Vocabulary Learning of EFL Learners at Elementary Level: Pakistani English Corpus-Based Approach

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Abstract

The present study aims to learn vocabulary for EFL learners at the elementary level. The corpus-based approach was promoted in this research. The vocabulary items were taught by using multimedia resources. The learners of EFL were shown Corpus through the multimedia resource to clarify the meanings of items generally and contextually. Pretests and post-tests were given to learners to check their level of vocabulary. The theoretical framework of Mayer's Cognitive theory of multimedia learning was used to carry out this research project. The researchers also noticed the attitude of learners. The use of visual aids proved helpful for learners in learning vocabulary words. The flexibility was provided in the learning environment by using multimedia resources. The results showed that the level of cognition matters in learning vocabulary items, and it varies from person to person. The findings revealed that the vibrant colors of visual aids attracted students' attention and significantly played a crucial role in

learning vocabulary. The result of the research paper also consists of a table that reflects the experimental group's frequency of exposure to vocabulary acquisition.

Key words: Multimedia resource; Vocabulary learning; Lexical items; Classroom

INTRODUCTION

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) holds great importance due to its global acceptance and the significance of English proficiency. The acquisition of vocabulary is considered one of the most important aspects of language learning for English as a second language, particularly at the elementary level. Vocabulary learning is crucial as it plays a role in communicating ideas and language development (Krashen, 1981). It provides a foundation on which language can stand, enabling learners to understand and be understood by others through their choice of words according to their needs. Learning vocabulary is essential for foreign learners to comprehend English entirely, and vocabulary is often considered more important than grammar for effective communication Lewis, 2012. Vocabulary acquisition holds great importance at the elementary level because it is the foundational stage for learners.

The most important stage in the language learning journey is the elementary level, as students begin to learn how to express themselves and comprehend basic messages in the target language Schmitt, 2008. Students are exposed to basic content words, function words, and syntax at this stage. However, in the Pakistani context, students are restricted and not given enough exposure to language or opportunities to practice. At the elementary level, students must encounter new content words to enhance their vocabulary knowledge through innovative methods. Since English is a second language and is not given adequate importance at lower levels, learners face difficulties while learning it.

In Pakistan, the linguistic landscape showcases a unique mixture of languages, where English holds a prominent role in the educational field alongside the national language, Urdu. In Pakistan, English is taught as a foreign language, and this dialect of English is referred to as "Pinglish" or "Paklish." This variant of English is greatly influenced by cultural and societal factors, resulting in a distinct language. Vocabulary learning is especially important for understanding the variation and blending of this language. Various teaching techniques must be devised to facilitate learning among elementary-level students. At this level, vocabulary learning serves as a building block for achieving language proficiency and improving literacy levels (Folse, 2004). There is a pressing need for diverse strategies to help learners acquire vocabulary at the elementary level in Pakistan, which can be best addressed through a corpus-based approach.

With the advancement of technology, teachers need to integrate technology into their classrooms. Technology makes learning more interesting and engaging for students. One effective method is the use of a corpus in the ELT classroom. Corpus linguistics is a relatively

new field of linguistic research that has gained traction in recent years (Smith, 2016). A corpus is essentially a collection of written and spoken texts. Nowadays, a corpus is used to analyze students' errors, and the data collected is often used to develop dictionaries. It is helpful because it consists of naturally used language.

Aijmer & Altenberg, 2014 claim that the study of language based on texts is known as corpus linguistics. Teaching English as a foreign language is particularly challenging, especially when it comes to teaching vocabulary. Vocabulary serves as the foundation for learning any language. Learning words and their contexts is critical, as vocabulary is the primary tool for expressing opinions and thoughts. Zhu, 2020 stated that vocabulary holds critical importance during language learning in the ELT classroom and should be taught using technology to enhance learning outcomes. By evaluating a Pakistani English Corpus, this study focuses on methods to enhance vocabulary learning among elementary-level EFL learners and their use of vocabulary in specific contexts.

Research objectives
The aim of this study is:

- To evaluate the effectiveness of multimedia resources in EFL classrooms for enhancing vocabulary.
- To identify the correlation between frequency of exposure to learning situations and vocabulary learning.

Research questions
- How are multimedia resources in EFL classrooms at the elementary level effective in enhancing vocabulary learning outcomes?
- What is the correlation between the frequency of exposure to learning situations and the acquisition of English vocabulary at the elementary level in the EFL context?

Significance of Research
This research provides an interesting method for vocabulary learning at the elementary level. It is necessary to have a strong command of the vocabulary of the target language. Vocabulary is one of the most important aspects of EFL learning, as it allows learners to communicate effectively in the target language. If students have a good command of vocabulary, it helps them express their ideas and opinions in a story more effectively. A strong command of vocabulary provides them with an enjoyable journey in language learning because it also helps them develop a better understanding of the English language and enhances their creative writing skills. Furthermore, using a corpus of storybooks in the classroom is interesting and engaging for elementary students.

Theoretical Framework
The "Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning" by Mayer has been applied to explore the effectiveness of multimedia resources in vocabulary acquisition. This theory focuses on combining visual and auditory factors to enhance vocabulary learning. According to this model, working memory is short, and therefore, repetition should be mitigated to achieve better results. Multimedia resources integrate information, remove redundancy, and present it in a better way

by highlighting important factors in the optical channel and ensuring spatial integration between visual and auditory parts. This model suggests incorporating human-like factors to make learning effective. It provides guidance on designing and implementing multimedia resources to enhance information assimilation through well-structured learning experiences.

The study aims to demonstrate the correlation between the frequency of exposure to new sources and the acquisition of vocabulary. This correlation is analyzed through the lens of "Input Theory." "The Input Hypothesis," proposed by Krashen (1989), serves as the main component for the acquisition of vocabulary in a second language. This theory states that language learning occurs when learners are exposed to language that is slightly beyond their current level of understanding. Language that is comprehensible to the learner with slight difficulty is essential for vocabulary development. If a person has a language ability at stage "i," their language ability improves when exposed to language input at the "i+1" level. To ensure that all learners encounter some challenges while comprehending, a natural communicative input approach should be used to design the syllabus so that everyone receives some "i+1" input.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Yersultanova et al., 2025 tried to test the effectiveness of Corpus in ELT classrooms. They specifically use the COCA corpus to improve students' learning. In this research, only three types of structures were focused. Moreover, they used the Likert scale to determine the effectiveness of COCA, and they found Corpus more effective than the course textbook.

Universidad Autónoma Chapingo & Aurelia Logojan, 2021 presented research to investigate the usage and frequency of usage of vocabulary strategies that the English students of Agricultural High School of Universidad Automoma Chapingo in Texcoco, Mexico used. They discovered that while utilizing vocabulary items, strategies play a crucial role. The researchers distributed a Likert-scale questionnaire with 5 points to 107 students. A descriptive survey was used to carry out this study to provide a brief description of the strategies students used to learn vocabulary items they encountered. The findings of this investigation reveal that students most likely invest their time searching for the meanings of new words and spend less time revising vocabulary to remember it for a long time for future use. The results also showed that the strategies used to learn vocabulary items were less effective, and students need to focus on strategies that help them acquire, store, and retrieve vocabulary words efficiently and effectively.

Dr. Nazia Anwar et al., 2024 investigated the variant use of verbs. They claimed that British and Pakistani English are the same only at the semantical level but different at the lexical level. For this study, a five million-word corpus was made using different newspapers. A list of verbs was made, and they were separated into the same and those with different meanings. Moreover, examples were also given to support their research.

Kashani & Shafiee, 2016 conducted research comparing vocabulary learning strategies among elementary Iranian EFL learners. This study reflected that knowing plenty of vocabulary plays a

necessary role in acquiring a second language (SL). This study also revealed that a major problem foreign language learners face, especially EFL learners, is how to commit vocabulary items to long-term memory. The study compared three strategies, i.e., the sentence writing approach, the use of flashcards, and the strategy of using a vocabulary book, to discover which strategy would prove most effective and reliable for Iranian EFL learners at the elementary level. The researchers experimented with three groups out of four, with the fourth group being the control group. A pretest was conducted, followed by treatment and a post-test. The differences among the four groups were noteworthy, but the difference in post-test results was not sufficiently great regarding long-term vocabulary learning. The findings showed that the flashcard strategy was the most appropriate and significant strategy for vocabulary learners at the elementary level.

Tayyebi, 2021 conducted a study to examine the vocabulary learning strategies used by Iranian EFL learners at the elementary level. The study reflected that learners' strategies depend entirely on their individual efforts when learning vocabulary items. The researchers focused on Iranian EFL learners learning English as a second language (SL). Placement tests were conducted, and 100 participants were enlisted through available sampling. Schmitt's taxonomy questionnaire was employed in this research. The results showed that learners acquire vocabulary at a medium level and favor social strategies, which include memory, cognitive, metacognitive, and determination strategies.

Nematollahi et al., 2017 researched to perform a meta-analysis of EFL learners' vocabulary learning strategies. The researchers found no better way to expand knowledge of lexical items. This research analyzed the functionality and practicality of distinct strategies for learning vocabulary items. The findings reflected the order of strategies used by EFL learners. The order of vocabulary learning strategies was as follows: determination, cognitive, memory, metacognitive, and social strategies. Most likely, learners used the strategy of guessing the meaning of vocabulary items from context and favored using a dictionary. The results also showed that different students used different strategies.

Ghalebi et al., 2020 believe that learners' strategies for vocabulary learning are a crucial process for teachers and researchers, as they promote effective learning outcomes. Samples were taken from 218 students pursuing BA, MA, and PhD degrees at an Iranian university. The aim was to compare vocabulary learning strategies among EFL learners. The questionnaire consisted of both open-ended and close-ended items. The level of education and academic degree significantly impacted the strategies used for vocabulary learning. There was a notable difference between undergraduate and postgraduate students' approaches to vocabulary learning strategies. The results showed no significant difference in the use of vocabulary strategies between M.A. and Ph.D. students. This investigation also encouraged EFL teachers and curriculum developers to design materials and co-curricular activities that could significantly improve vocabulary learning.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to conduct this research. The students were taught vocabulary items using multimedia resources. It was observed that learners learn

effectively through visual aids. The stage of students learning vocabulary was analyzed, and then a corpus of vocabulary items at the elementary level was further developed. A class of elementary-level EFL learners was conducted to teach vocabulary words through visual aids. This Corpus was shown to EFL learners or students through multimedia. This activity exposed students to vocabulary words so they could pay attention to visual aids. The number of exposures to vocabulary items was also counted. The Corpus of these vocabulary items was exposed to students 3 to 4 times.

The vocabulary words, along with their meanings and pronunciations, were taught. These vocabulary items were also taught in sentences so that elementary-level learners could learn their contextual meanings. Each item was taught separately to provide EFL learners with a clear understanding of a word's meaning. After this, it was observed how many students learned efficiently and properly. It was shown that some students performed well while others reached a mediocre level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Technological resources are crucial in increasing vocabulary learning for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at the elementary level. The combination of multimedia factors such as pictures, slides, audio clips, videos, and other activities provides an immersive learning experience aligned with the strategies adopted by students. Firstly, the Corpus significantly influences vocabulary learning by creating an engaging and technological environment for students to learn new lexical items. At the elementary level, learners develop their vocabulary skills by associating words with situations, leading to clearer comprehension. The Corpus was presented using multimedia resources in the form of slides. Students were exposed to the Corpus slides, and their vocabulary knowledge was assessed after exposure.

In a comprehensive exploration of the effectiveness of multimedia resources, qualitative methods such as observation and student interviews were employed to gain learners' insights. Using multimedia resources to expose students to vocabulary through the Corpus allowed them to engage multiple senses, enhancing overall vocabulary learning. Researchers also observed learners' attitudes towards the communicative language teaching approach.

Access to multimedia resources in this age of technology has enabled individualized and flexible learning. EFL learners can interact more effectively with multimedia resources to learn vocabulary. The Corpus can be adapted to suit individual needs, allowing progress based on each learner's comprehension. This adaptability accommodates different learning styles, promoting a more personalized approach to vocabulary learning. By introducing innovation, students become more interested in learning vocabulary efficiently.

Slides were shown to students with the lexical items pronounced by the researcher, enabling learners to associate words in the Corpus with specific concepts and acquire more vocabulary than conventional teaching methods. Furthermore, students were encouraged to interact with computers displaying the Corpus on screens, positively influencing vocabulary learning. Observations and student comments revealed that learners were attracted to using new

technology, such as the Corpus, in schools. This interest resulted in increased attention and, ultimately, enhanced vocabulary learning.

When data was gathered from learners, they responded positively and acknowledged the significant influence of multimedia resources on their vocabulary learning. Students noted that multimedia resources served as a new and innovative tool in the traditional Pakistani teaching approach, notably positively affecting their vocabulary acquisition. The Corpus acted as a support system that helped learners understand the concepts behind lexical items and promoted a long-lasting association between words and their applications.

The study involved a pretest and post-test design to evaluate the impact of exposing students to vocabulary. Before the exposure, both groups were given a pretest to establish a baseline for comparison. The experimental group was then instructed and exposed to vocabulary learning through a communicative approach. Throughout the experiment, quantitative data was collected using repetitive assessments. Various elements of vocabulary acquisition, such as recall, were measured. Data analysis revealed significant differences between the two groups as the experiment progressed. The experimental group displayed higher engagement and improved vocabulary acquisition than the control group.
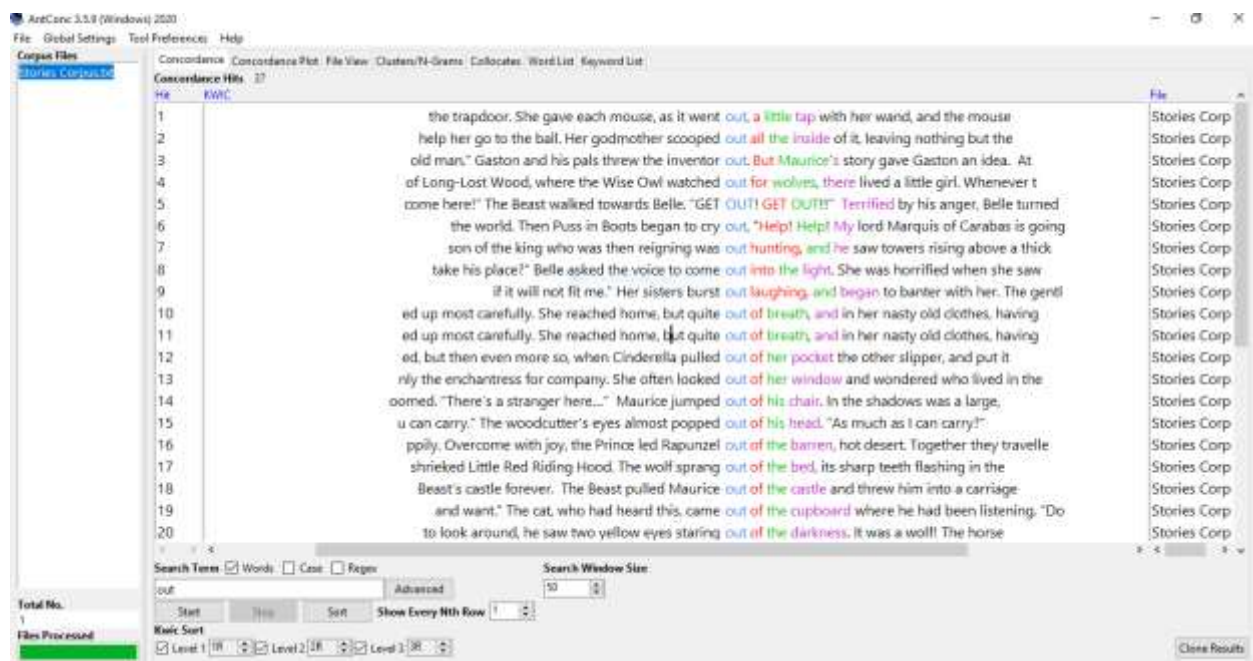

Figure 1: Vocabulary items taught in the context of a storybook

The same experimental group was exposed to the communicative language teaching method to analyse the correlation between the number of exposures and vocabulary acquisition. They were taught the meaning of words three times in the target language using less challenging lexical items. The learners in the experimental group responded positively when they were taught the meaning of words such as "terrified" and "barren" in context. These words were one level above the current stage of the students' cognitive abilities. The teacher, employing the

communicative language teaching method, used some words in context while communicating with the learners.

The results showed that different students acquired various words based on their cognitive levels. When students with high cognitive capacities were exposed to vocabulary three times, four students acquired 80% of the new words on average. Three students gained insight into about 50% of the vocabulary, whereas three students showed an acquisition of 40% of the vocabulary.

Table 1: Result of frequency of exposure to vocabulary acquisition of an experimental group

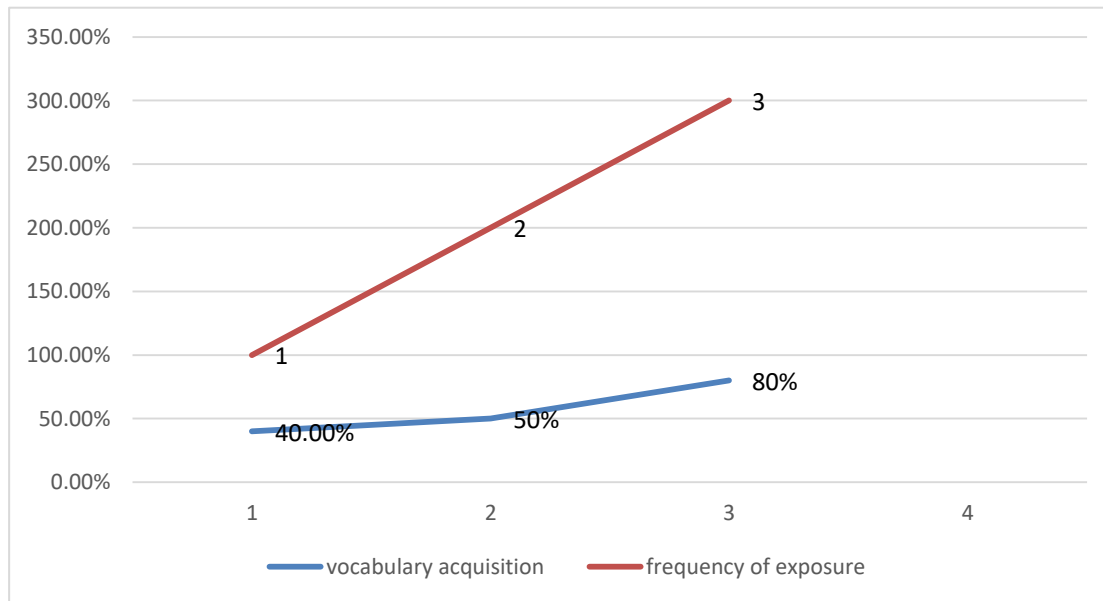| No. of students	No. of exposures	No. of words	Percentage
4	3	16	80%
3	2	10	50%
3	1	8	40%

Figure 2: Positive correlation between frequency of exposures (from 100-350) and vocabulary acquisition (from 50-90)

Figure 2 reveals a positive correlation between the frequency of exposure and vocabulary acquisition in the experimental group's post-test results. The positive slope of the graph indicates an increasing correlation. Further analysis revealed that low vocabulary acquisition resulted from less exposure and engagement. In contrast, high vocabulary acquisition indicated that students were highly engaged in interactive activities with vocabulary as they were exposed to it. The results showed that as the frequency of exposure increases, so does vocabulary acquisition in the communicative language teaching approach.
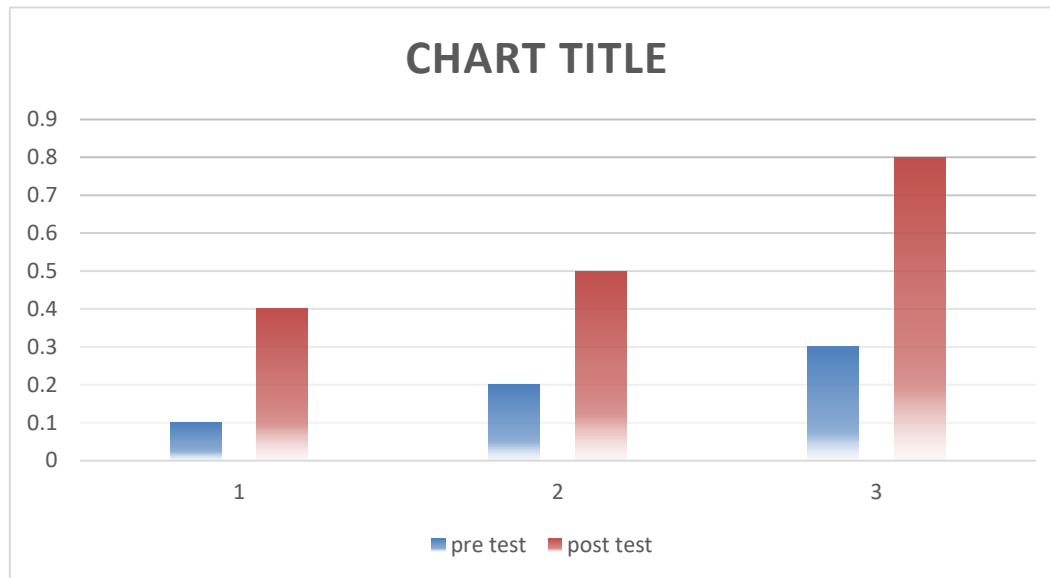
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Figure 3: Pretest and post-test results of exposure to communicative situations on vocabulary acquisition

CONCLUSION

This research work focuses on building vocabulary at the elementary level. Having a good vocabulary is essential for students at the elementary level. It helps them express their thoughts and ideas more clearly and enables them to understand the complex context of words during reading. Due to a lack of vocabulary knowledge, students could not express their ideas, but the Corpus of Storybooks is an ideal approach to fill this gap. This study provides an effective method for learning and teaching language. Frequent exposure of students to vocabulary by the communicative approach greatly influences acquisition. Multimedia resources and the Corpus also serve as crucial tools to increase vocabulary at students' developmental stages.

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Appendix: (Test Sample)

PRE TEST

NAME--

CLASS-------------- ROLL NO---------------

1. The concert was a resounding success. (Choose Synonyms of underline word)
a) quiet
b) noisy
c) crowded
d) impressive

2. The movie had a captivating storyline. (Choose Synonyms of underline word)
a) boring
b) exciting
c) predictable
d) tedious

3. The politician made an incoherent speech. (Choose Antonyms of underline word)
a) logical
b) coherent
c) intelligent
d) persuasive

4.The movie was incredibly monotonous. (Choose Antonyms of underline word)
a) exciting
b) entertaining
c) diverse
d) engaging

5.The professor's lectures were always ____ and easy to understand. (Choose appropriate word to complete sentence
a) complicated
b) concise
c) ambiguous
d) convoluted

6. The team's performance was ____, leading them to victory. (Choose appropriate word to complete sentence)
a) mediocre
b) exceptional
c) lackluster
d) average

7.The ____ of the novel kept the readers engaged until the end. (Choose word or phrase to completes sentence)
a) plot
b) genre
c) protagonist
d) climax

8. The students conducted a ____ experiment in the science lab. (Choose word or phrase to completes sentence)
a) controlled
b) random
c) spontaneous
d) chaotic

9. Word: Sufficient (Select the correct definition of given word from the options provided.)
a) Inadequate or insufficient
b) Excessive or surplus
c) Adequate or satisfactory
d) Careless or reckless

9. Word: Contribute (Select the correct definition of given word from the options provided.)
a) To take away
b) Hardworking or industrious
c) To hide or conceal
d) To give or provide

POST TEST

NAME---

CLASS-------------- ROLL NO----------------

1. The teacher commended the student for her exemplary behavior. (Choose Synonyms of underline word)
a) admirable
b) disrespectful
c) indifferent
d) indifferent

2. The athlete demonstrated remarkable agility on the field. (Choose Synonyms of underline word)
a) flexibility
b) clumsiness
c) laziness
d) strength

3. The cat exhibited a timid behavior. (Choose Antonyms of underline word)
a) brave
b) bold
c) confident
d) fearless

4. The weather was incredibly gloomy today. (Choose Antonyms of underline word Antonyms)
a) sunny
b) bright
c) cheerful
d) pleasant

5. The chef's _____ recipe impressed all the guests at the restaurant. (Choose appropriate word to complete sentence)
a) ordinary
b) elaborate
c) simple
d) basic

6. The artist's _____ paintings were displayed in the art gallery. (Choose appropriate word to complete sentence)
a) abstract
b) conventional
c) traditional
d) realistic

7. The politician's _____ speech left a lasting impact on the audience. (Choose word or phrase to completes sentence)
a) eloquent
b) inarticulate
c) verbose
d) rambling

8. The coach provided _____ feedback to help the athletes improve their skills. (Choose word or phrase to completes sentence)
a) constructive
b) destructive
c) negative
d) pessimistic

9. Word: Vigilant (Select the correct definition of given word from the options provided.)
a) Drowsy or sleepy
b) Cautious or watchful
c) Talkative or chatty
d) To ignore or neglect

9. Word: Abundant (Select the correct definition of given word from the options provided.)
a) Rare or scarce
b) Plentiful or ample
c) Unusual or strange
d) To give or provide