

LEARNING VERBS WITH ARGUMENTS: THE ESL/EFL CHALLENGE

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Abstract. *This study investigates the use of the verb 'recommend' within a written corpus of more than three hundred graduating EFL/ESL college students at a Middle Eastern American university, with a total number of more than twenty five thousand words. The corpus analysis shows that about one fourth of the graduates are still experiencing difficulties as they try to use the verb 'recommend' in their writings. The paper shows the inherent features of that verb. It then describes its various uses in graduating students' writings. Finally, it discusses the findings, argues against incidental learning, and makes a number of pedagogical recommendations.*

Key words: *ESL/EFL learning, vocabulary, writing, English verbs*

1. INTRODUCTION

“We have some general idea of the forces that influence what gets properly learned and what gets forgotten, but learning itself remains a covert, nonconscious mental process that resists explanation in particular cases.”

(Allwright, 2005:18)

The opaque nature of the learning process as stated in Allwright above has been a subject of investigation within and across a number of disciplines with the aim to unveil its intricacies and empower both the teacher and the learner. Folse (2004), for example, examines the learning of vocabulary by second and foreign language learners of English. Thus, he quite rightly observes that “For far too long, it has been incorrectly assumed that learners will pick up enough vocabulary without direct instruction” (p.23), arguing therefore against incidental learning approaches and proposing that teaching vocabulary be an integral part of any English Language Teaching (ELT) curriculum. On the other hand, one of the latest studies seems to argue against incidental learning by showing that intentional learning proves more effective with learning English collocations (Noori, Gholami, Rajabi, 2014). Such controversy can only support Hald, Hurk, and Bekkering's statement that “...not much is known about the underlying neurocognitive mechanisms that improve learning” (2015: 107). It is also not controversial to assume that learned materials are typically stored in learners' long term memory, while forgotten items might have been stored in learners' short term memory. Nation (1990), for instance, argues that language learners have to encounter the target words from 5 to 16 times before they get stored in their

long-term memory. However, checking on the status of items in terms of forgetfulness or learning-less might be a tedious task. With respect to vocabulary learning, it is generally assumed that learners are much more capable of recognizing lexical items than producing them, hence the distinction between passive and active knowledge respectively (Jackson, 2009).

Similar to native English speakers, second and foreign language learners of English develop lexical competence as part of their language learning.¹ Thus proficiency levels are generally checked through demonstration of relative command of English in its written and oral forms. This command is articulated through proper use of lexical items in their canonical and collocational forms. Haegeman (1991), for instance, observes that “the semantic relationship between the predicate and its arguments is part of the lexical knowledge of the native speaker and should hence also be recorded in the lexicon” (p.43).

This paper examines sample writings of graduating ESL/EFL students from an American university in the Middle East, and shows the difficulties a large number of them encounter while using the verb ‘*recommend*’.² It first discusses the semantic properties of the verb ‘*recommend*’. Second, it identifies the various syntactic configurations within which the verb has been used in students’ writings. It finally discusses the findings and makes a few pedagogical recommendations.

2. SEMANTIC PROPERTIES OF THE VERB ‘RECOMMEND’

The verb *recommend* falls within the semantic domain of suggestions as part of directive utterances whereby speakers and writers give their opinions as to what addressees should or should not do (Kreidler 1988). The general semantic meaning of such verbs is as follows:

Speaker expresses an opinion about Addressee’s choice of performance. Addressee is the suggestee, not necessarily the addressee. Presupposition: The suggestee has a choice of performance.

(Kreidler, 1988:191)

As for the structure of such predicates, the speaker or the writer bears the semantic role of *a source*, the recommended entity *the theme*, and the recommendee is *the goal*. Thus, the three semantic roles, namely the *source*, the *theme*, and the *goal* represent the subject, direct object, and indirect object respectively in usual grammatical terminology. The semantics of other verbs range from verbs which are selected for two semantic roles, such as regular transitive verbs, to those which request one semantic role, as in the case of intransitive verbs. The contrast between the verb *recommend* and other types of verbs is shown in examples (1), (2), and (3) respectively.

¹ See Becker (2005) for the learning of raising verbs with English-speaking adults and conclusions relevant to language acquisition; see also Mukherjee (2005) for a thorough discussion of ditransitive verbs from a corpus-based and intuition-based approaches.

² For similar issues and writing difficulties of Middle Eastern students, see in particular Al-Jarf (2015), Khreisat & Kaur (2014), Javid & Umer (2014), Abdulkareem (2013), Golkowska (2013), Elhilali (2012), Ismail (2011), Hind (March), Ezza (2010), Khuwaileh (2000). For the latest boom of American universities in the Middle East, see Badry & Willoughby (2016).

- (1) The students *recommended* their university to all graduating high school seniors.
 (2) The students *took* all required courses.
 (3) All senior students *graduated*.

While the verb *recommend* in (1) has for a Noun Phrase (NP) '*their university*' and a Prepositional Phrase (PP) '*to all graduating high school seniors*', the verb *took* in (2) has for a NP '*all required courses*' and the verb *graduate* in (3) does not require any object. All verbs, however, require a NP subject, *The students* in (1) and (2), and *All senior students* in (3). The syntactic configuration of each verb type may be represented as follows:

- (4) (NP) recommended (NP) (PP)
 (5) (NP) took (NP)
 (6) (NP) graduated

In addition to the two arguments the verb *recommend* typically has, namely the NP and the PP, it may also have a sentence optionally headed by the complementizer *that* as shown in (7a) and (7b).

- (7) a. I would recommend **that** you join AUS.
 b. I would recommend \emptyset you join AUS.

The above description is further supported by The Online Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English which provides an exhaustive list of uses of the verb 'recommend' in its active and passive forms³. Longman's description of the verb *recommend* includes a lexical section where three different uses are highlighted and a grammatical section which exposes three syntactic configurations, two of which are grammatical, while one is not. The classification of the three different uses of the verb *recommend*, as appears in the lexical section, is based on the regular versus idiomatic use of such a verb on the one hand, and on the effect the use of the verb has on the recommendee on the other. Thus, while the first and second cases refer to common uses, the third case isolates an idiomatic use. As for the distinction between the first and the second cases, it is based on the extent to which it effects the recommendee. In the first case, the recommendee is asked to 'perform' something, while a mere suggestion is implied in the second case. In the grammar section, however, the dictionary highlights the grammatical and ungrammatical syntactic configurations. It starts with the ungrammatical structure where the indirect object is used as a direct object as illustrated in 8 below, then exposes the two grammatical structures where both the direct and indirect objects are clearly stated.

- (8) * NP recommend (NP) (NP)

In short, Longman's description of the verb *recommend* is quite thorough, for it takes into consideration a number of contextual factors in addition to possible uses and misuses of such a verb (see Appendix 1 for more details).

³ Compared to other available dictionaries, such as the Online Cambridge Dictionary, the Cambridge Learners' Dictionary, and the Cambridge Dictionary of American English, the Longman is indeed commendable for all the helpful details it provides learners with (see appendix 1 for such details).

3. CORPUS AND METHODOLOGY

The corpus under investigation is composed of more than 25000 words collected from graduating students at the American University of Sharjah during the spring semester of 2005. Students were given the following writing prompt:

- (9) Write a short letter in which you either recommend or not recommend the American University of Sharjah to one of your best friends (you may think to include your opinion about the courses, the teachers, the administration, the activities, the friends, the general atmosphere, etc.)

The task has therefore prompted the use of the verb *recommend*. Amongst the 451 potential respondents, 319 responded to the writing task. Of this total number, 148 students made use of the verb *recommend*. The data was tabulated with the help of a concordance software which allows for retrieving immediate and larger contexts⁴. After the larger context is selected, the core sentences composed of the verb *recommend*, the subject, and the verb arguments were identified and classified. The classification is based on the various syntactic configurations in which the verb *recommend* and its arguments appear in the corpus (see Appendix 2 for details).

4. FINDINGS

Out of the three hundred and nineteen (319) students who responded to the writing task, one hundred and forty eight students (148), which is a rate of 46.39%, included the use of the verb *recommend* in their writings. Table 1 summarizes various syntactic configurations in which the verb appears along with their frequencies.

Table 1 Uses of the verb '*recommend*' in Students' Writings

Syntactic Configuration	N = 148	Percent	Examples
1. Recommend (NP) (PP)	47	31.75	I highly recommend it to my friends
2. Recommend (NP)	43	29.05	I strongly recommend AUS
3. Recommend (NP) (IP ⁵)	23	15.54	I recommend students to come to this university
4. Recommend (that S)	9	6.08	I strongly recommend that you join AUS
5. Recommend (NP) for (NP)	8	5.40	I recommend AUS for a friend
6. Recommended (NP) Passive Voice Construction	7	4.72	It is a recommended university
7. Recommend (IP)	4	2.70	I don't recommend to engage in numerous activities
8. Recommend (S)	4	2.70	I recommend you go to a "Real" University!
9. Recommend (Ø)	2	1.35	Because of this, I am writing to you to recommend
10. Recommend (NP) (GP ⁶)	2	1.35	I recommend you joining us

⁴ I used the concordance software of TextSTAT-2 for such tasks.

⁵ IP stands for an Infinitive Phrase, a phrase which begins with [*to* + verb].

⁶ GP stands for a Gerundive Phrase, a phrase which begins with a gerund [*v-ing...*]

Table 1 shows the use of the verb *recommend* in ten different syntactic configurations. It also shows the frequency of each configuration. While some configurations appear to be highly marked for their low frequencies (i.e., less than 3%), other uses appear to be quite frequent (i.e., 29.05%, and 31.75%)⁷. The following graph chart further summarizes such distribution:

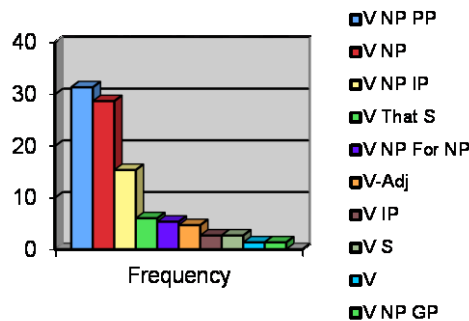


Fig. 1 Syntactic Distribution of Recommend

Thus, 47 out of the 148 whose writings exhibit the use of *recommend*, that is one third of ‘recommend users’ appear to be quite cognizant of the selectional properties of the verb, hence the use of the two arguments, the direct and indirect objects. This number represents a bit less than one third of the students, that is 31.75% of the total number. How about the remaining 68.25% of the uses of the verb ‘recommend’?

The second largest percentage of the uses of the verb ‘recommend’, which is 29.05%, shows presence of the direct object and an absence of the indirect object. In other words, 43 cases of the verb ‘recommend’ mention the object which is ‘the university’ and make no reference of the recommendee, that is ‘the close friend’. This is shown in (10) below:

(10) I recommend AUS

As for deletion of the recommendee, it is in most cases here licensed by the fact that it is recoverable from the context. It is a letter addressed to a close friend, so the addressee is that same friend. Hadn’t we known the recommendee, the sentence would have been too opaque to merit grammaticality. A similar use with no indirect object is found in the examples given by the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English as shown in (11) below:

(11) I recommend the butter chicken – it’s delicious.

The third largest use of the verb ‘recommend’, that is 23 cases with a frequency of 15.54%, appears with the recommendee ‘the students’, used as a direct object, followed by an infinitive phrase ‘to come to this university’. This use is unfortunately not attested in any English dictionary, neither is it accepted by native English speakers. Example (12) illustrates such ungrammatical use of the verb ‘recommend’:

⁷ It is quite intriguing to have 31.33% as the highest use. One would expect a much higher frequency for a common syntactic configuration such as the first where both the direct and indirect objects are realized.

- (12) * I recommend students to come to this university

The remaining seven cases show a rather low frequency ranging from a maximum of nine cases to a minimum of two uses, representing 6.08% and 1.35%, respectively. Most important are the cases that are attested and grammatical versus those that are ungrammatical. Amongst the seven cases, we note the ungrammatical use of the verb 'recommend' in cases seven, nine, and ten in Table 2. Such examples are shown in (13), (14), and (15) respectively:

- (13) * I don't recommend to engage in numerous activities
 (14) * Because of this, I am writing to you to recommend
 (15) * I recommend you joining us

The above illicit cases represent 5.33%, that is a total number of eight instances. In (13), for example, the verb 'recommend' is directly followed by the object of the recommendation used within an infinitive phrase. Such use violates the selectional properties of the verb 'recommend' resulting in an ungrammatical sentence. In (14), the verb 'recommend' appears at the end of the clause and is not followed by any complement. As such, it is used just similarly to an intransitive verb. This is highly illicit for it violates the transitivity of the verb. The last case in (15) shows a clear ungrammatical use of the verb 'recommend' since it uses the 'recommendee' 'you' as a direct object, and the object of the recommendation within a gerundive construction 'joining us'. In short, it is clear that a number of graduating students appear to encounter difficulties while using the verb 'recommend'.

Now the remaining cases under four, five, six, and eight in Table 2 show a number of infrequent cases of the use of the verb 'recommend' that are grammatical. Such uses are illustrated in (16), (17), (18), and (19) respectively:

- (16) I strongly recommend that you join AUS
 (17) I recommend AUS for a friend
 (18) It is a recommended university
 (19) I recommend you go to a "Real" University!

As the examples above show, the case in (16) illustrates the use of the verb 'recommend' followed by a Complementizer Phrase (CP) headed by the Complementizer 'that' and followed by a sentence 'you join AUS'. Despite the common use of the verb 'recommend' with CPs, the low frequency in our corpus shows an intriguing pattern. A common use of the verb is only used 9 times within a corpus of 149 cases which represents only 6%. The fact that this frequency is indeed very low is further supported by the fact that the Online Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English mentions the first example of the verb 'recommend' with a CP, as reproduced in (20) below:

- (20) I recommend that you get some professional advice.

The example in (17) shows the use of the verb 'recommend' followed by a Direct Object (DO) and a Prepositional Phrase (PP). However, the latter is headed by the preposition 'for' instead of the preposition 'to'. While the use of both prepositions 'for' and 'to' is observed, there seems to be a few nuances reminiscent of the semantic value of each preposition. As for the example in (18) which shows a passive construction, the verb 'recommend' is used as a past participle with the suffix /-ed/. The last example in (19) illustrates the use of the verb 'recommend' followed by a sentence with no Complementizer. Only two such cases are found, and this shows how highly unfamiliar college students are with such use. In sum, the 4

cases above show a total use of 27 occurrences within a total number of 148, that is 18.24%. Though grammatical, it is unclear why college students are not making abundant use of such constructions, especially those with Complementizers.

5. DISCUSSION

A closer examination of students' use of the verb *recommend* shows a confusion as to the verb's selectional properties ranging from no arguments, to one argument and more in various attested and unattested syntactic configurations. The examples in (21a-e), taken from students' writings, show samples of such uses:

- (21) a. I would always recommend
 b. I will recommend it
 c. I highly recommend it to you
 d. I recommend to join AUS program
 e. I don't recommend anyone to study at AUS

The example in (21a) shows the use of the verb *recommend* with no arguments which despite the possible context recovery of both the recommended entity, the university, and the recommendee, the friend to whom the letter is being written, falls short of grammaticality^{8,9}. The sentence in (21a) is therefore ungrammatical for it does not satisfy the selectional properties of the verb *recommend*. The sentence in (21b) shows the use of the verb *recommend* followed by the pronoun 'it' which refers to the complement 'the university'. The lack of the second argument of the verb, that is the recommendee, however, questions the full grammaticality of the sentence. In (21c) the use of the verb *recommend* exhibits a direct object 'it' and an indirect object 'to you', the two arguments as requested by the verb *recommend*, hence a fully grammatical sentence. The example in (21d) shows an infinitive phrase 'to join the AUS program' used immediately after the verb *recommend*. This use violates the verb selectional restrictions for it neither states the goal nor the theme in their proper syntactic configurations, hence its unacceptability. The use of *recommend* in (21e) shows a peculiar change of semantic roles; the indirect object, the goal, is used at the position of the direct object, the theme. This change suggests that the recommended entity is no longer the university or the program, but the person or the recommendee. This possible meaning is not however the intended one in (21e) for the inadequate syntactic configuration in which the second argument appears. If this latter were a prepositional phrase 'to AUS' instead of an infinitive phrase 'to study at AUS', the sentence would be interpretable and therefore grammatical.

Now, if we turn our attention to the total number of grammatical cases and ungrammatical cases within the entire corpus, we notice the following. Amongst the 148 uses of the verb 'recommend', 109 cases representing 73.64% of the uses of the verb fall within the proper

⁸ Halliday and Hasan (1976:202) describe such cases as 'not possible in English' for they violate a general restriction which bans 'ellipsis of single elements'. In other words, while a verbal ellipsis may replace the whole verb phrase (i.e., Has she taken her medicine? Yes, she has.), a single element ellipsis where the complement is missing (i.e., Yes, she has taken) is not possible.

⁹ Within the Principles and Parameters framework, such examples are ungrammatical for they violate the Theta Criterion and the Projection Principle (see Haegeman, 1991: 41-58)

and attested use. However, 26.36% of the cases show illicit and unattested use of the verb ‘recommend’¹⁰. This distribution is further clarified in Figure 2 below:

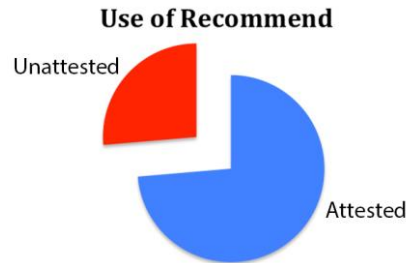


Fig. 2 Attested and Unattested Uses of ‘Recommend’

To sum, after four years of English-medium instruction, ESL/EFL students’ use of the verb *recommend* exhibits felicitous and infelicitous, attested and unattested uses, a case which warrants a serious investigation and invites both teachers and administrators to ponder on ways of overcoming such linguistic deficiency.


6. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

If one out of four university graduates fails to master the use of the verb ‘*recommend*’, it is crucial that some serious revision of the teaching and learning pedagogies be initiated. In relation to ways of assisting learners with writing, Nation (2009) suggests that “writing instruction should be based on a careful needs analysis...” (p.94) which leads teachers to ‘design’ relevant tasks so that those needs are fulfilled. This study does indeed show the need to address students’ vocabulary deficiency. While one could argue that in English-medium universities where all degree courses are carried out in English, students will eventually master the language through extensive exposure and incidental strategies. While this may be true in English speaking countries, such as the United States or England, it does not seem to be the case in the Middle East at least, where other languages such as Arabic, Urdu, and Farsi are widely spoken.


Explicit vocabulary learning may be suggested as a plausible alternative. While several researchers have advocated such intentional approach, the challenge remains with identifying most plausible and effective pedagogies. If, for instance, we consider the assignment as in Figure 2 below, we will probably see the extent to which learning challenging verbs such as ‘*recommend*’ may be facilitated.

¹⁰ This percentage includes the obvious cases number 3 (recommend NP IP), 5 (recommend NP for NP), 7 (recommend IP), 9 (recommend 0), and 10 (recommend NP GP) under Table 1.

Greece



My best friend



R
e
c
o
m
m
e
n
d

I recommend _____ to _____

Fig. 2 Sample Vocabulary Learning Assignment

Including visual art in the design of learning tasks is highly desirable. Craig (2013) explains that “For L2 students, the use of visuals can be not only about process and product but also about providing an alternate way of looking at information and a stimulus for generating language.” (p.61). In addition, as visual clips change within the same assignment to include a variety of recommendees (i.e., + human, - human, + animate, - animate, etc.) and a variety of recommended objects (i.e., + human, - human, + animate, - animate, etc.), the use of such verbs gets easily reinforced. This suggestion is echoed in Steve Kaufmann’s observation on the TESL-List:

“For university level non-native speakers, it is vocabulary that is the biggest problem, not grammar. Most of them have an insufficient grasp of the precise meaning of words, how to use them and what other words to use with them. **The priority needs to be to increase learners’ active vocabulary of words and phrases, by allowing the learners to see them in many different contexts in a systematic way...**” October 30, 2005 (emphasis is ours)

In his recently published book, Baratta (2010) also observes that the current generation is heavily exposed to visuals through their mobile phones, i-pads, and computers. He assumes that making use of such visual tools in learning pedagogies will have a great impact on bringing subjects closer to learners, especially academic writing. Yamagata (2015) observes that verbs’ learning is enhanced through image-based methodologies. Thus, promoting the use of visuals in learning English vocabulary would maximize effective exposure. Similarly, Osmani (2014: 710) concludes that “the Online Visual Dictionary is a very efficient tool in acquiring new vocabulary items.” Along the same line, vocabulary mind-maps proved highly effective in learning new vocabulary (Al-Jarf, 2015).

In addition to the effective use of visuals tools, the incorporation of corpus linguistics in language teaching also has the effect of exposing learners to language use in context and in systematic ways. The concordance sample in Figure 3 below from the British National Corpus illustrates such exercise.

Results of your search

Your query was

recommend

Here is a random selection of 50 solutions from the 1782 found.

[A0V 766](#) (At this time, I would strongly recommend trying to maintain a high quality of shot during the rally.)

[A4S 153](#) If you go and see this film I recommend that you don't eat first.

[ABS 847](#) I didn't recommend it because I had seen what it had done to sensitive artists like Scott Walker.

[AKE 1689](#) 'I wouldn't recommend to anyone what he does.

[ALW 2647](#) I would recommend it to students who want to know more about peptide chemistry.

[ANS 1324](#) To recommend a model of the English language, whether spoken or written, which would:(i) serve as the basis of how teachers are trained to understand how the English language works;(ii) inform professional discussion of all aspects of English teaching.

[AT8 1172](#) In energy, as opposed to environmental, terms the most serious potential consequence of acid rain could be on coal as a power station fuel, a fact which led the IEA in a study published in November 1983 to recommend governments to increase basic research on acid rain pollution.

[B7J 1322](#) When Lilly finally handed over reports from the June symposium to the Committee on Safety of Medicines on 7 October it also proposed that the data sheets of information to doctors be changed to recommend 'half doses to the elderly', according to the DHSS press office, or 'reduction of dosage to over 75s' according to the health minister.

[B7J 1348](#) These 'leading experts' did agree to recommend lower doses for elderly patients 7 ½ months later.

[B7J 1546](#) So much of modern astrophysics has sprung from the seeds of radio astronomy that I would recommend a session with this book for anyone currently involved in astronomy research.

[B7G 360](#) They recommend that the sealed sections of the hull containing the reactor compartments should be buried in an open trench in an arid or semi-arid environment.

[BNE 383](#) In such circumstances, it seemed surprising that the Report should recommend the repeal of the Obscene Publications Act and consequent decriminalisation of all forms of publication other than those narrowly defined as causing actual harm to performers, whilst urging for films, and films alone, the continuation of an administrative system of prior restraint.

[CBC 12736](#) The dessert trolley (£3.25 per portion) was tempting, but I'd recommend the cheese trolley loaded with all the French cheese you've heard of and more that you haven't.

[CBX 1978](#) They recommend a strong, constructive personnel policy, including a structured management philosophy covering rules of conduct relating to the employment life cycle from recruitment, through continued education, performance evaluation, promotion, mandatory annual vacation, and employment termination, covering all employees from data entry operators to management information systems directors.

[CCT 1287](#) On the whole, we would prefer the CD policy, of same-name information only from a given address, to be followed generally, and recommend this.

[CGI 1294](#) There are passages in this book which are curiously enigmatic or coy; but I'd recommend it to anyone and I'd freely tell them about Dennis that he's a good old boy, a sound socialist, a grassroots

Fig. 3 Sample concordance results

A closer examination of the sample uses of the verb recommend from the British National Corpora, for instance, provides learners with patterns of use in context. This examination may be reinforced by a follow-up group exercise whereby students report on the frequencies and patterns within a particular selection. Such involvement can only reinforce the understanding of the target form and maximize the chances of active learning. Schmitt & McCarthy (1997) argue that “the more cognitive energy a person expends when manipulating and thinking about a word, the more likely it is that they will be able to recall and use it later” (p.3). In other words, assignments such as the ones described in Figure 2 and Figure 3 above would provide informed input which could only lead to effective learning of target forms.¹¹ Another line of research related to Action-Based Language learning highlights the importance of dynamic animations in language learning in general and verbs in particular (Hald, Hurk, and

¹¹ See also Huang (2012) and Carmen Barrera Cobos (2010) for examples of effective EFL learning through such medium.

Bekkering, 2015). The claim being made here is that short of such vocabulary training, explicit and systematic, second and foreign language learners would encounter vocabulary learning difficulties which may be with them for long periods. In this case, students attending an American university in the Middle East whereby all subjects are taught in English, by the time they graduate, a number of vocabulary words, especially common verbs, have not been mastered. In sum, while being exposed to the English language during a course of university studies with assignments ranging from reading textbooks and writing reports and term papers, a second/foreign language learner would still face vocabulary challenges as they graduate from one of the well known universities in the Middle East, that is the American University of Sharjah¹². Such result calls for a serious revisiting of current teaching and learning pedagogies to ensure much more effective language learning.

7. CONCLUSION

While myriad studies have addressed issues of vocabulary learning at elementary, secondary, and tertiary stages of education, rare are the studies which examined such learning after college graduation. This study is probably amongst the few that examined students' English writings after they gain their college degrees. It is quite clear that ESL/EFL students fall short of having developed a highly proficient level of language that is articulate and error-free. By examining the various ways students used the verb '*recommend*' in their writings, it becomes quite obvious that vocabulary mastering remains an obstacle for at least one out of four graduates. If language is incidentally learned by being exposed to such a great input all along the four to five years of college, one would not find issues with the use of a common verb such as '*recommend*'. Such findings invites teachers to revisit a number of language learning strategies and pedagogies. Thus, the paper suggests a number of visual-based and computer-based methodologies to assist with effective vocabulary teaching and learning.

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¹² The American University of Sharjah (AUS) is located in the United Arab Emirates. It is founded in 1997, and has been enjoying excellent reputation across the MENA region.

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