

EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF NARROW READING ON VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT AMONG EFL LEARNERS IN BASTAK TOWN

***Abdollah Ahmadi¹ and Ali Poordaryaie Nejad²**

¹*Department of English Language Teaching, Bandar Abbas Branch, Islamic Azad University, Iran*

²*Hormozgan University, Bandar Abbas, Iran*

**Author for Correspondence*

ABSTRACT

Vocabulary has been of primary importance in recent EFL studies, because it is an important factor in second language proficiency. After becoming proficient in pronunciation and grammar, a student needs more time to work on his vocabulary, so that he/she becomes proficient in vocabulary. In spite of great satisfaction with and the importance of this field, there are still some important questions about second language vocabulary acquisition which need to be answered. Since these questions are not answered yet, the field of vocabulary remains somehow limited. One of the most important unanswered questions is what the effect of narrow reading (a kind of narrow input) is on vocabulary development. In this thesis, we investigate the effect of this kind of reading input in two levels: topic- limited lexical development and author- limited lexical development. Seventy five below- intermediate students were divided into three groups of equal number of students. Two classes were selected randomly as the experimental group. We gave a pre- test on the first category of vocabulary. After a week, the treatment for the experimental group started. A week after the end of the treatment, a post test was given to all three classes. The results show that author- limited narrow reading was more helpful than topic-limited narrow reading and non- narrow reading. ANOVA and post hoc comparisons between the three groups showed a great difference among the groups. The comparisons showed that those who studied using author-limited narrow reading, developed their knowledge of vocabulary more than the participants of the control group.

Keyword: *EFL Studies, Second Language Proficiency, Acquisition, Narrow Reading*

INTRODUCTION

Overview

The concept of language learning has been always the subject of study and research. These studies had certain contribution to the field. As Laufer (1997) states, vocabulary is the center of language learning and use. People are not able to convey meaning and communicate in a particular language.

From 1940 to 1970, vocabulary was not important in teacher- training programs. Allen (1983) says it was because of three important reasons. The first reason was that it was believed one have to know how words go together, so the emphasis on grammar was more than the emphasis on vocabulary. The second reason is that some scholars believed the meaning of the words cannot be taught completely. So, we should avoid teaching vocabulary. The third reason is that some scientists say if students are exposed to a lot of vocabulary, they may make mistakes in producing sentences. But, experienced teachers know that even if students are very good at grammar, they still need to know new words when they study.

Recently, in teacher training programs, the techniques for teaching words are of high importance. Studies reveal the learners who learned strategies, can learn vocabulary independently (Baumann *et al.*, 2002).research show that teaching skills related to morphology, context and dictionary are important for learning vocabulary in a strategic way (Baumann *et al.*, 2003; Nagy & Scott, 2002; Graves & Watts-Taffe, 2002).

One way to develop the knowledge of words in EFL learners is reading. Reading is a receptive skill. It seems that the knowledge of vocabulary can be developed and boosted by using receptive skills (using listening and reading), rather than by using productive skills (by practicing speaking and writing). It is clear that after acquiring the receptive skills, vocabulary may be transferred to other areas, like the

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productive area. The receptive and productive mastery of vocabulary are the two ends of the same continuum (Gass and Selinker, 2001).

Regarding the mentioned studies, the purpose of this study is the effect of narrow reading on vocabulary development in second language learners (Krashen, 2004). The experience in teaching suggests that reading has a significant role in teaching vocabulary, since reading can provide the intermediate students with the opportunity to see non- frequent, peripheral vocabulary. The students have been previously exposed to the frequent vocabulary; they can now add new non-frequent vocabulary to their lexicon, by reading deeply. Since the reading passages use sets of words that go together in certain contexts, the EFL learners can improve their competency in vocabulary. Krashen (1985) first introduced narrow reading in order to achieve this aim. Narrow reading is a sort of reading which is limited to a single topic or the vocabulary used by a single writer. He (1996) said that narrow reading (narrow input) is more fruitful for second language acquisition. So, comprehending the text after reading the first few pages is easier for the students who read on a single subject, or read the works of a single author (Yang, 2001). The student who reads using focused or narrow reading, faces various contexts and sees frequent words related to that topic (Cho & Krashen, 1994; Krashen, 1981; Schmitt & Carter, 2000).

In non- narrow reading – unlike narrow reading – a lot of different topics and writers are introduced to the students. The input given to students is so broad and it is not that efficient. The narrow reading exposes the student to new words repeatedly. So, it helps the development of vocabulary in many ways: first, every writer has some special choice of words and his own discourse. Therefore, it needs a lot of built- in reviews. Second, based on the schema theory, background knowledge improves and helps understanding the text. The narrower the reading, the easier reading and learning in future will be. In addition, different short passages give students frustrating experiences (Krashen, 2004).

Narrow reading is also very motivating. A subject in which the student is interested, encourages him/her to read in order to find the meaning. It is not like an exercise of decoding the passage (Devine and Eskey, 1988). Unlike narrow reading, non- narrow reading provides the student with new words and unfamiliar styles in a context- limited way.

Other studies show that the effect of narrow reading is more than non- narrow reading (Lamme 1976; DEcarrico, 2001). Lamme (1976) says that good L1 readers of English like to read books written by the same writer or books of a series. He found out that reading deeply exposes students to a large amount of syntax and vocabulary.

Therefore, it internalizes the students' knowledge of words and syntax. It improves the students' skill in comprehending the context.

The narrow input in listening was studied a lot during the 1990s. The findings about the influence of input on listening were encouraging (Krashen, 1996; Dupuy, 1999). All of those studies showed that narrow listening input has a good effect. They showed that narrow input made EFL students' listening comprehension easier, because the context was repeated and familiar to them. The same happens in narrow reading.

The narrow input in the narrow reading makes the reading comprehension easier (Cho & Krashen, 1994, 1995). Schmitt & Carter (2002) say, in addition to make reading comprehension easier, the narrow reading makes reading comprehension faster.

According to the previous studies on the relationship between the development in the knowledge of vocabulary and narrow reading, we can conclude that input is a critical source of expanding the students' vocabulary store. One effective input is narrow reading, which can help the students to expand their knowledge of words.

Statement of the Problem and Purpose of the Study

EFL students had always been challenged to comprehend a text because their reading ability was poor. This is one of the educational shortcomings of the reading skill. Therefore, the students could not improve and expand their knowledge of l2 vocabulary.

So, this study is based on the idea that the students can improve and develop their knowledge of vocabulary and comprehension by narrow reading – a comprehensible input (Krashen, 1996).

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A passage is a context for words. When a reader reads on a topic or a writer- limited text, certain words are read repeatedly by the students. Therefore, the narrow input, that repeatedly gives the students the chance of more exposure to many different written input on the same topic or by the same writer, makes the reading skill and comprehension easier (Nation, 1990).

There are no easy or quick solutions for optimizing reading achievement to develop the students' vocabulary in L2.

This thesis is trying to find the problematic area in order to help Iranian EFL students to develop their knowledge of vocabulary and solve many of their problems in reading and vocabulary. The purpose of this thesis is to find out if narrow reading (which is a sort of narrow input that has two levels of topic-limited and author- limited) enhance their L2 knowledge and storage of vocabulary.

Significance and Justification of the Study

Recently, the interest in L2 vocabulary acquisition has enhanced. A summary of the research findings that attempted to show many myths which banned the role of vocabulary in the curricula of foreign language throughout the years, were not true, is given in the book "Vocabulary Myths" (Folse, 2004). Consequently, research related to vocabulary is no longer ignored. For this reason, now vocabulary is a great subdivision of applied linguistics. A lot of books and articles are produced in this realm. However, despite the great satisfaction with the maturity and acceptance of the field of vocabulary, some important questions are not answered yet. Also, the influence of research related to vocabulary on the vocabulary pedagogy was limited (Singleton, 1999), may be because these simple questions have not yet been answered.

One important question which is not answered yet is that if L2 narrow reading can expand L2 mental dictionary. Nowadays, many students try to learn to read so that they expand their word store in any language. Many teachers have seen that problems in reading have big long lasting consequences for students' developing vocabulary and passage comprehension. Vocabulary is one of the most important parts of the language. So it is important to provide the students with beneficial courses in reading for EFL students and to find out the problems in planning for the reading and vocabulary courses.

Research Questions

In this study we try to ask these questions:

Question 1: Does topic- limited narrow reading have a positive influence on the development of vocabulary in lower intermediate EFL students?

Question 2: Does author- limited narrow reading have a positive influence on the development of vocabulary in lower intermediate EFL students?

Question 3: Does non- narrow reading have a positive influence on the development of vocabulary in lower intermediate EFL students?

Hypotheses

Based on these research questions, the following null- hypotheses are generated:

Null hypothesis 1: The topic- limited narrow reading does not have an influence on the development of vocabulary in lower intermediate EFL students.

Null hypothesis 2: The author- limited narrow reading does not have an influence on the development of vocabulary in lower intermediate EFL students.

Question 3: The non- narrow reading does not have an influence on the development of vocabulary in lower intermediate EFL students.

Delimitations of the Study

This study, like any other one had some restrictions, as what follows:

1. The number of the passages for each group was limited. Each group has eight texts to read.
2. Based on the number of words (each text was 250 words) in each passage, the time of instruction was short (20 minutes for each passage).
3. The participants were male.
4. Iranian pre- intermediate EFL students participated in this study; therefore one should be careful about generalizing the findings of this research to the students with other levels of proficiency.

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Definition of Key Terms

1) *Lexical Item*: a lexical item or a lexeme is an item which function is as a meaningful unit, without considering the number or the way it is written: “take off”, “well enriched”, and “pull your socks up” are examples of lexical items (Schmitt & McCarthy, 1997).

2) *Narrow Reading*: narrow reading is reading just in one genre, one topic or one writer. The narrow reading was first introduced more than twenty years ago (Krashen, 1981). It is said that the advantage of narrow reading is to expose the readers to familiar contexts and background knowledge which enhances the text comprehensibility. Below advanced students, most of the time have problems and are confused and they cannot adjust to new characters and settings in fiction. Narrow reading helps them to avoid these problems. It also helps them to use their background knowledge in reading the non-fiction in which they are interested.

3) *Lexical Knowledge*: it refers to the number of lexical items a person has stored in his/her mind.

4) *Input*: the language information that one gets when he or she listens to something or reads something.

5) *Narrow Input*: the concept of narrow input first emerged with narrow reading (Krashen, 1981), the narrow reading says language learners keep reading the works written by one writer or in one genre, and then gradually branch out. Findings that show that those whose L1 are English and are the best readers can read more series books, support this idea (Lamme, 1976).

Review of Literature

Overview

Because of the pedagogic dominance of structuralism, vocabulary acquisition has been neglected for a long time in L2 pedagogy. However, after the emergence of communicative approach, the knowledge of vocabulary has become very important for EFL and ESL learners with different learning needs (Groot, 2000). This need started a great revolution in EFL/ESL research related to vocabulary in a way that this matter became one of the most admirable and respectful part of Applied Linguistics (Kamil & Hiebert, 2005; Stahl & Nagy, 2006; Johnson & Schlichting, 2004).

Therefore, since meaningful interactive language activities mostly depend on vocabulary, the role of vocabulary in language classrooms has become important. It is clear that enough knowledge of grammar and pronunciation does not compensate for the inadequacy of the amount of word storage and knowledge of vocabulary.

Decarrico (2001) also says that all research in the SLA agree that vocabulary has an important role in L2 or foreign language acquisition. They all also reject the simplistic and outdated idea that the words of a language should be seen as a group of basic irregularities and vocabulary acquisition is a disorganized process of learning not related elements.

What is Vocabulary?

Before answering the question “what is vocabulary?”, we should define two primary concepts of “word” and “vocabulary”, because up to now the research findings show that vocabulary is not equal to single words. Carter (1987) says a word is an orthographic or phonological thread of letters which are separated by spaces before and after it, from other written or spoken discourse. But, this definition does not show practically if different forms of a word are considered separate words.

Then, Carter & McCarthy (1988) tried to define word morphologically. They said meaningful language pieces can consist of free standing words. In this definition, inflectional suffixes are not recognized lexical. For example, the word GOING comprises of two parts: GO and ING. It is clear that GO is meaningful and ING (an inflectional suffix) is not meaningful. These authors say since the first part is meaningful separately, just the first part can be considered a free standing word.

On the other hand, linguists use “lexeme” instead of “words” to define vocabulary. A lexeme is defined as the basic unit of vocabulary in each language. A lexeme is the underlying abstraction that includes different variants or inflections of a word. Schmitt (2000) argues that the first thing which comes to mind about the term vocabulary is the word. But this term doesn’t include all implications of vocabulary.

Therefore, the definition of lexeme or lexical items could be ‘items that have one meaning as a whole’. However, sometimes many items could imply one meaning. So, since units consisting of many words

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work as one unit of word and they are processed and classified as one independent mental lexicon, the idioms and formulaic expressions can be considered lexemes.

A lexical item or a lexeme is defined as a single unit of meaning without considering the number and orthographical words it has. For example, the words “well enriched”, “pull your socks up” and “take off” all are considered as lexical items (Schmitt & McCarthy, 1997).

So, since units consisting of many words work as one unit of words and they are processed and classified as one independent mental lexicon the idioms and formulaic expressions can be considered lexemes.

The research related to the frequency of English words reveal that language learners don't have the chance to learn the most frequent words which are considered necessary for productive and receptive language uses (Nation, 1990). It is suggested by McCarthy that most frequent vocabularies are educationally useful for EFL students and they should be learnt primarily.

Core vocabularies are defined by Carter (1987) as the frequent vocabularies in a language. He also suggests that probably many kinds of core vocabularies exist based on the conditions of communication. McCarthy (1990) says core vocabularies are the most central vocabularies in a language. The students can use the core vocabularies to survive in any language situations.

Frequent Vs. Non-Frequent Vocabulary

Comparing vocabulary learning in the first and second language showed that the frequency of the words is an important factor in second or foreign language acquisition. The researches about frequency of the words have revealed that SL students do not have the chance to learn highly frequent vocabularies that are necessary for using the language productively and receptively (Nation, 1990).

Consequently, many word list books which contain lexically frequent words are made with educational aims (Nation, 1990). Other evaluative researches show that if students want to show their intention in communication, they mostly need the highly frequent words.

So, it is suggested by McCarthy (1990) that frequent words are educationally useful for EFL learning and they should be learnt initially. Also, it is suggested by Nation & Waring that the words should be relevant and influential for designing syllabus, because if it is so, the teachers and syllabus designers are able to realize the learners' needs. This is a significant criterion in designing a curriculum.

But, English teachers should not rely blindly on the number of words (which is related to frequency), because the frequencies provide variant results according to the corpus quality and size (McCarthy, 1990). Let us look at this from a different point of view: it may happen that the particular corpus provides a limited context of one or two passages for a word which is very frequent. So, these kinds of words may have a limited application and they are not as influential as the words which have a wide application.

Furthermore, since some words are highly frequent and necessary for particular contexts, they cannot often be paraphrased or substituted with other words. Also, Groot (2000) thinks that frequency word counts are not always helpful for pedagogical purposes in EFL learning; because selecting them poses certain arbitrariness in considering what must be included in or excluded from a particular passage.

Core Vs. Non-Core Vocabulary

The concept of Core vocabulary is based on the fact that competent speakers of a language are able to simplify their sentences when they communicate with the speakers of other languages (for example foreign people). Therefore, the core vocabulary is defined by Carter (1988) as the frequent words of a language. He also declares that there may be many types of core vocabularies based on the conditions in which the communication takes place. For example, a student greets his friend in a way which is different from the way he greets his professor.

Like this, the core vocabularies are also the core and central vocabularies in a language. The language learners can use the core vocabulary for survival in any language conditions (McCarthy, 1990). Because of this, the idea of core vocabulary is considered in deciding how many words EFL learner should learn in unnatural language learning situations, so that they can perform many language tasks.

On the contrary, non-core vocabularies are not as frequent as core vocabularies. But, they may be necessary in some particular conditions. It means that though they are not used in many situations, they may be necessary in particular conditions in a way that we are able to paraphrase or substitute them with

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other words. For instance, we cannot substitute any word for “biology”. Furthermore, these words’ number of occurrence is less. It means that their occurrence depends on the topic of the text. Non-core vocabularies are frequent and have a wide range of application, if we consider the range, genre and texts. In other words, the core vocabularies are not used only in one discipline, they appear in different disciplines (Nation and Waring, 1997). For instance, the word “hemisphere” is used in three disciplines of geography, medicine and geometry. But it has different meanings in each discipline.

English Vocabulary Size

How many words does English language have? Finding a certain response to this question is not possible. However, the simplest and the easiest answer is to find the size and number of words in the largest dictionary that we have. Many writers have estimated the number of English vocabularies as something between 500000 to more than 200 million. Considering the number of new vocabularies, borrowed, scientific and technical buzzwords, the number of words is different in various dictionaries. But the common words are near 200000 (Schmitt, 2000).

Also, two researches (Dupuy, 1974; Goulden *et al.*, 1990) studied the number of words in Webster’s third international Dictionary (1963), which is the biggest non- historical English published up to now. They realized that except archaic and compound words, abbreviations, proper nouns, alternative spellings and dialectal forms, the number of word families in dictionaries is almost 54000 words. A word family is defined as having a base word, its inflected forms and some reasonably regular derived forms (Bauer and Nation, 1993).

English Native Speaker's Vocabulary Size

For more than a century, some reports have been published about the systematic attempts for measuring the number of vocabulary the native speakers of English use. The question behind most of these studies is that how many words non native learners of a language should learn. It is because EFL teachers are interested in measuring the number of vocabulary used by native speakers. If they know the number of words used by native speakers, they can choose suitable learning tasks for ESL learners.

The findings of the studies about the number of vocabulary gave a estimation between 2500 to 2600 words for usual first graders and a estimation between 19000 to 20000 word families for those who graduated from universities (Beck and McKeown, 1991; Stahl, 1999; Nation, 2001). But those figures are not exact, because it is possible that individuals are very different from each other (Nation and Waring, 1997).

So, it should be expected from native speakers of English to add almost 1000 word families to their mental lexicon each year. It means a kid who is one year old, may know near 300 words, and a university graduates’ mental lexicon includes almost 20000 word families (Goulden *et al.*, 1990; Danna *et al.*, 1991).

The issue of vocabulary growth (the size of vocabulary students learn each year) is also relevant to vocabulary size. It is not strange that methodological problems that caused troubles in estimating the vocabulary size have also caused some problems in estimating the lexical growth. So, the lexical growth has been estimated from as little as 1000 words to as many as 7300 new words during a year (Beck & McKeown, 1991).

But when definitions of knowledge of vocabulary were refined more, the estimates of growth became consistent, too. Therefore, three research reviews related to vocabulary, that are cited many times, show that native students learn near 3000 new words each year (Graves, 1986; Baumann & Kameenui, 1991; Beck & McKeown, 1991).

Based on that, those students who learn 3000 words each year, have to learn almost eight words every day. Perhaps this unbelievable growth is because of the neurological framework that helps native language learners work as spontaneous apprentices in the language business. They learn 8 new words each day with an extraordinary speed.

Non-Native Speakers’ English Vocabulary Size

It is clear that it is not possible for a non- native EFL student to master all English vocabularies (or any other language vocabularies). Because, even native speakers cannot reach this point (Schmitt, 2000).

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However, how many words should a nonnative language learner know at least? Most probably, the minimum number of the words they should know is near 3000 most frequent words of English (those words which learning is very important). It is not reasonable to focus on learning other words before students first learn those frequent words. Therefore, the enough lexicons students should know is between 3000 to 5000 at least (Nation, 1993; Laufer, 1997).

Laufer (1997) says when good L1 students learnt about 3000 word families or near 5000 lexical items, we can expect them to transfer their strategies for learning L1 vocabulary to L2 learning. Before learning this size of vocabulary, they are not able to transfer the knowledge of L1 vocabulary. So, EFL learners should be provided with a great spate of the high frequency start-up words. If they are not equipped with the elementary words, the gap between non- native learners and native learners will be widened and it will even worsen at higher levels.

In addition, different language learners should learn different number of words according to their level and the language activity they need. For instance, for a tourist who wants to go abroad, the number of vocabularies used in a short- phrase book is enough. Furthermore, SL learner should know minimum 2000 word in order to express themselves in L2, and to use language in an effective way in speaking or writing (Nation, 1990). But, this number of vocabulary is not enough for primary proficiency in a language. Hazenberg and Hulstijin (1996) think that an EFL student should know about 10000 word families, so that he/she is able to succeed in dealing with more problematic conditions. Also, if the students want to be native like, they must learn between 15000 to 20000 word families (Nation & Waring, 1997).

However, it is not possible for a nonnative speaker who is learning a language in an EFL situation (i.e. language classes) to learn this number of vocabulary, because they don't expose enough to less frequent words and also because there is an initial gap caused because of not receiving enough EFL input (Schmitt, 2000). However, many L2 learners learn a number of vocabularies which is near to the number of words that educated native speakers know. But they are not the norm, because most of the nonnative learners of language are not exposed frequently to the less frequent words as much as they should be.

Where Is Vocabulary Stored?

It seems that many scholars agree that first and second language lexical items at the word level are saved in the lexicon. It means that both single and multiple lexical items are saved in the lexicon (Cook, 1996; Ellis, 1997; Schmitt & McCarthy 1997; Zimmerman, 1997; Schmitt, 2000). A lexical item or a lexeme is defined as an item which function is as a meaningful unit, without considering the number or the ways it is written (Schmitt & McCarthy 1997, Schmitt 2000).

We should also find answers for this question "how first and second language lexicon are connected?" Cook (1986) says that there are a lot of evidence that show the first and second language lexicon are at least closely connected if not one great store. Therefore, learning a foreign language is not a matter of making a new separate lexicon. But it is adding items to the same lexical or functional store beside the existing items. Therefore, learning second language vocabulary is not creating another separate lexicon. It is adding new items to the formerly established first language lexicon.

What Is Word Knowledge?

Nation (1990) says knowledge of a word means knowing its spoken and written forms, grammatical patterns, collocations, registers, connotations, and its semantic, pragmatic, sociolinguistic, and morphological properties.

Henrickson (1999) distinguishes three types of knowledge of a word: partial / precise knowledge, depth knowledge about the word, and receptive / productive dimension. The first type of lexical development is incremental mapping of different properties onto an item facilitated by factors like modified input, focus on the form instruction, noticing, selecting forms, background knowledge and inferring meaning from the context, depth of processing, and output processing techniques.

The second type is deep knowledge of the word. It is a part of the students' lexical knowledge organization by creating the intentional links and sense relations between lexemes; we can achieve this type of knowledge of a word. The receptive / productive type of knowledge is in concordance with the

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assumptions of the scholars about lexical knowledge. They say lexical knowledge is a continuum which starts with the ability to recognize a lexical item's meaning and with the ability to use the lexical item in a productive way.

Therefore, we conclude that we cannot acquire or learn all English lexicons and the entire knowledge of words at once. The process of learning or acquiring a language is incremental, because students have various amount of previous knowledge of the second language lexicons (Gass & Selinker, 2001). It means that the students whose vocabulary size is great and have a well enriched background knowledge of the words are able to learn more concepts and increase their knowledge of vocabulary more than the students whose vocabulary store is not great. It is because knowledge of vocabulary enhances itself, and word knowledge increases the knowledge of vocabulary (Nation, 1993).

Implicit Vs. Explicit Vocabulary Learning

If the vocabulary learning is incidental and without paying attention, it is called the implicit vocabulary. The 1970 and 1980 decades were the beginning of basing vocabulary learning on the communicative approach. The communicative approach's focus was on implicit learning. Decarrico (2001) says research related to vocabulary reveal that most of the vocabularies we know are those that are not taught explicitly. Therefore, we should teach vocabulary implicitly. In naturalistic situations for learning language, enough time and exposure results in the implicit and informal acquisition of vocabulary.

On the contrary, in foreign language classes it doesn't happen. Therefore, in foreign classes the teachers should teach most frequent second language vocabulary explicitly at the basic levels (Decarrico, 2001). When an EL learner learnt explicitly and practiced 2000 – 3000 most frequent word families (which are the threshold), many less frequent word families can be learnt implicitly in the context. Intermediate students were encouraged by her to read narrowly in order to have many exposures to the language. Narrow reading means reading a lot of passages about one single topic or written by the same writer. Implicit vocabulary learning through reading, helps students to learn vocabulary, learn how to use the words in the context, accelerate their speed of reading, guess intelligently, and holistically approach reading (Yang, 2001).

On the contrary, the students do well planned activities and the needed vocabulary are directly taught in explicit vocabulary learning. The teachers consider many principles in choosing the material they want to teach and choosing how they will do things like: teaching much frequent vocabularies and word families (not separate words) in order to enhance vocabulary learning, make a great recognition lexicon, integrate new words and old words, provide some encounters with a word, promote a deep level of proficiency, make imaging easier and faster, using many different techniques, and encouraging students to have independent strategies of learning. Also, it is suggested by Schmitt & Zimmerman (2002) that it is better to teach some certain word elements explicitly through introducing a new word and its derivatives, focusing on affixes, adjectives and adverbs when necessary.

But, research about learning vocabulary show that a mixture of implicit and explicit vocabulary teaching and learning can help very much in overall development of second language vocabulary (Zimmerman, 1994; Parry, 1997). Both explicit and implicit vocabulary learning is essential. They have to be considered complimentary (Schmitt, 200), if the students are expected to develop their mental vocabulary successfully. Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) believe that the perceptual parts of a new word (for instance, phonetic and phonological properties) are learnt implicitly and semantic parts are learnt explicitly.

Language Learning Strategies

Definition of Learning Strategies

If we want to understand learning strategies, at first we should define the primary term "strategy". Oxford (1990) says this word comes from the ancient Greek word "strategia" which means generalship or the art of war. If we want to define it more specifically, it is the best management of troops, ships, or aircrafts in a planned campaign.

The concept of strategy is very effective in education. Its meaning has changed in the field of education and its technical term in this field is "learning strategies". Bialystok (1985) says some assumptions underlie the definition of "learning strategies". The first assumption is a reflection of the usual processes

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of learning, which happen if the students pay attention to and intentionally manipulate the material. The second assumption is that the processes of learning can be controlled consciously and intentionally. The change in control is very great and important. Learning strategies are defined by Bialystok (1985) like this:

Learning strategies are the activities that learners do, either consciously or unconsciously. This activity improves the student's ability to examine the knowledge of linguistics which is related to the language studied, or for promoting control of the procedure of choosing and using the knowledge in a certain conditions related to the context (Bialystok, 1985).

Learning strategies are defined by Weinstein and Mayer (1986) as behaviors and thoughts that the student has when he/she is learning, the thoughts and behaviors that have an effect on the process of encoding (p.315). So, in order to influence the student's motivation or affection, or his/her procedure of choosing, acquiring, arranging, or combining the new knowledge, certain learning strategies should be used (Chastain, 1988, p.146). If we want to speak more clearly, learning strategies are considered as what students do in order to improve acquisition, storage, and using information; certain actions the student does in order to make learning easier, faster, more pleasant, self- directed, influential, and transferable to new conditions (Oxford, 1990, p.8).

Learning strategies are defined by O'Malley & Chamot (1990) as particular ways of processing information which improve understanding the text and learning or retaining information. Brown (1994) defines strategies as "certain ways for starting to deal with a problem or activity, particular ways of doing things to reach a certain goal and thought over designs to control and manipulate particular information". The strategies are like fight plans which are related to the context and are different depending on the time and situation.

Strategies are defined by Nunan (1999) as mental and communicative procedures used by the students to learn and use language at least one strategy underlies each learning activity.

The last definition for strategies is "the second language student's tool for active, conscious, purposeful and attentive learning. They cause greater proficiency, and facilitate learner autonomy and self- regulation (Hsiao and Oxford, 2002).

Importance of Learning Strategies

Strategies are important because of two significant reasons. The first reason is that, strategies are tools which are used to involve students actively and in a self-directed way. They are necessary for boosting communicative competence. The second reason is that students with suitable learning strategies are more self- confident and learn better. She considers twelve important features for strategies. Based on what Oxford says, language learning strategies:

- Help communicative competence (the main aim)
- Make students more self-directed
- Expand the role of the teachers
- Are Concerned with problems
- Are particular actions students do
- Are part of a lot actions the students take, not only the cognitive actions
- Support learning directly and indirectly
- Are not observable all the time
- Are conscious most of the time
- Are teachable
- Are flexible
- Are affected by many causes (Oxford, 1990)

Furthermore, according to Lessard- Clouston (1997), the teachers who teach learners to use language learning strategies can help learners to be a better language learner. A good language teacher can make it easier for students to understand good language learning strategies, and can teach students to develop and use them.

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According to Nunan (1999) knowledge of strategies is important, since if one is more aware of what he/she are doing and if he/she is more conscious about the process which underlies learning, it becomes more influential.

Classification of Learning Strategies

Like strategies which had different definitions, categorizing those strategies also has various ways.

Rubin (1987) introduced a classification plan. In this classification, learning strategies include two main groups and some subgroups. The main group includes the strategies that have a direct influence on learning.

The first main group includes: clarification/ verification, monitoring, memorization guessing, inductive reasoning and practice. The second main category includes strategies which indirectly lead to learning. This category includes designing chances for practice and using production trucks like communication strategies.

Naiman *et al.*, (1978) introduced another classification plan which includes five primary groups of learning strategies and some secondary strategies. It has been found out that all good students who were interviewed used the main strategies. However, some of them used secondary strategies. The main classification consists of active task approach, understanding language as a tool for communication and interaction, managing influential needs, and monitoring performance in L2.

Using 24 strategies by ESL students in the U.S were studied by O'Malley and Chamot (O'Malley *et al.*, 1985a, b). They categorize strategies as three groups of metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective strategies.

The strategies are categorized in two main groups of direct and indirect strategies by Oxford (1990). Memory, cognitive and compensation strategies are the direct strategies. You should be involved directly with the language. Memory strategies include putting new vocabularies in context, using key words, semantic maps, representing the sound in memory. They help learners save new information and bring them back. Cognitive strategies include summarizing passages, translating, taking notes, etc. They help learners to understand the language better and produce it better in various ways. Compensation strategies are strategies like guessing new words through linguistic clues, inventing words and using synonyms. They help students to use the language, though there may be some big gaps in their knowledge (Oxford, 1990).

Indirect strategies are metacognitive, affective and social strategies. They make the learning process easier to happen and organize it without directly involving the second language. For example, metacognitive strategies (like over viewing and connecting the new material to previously known ones, recognizing the aim of a language activity, self- monitoring/ evaluating) help directly in the acquisition of knowledge with purposes like centering, arranging, planning and evaluation (Oxford, 1990). Affective strategies are strategies like using relaxation skills, behaving positively and taking risks widely. They are important in controlling emotional behaviors and motivation. Social strategies include asking for clarification, peer- correction and group work. They lead to a better interaction between participants.

Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Researchers and teachers have been usually eager to find out how students learn words. If they know more learner strategies, and are aware that what strategy is useful and what strategy is not, they can make it easier for students to use better strategies. Oxford and Scarcella (1994) say:

vocabulary learning strategies makes students independent of the teacher. It is a good instrument and can be used in and out of the classroom. Guided practice of these strategies motivates the learners to use strategies and the students will gain the skill to use them in an influential way (p. 236).

Tasks related to vocabulary acquisition (strategies) are categorized by Oxford and Scarcella (1994) in three groups of decontextualized, partially contextualized and fully contextualized strategies. Some explanations about each of them follows:

Decontextualized Strategies/Activities

Oxford and Scarcella (1994) say in these kinds of strategies, the words are deleted from the context they were in, and they are put in places which don't have a communication value. According to Lewis (1997)

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decontextualized vocabulary learning is a reasonable strategy that language learners can use. Making word lists and flashcard, and using dictionary are the activities which are considered as decontextualized strategies.

Word Lists

Most of the time the learners make word lists. Sonaiya (1991) says language teachers always suggest making word lists. Making word list for vocabulary acquisition is common among EFL learners. Usually they are answers to the vocabulary part of the exams. They are usually the first language equivalent for the second language word.

Flashcards

Many students like this activity for learning vocabulary. Oxford and Crookall (1990) say they are like a glorified list of second language to first language equivalents, which are divided to units.

Dictionary Use

This activity is used by second language students when reading a passage. According to Hunt and Beglar (1999) this activity has immediate advantages, so it should start soon in the curriculum. (p.1)

Partially Contextualized Strategies

Oxford and Scarcella (1994) say these strategies are the essence of the intentional or planned vocabulary learning or teaching. New research based approaches to teaching vocabulary, led into the emergence of these strategies. In these strategies, the context facilitates retaining the meaning of vocabulary for a longer time. It can be inferred from this categorization that many of these strategies (for example, word grouping, word association, visual imagery, key word, physical response, etc.) are memory strategies which are called mnemonics.

Fully Contextualized Strategies

These strategies usually involve incidental vocabulary learning. According to Oxford and Scarcella (1994) incidental learning happens when students practice four language skills: reading (stories, magazine,...), listening (to the radio, or TV), speaking (participating in the dialogues), and writing (writing messages for communication in real life conditions). In addition, though not included in Oxford and Scarcella's (1994) categorization of vocabulary learning activities, guessing from the context can be included in this category.

Incidental Learning

Perhaps in future, many L1 and L2 vocabularies are learnt incidentally, by reading and listening extensively (Nagy, Herman, and Anderson, 1985, cited in Hunt and Beglar, 1999). The incidental vocabulary learning may explain the reason of advanced vocabulary learning. They also say second language students may need a lot of exposure to a word (in context) before realizing the meaning of that word (p.4)

Guessing From Context

Guessing the meaning of a word from the context is a very challenging and hard activity. If the students want to guess from the context correctly, they should know near ninety five percent of the words in the passage (near nineteen out of twenty words). In order to do this, the student should know the three thousand most common vocabularies (Liu and Nation, 1985; Nation, 1990). According to Kelly (1990, cited in Hunt and Beglar, 1999) in guessing from the context, the student learns very little, since he doesn't focus directly on the form and meaning of the word.

Hulstijn (1997) says there is no guarantee that the student retains the connection of the form and meaning of a word in guessing from the context. Just sometimes this connection remains and there is no need for the student to try consciously to remember the word. He declares that most of the time, students should learn words intentionally, so that they can retain them. So, the teacher should encourage the students to use mnemonic strategies. This activity helps them to connect the form and meaning of the words in their mind (Hulstijn, 1997).

Vocabulary & Reading

A lot of teachers of English as a foreign language who teach reading comprehension say the first challenge for the students who read an unfamiliar passage is vocabulary (Grebe & Stoller, 2002).

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Hazenbergh and Hulstijn (1996) have found out that the learners should know minimum 1000 words so that they can read the first year university material.

According to Decarrico (2001) most frequent words which include 2000 to 3000 word families should be learnt explicitly at the elementary level in second language learning. Just when the beginner student have learnt most frequent words explicitly and practiced them, less frequent word families can be learn implicitly in advanced levels. She also believes that many exposures to certain language contexts would make incidental and intentional vocabulary learning activities easier. Reading is difficult for some EFL students.

Those who have problems especially in reading explanatory passages, have problems in reading to learn from the context too, because they don't have the effective and enough exposure to the printed resources. According to Coady (1997) a language learner should be at least exposed to a new word 10 to 12 times, so that he /she can begin learning and using new words and in order to attach short term stored items to the long term memory.

The Role of Reading Materials

In a pilot study about finding an appropriate tool to measure vocabulary, Horst (2005) reported that a amount of vocabulary gain which was more than their amount in researches done before. Twenty one students of English as a second language participated in a six- week extensive reading course at a community center in Montreal. Each student read two simplified and leveled readers (in average) which were chosen by themselves. The overall mean was found out by Horst as 16.88 words.

One of the things that underlies the relationship between vocabulary learning and reading skill are the printed words. According to Stavonich *et al.*, (1996) much of the knowledge of vocabulary is saved in the printed materials (both paper and electronic prints). This knowledge can be brought back to the mind by reading. So, reading is not just a long- lasting, influential, and strong tool for reaching information. It is also a tool for making, changing, and consolidating the structure of declarative and procedural knowledge (for example, general previous knowledge, knowledge about a certain area, language knowledge, and knowledge gained through reading various genres). For this reason, the role that textbooks play in the context of vocabulary learning showed the significance of the reading skill. With no doubt, just by reading, a person is able to reach a huge number of words independently. So, the passages are great sources of formal knowledge, and include less frequent words that do not appear always in usual dialogic discourse. Therefore, it is necessary for learners to read and understand them and gradually increase the knowledge of new words and combine it with coherent schemata of different subjects.

But, Those EFL students who have problems especially in reading explanatory passages, have some problems in reading in order to learn from the context, too, because they don't have effective and enough exposure to the printed resources. Current studies about incidental learning reveal that since incidental learning is connected to the short- term memory, EFL students are able to process incidentally learnt vocabularies for a short time (Stahl, 1999; Read, 2000; Grabe & Stoller, 2002). According to Read (2000) incidental vocabulary learning does not show if the student has retained vocabulary in his mental dictionary or they will remember them when they are exposed to them for the second time in future. In the following part, vocabulary and two various but complimentary approaches to reading will be analyzed.

Narrow-Input Vs. Wide-Input Reading

Krashen (2004) says many classes of English as a foreign language and English as a second language give students a lot of topics and works. The logic behind this is that encountering various subjects, genres, and styles make language learning easier, because great input reading materials include a lot of new words and unfamiliar styles. They are not comprehensible and interesting. So, they are a kind of decoding practice.

According to Krashen (2004) mere exposure is not important, but exposure to comprehensible input is of importance.

He says the best kind of comprehensible input is narrow input. It may enhance the vocabulary intake and power of linguistic structure. He says narrow input includes narrow reading. The narrow input lets the student to be exposed to much different written input about a single subject or different passages by the

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same writer, like narrow listening in which students should listen to the same subject which is recorded by various speakers.

Based on practical tests and experiences, narrow reading and narrow listening make the comprehension of the input easier for students because the context is repeated and familiar. It means that students can acquire both syntactic and lexical knowledge in a comprehensible contexts using comprehensible and narrow input (Krashen, 2004).

Review of Related Empirical Studies

Many researches which were based on practical tests and experiences showed that narrow reading is useful for lexical knowledge and comprehension. Before Krashen, the results of Lamme's (1976) study showed that good readers of L1 English are eager to read many books written by the same writer and books of a series. He found out that reading deeply exposes student to a lot of syntax and vocabulary. It will make the context comprehensible. So, the students can gain actively internalized knowledge of lexis and syntax and they can become skillful.

It is suggested by Laufer (1988) that if intermediate learners use narrow reading they will be exposed to a useful and suitable input, because written discourse in non- narrow input has a lot of non-frequent words, so if the students are given a lot of subjects and works, they won't acquire all words either actively or passively. Therefore, if we give narrow passages (with the same topic or a single writer) to students, they will be exposed to the words many times.

Also, the influence of narrow reading hypothesis is searched on by Cho and Krashen (1994, 1995). They said those adult 12 students who read a series of books, developed and boosted their lexicon significantly. They say it is because the readers' level improved very fast from Sweet Valley kids (the second level) to Sweet Valley Twins (the fourth level) and to Sweet Valley High (the fifth and the sixth level). Furthermore, many readers who participated in this research had never read an English book just for pleasure. Despite this fact, they became fans of Sweet Valley.

Other researches (Krashen, 1996; Krashen & Rodriqs, 1996; Dupuy, 1999) like this also were carried out to measure the effect of narrow input as a technique to boost listening comprehension in EFL classes. The results of these studies showed that narrow listening input influence was positive in comparison to non-narrow listening input's influence. The findings of these studies showed that because of the repeated and familiarized material, the input make the listening comprehension of EFL students easier. So, the students could understand and acquire syntactic structures and lexical items completely, because of various exposures to a comprehensible context.

According to Schmitt and Carter (2000) reading about one single subject lowers the lexical pressure on students and they have the opportunity to exercise reading fast and fluently.

Intermediate level EFL students were encouraged by Decarrico (2001) to use narrow reading so that they expose a lot of passages (they were encouraged to read a lot of topic- specific passages). By doing this, the student reads a word in various contexts and it enhances his/her knowledge about that word. Therefore, the quality of knowledge is developed.

A study done by Cho, Ahn & Krashen (2005) showed that students' English competence is developed and they liked and enjoyed English more than before. This research also showed that the 4th level EFL students in Korea realized the usefulness of narrow reading.

But, in comparison to reading + vocabulary enhancement tasks (RV), narrow reading was not considered as effective in Hui-Tzu Min's study (Hui-Tzu Min, 2008). the aim of this study which was quasi-experimental was to compare the usefulness of reading + vocabulary-enhancement tasks (RV) and narrow reading (NR) - repeatedly reading the articles which themes are relevant to each other – on vocabulary acquisition and retention in EFL secondary school learners. The participants of this study were twenty five male learners who were studying at the third grade. Their level was intermediate. The treatment was two hours per week and lasted for five weeks. The RV group read chosen passages and exercised different vocabulary activities. The NR group read passages which were relevant to each other based on their themes as a supplementary in addition to the chosen passages. A Chinese type of the modified vocabulary knowledge scale was used in order to judge the learners' knowledge of vocabulary items. The findings of

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the acquisition and retention tests revealed that the RV group had significantly more knowledge about the target words compared to the NR group. The conclusion is that reading + focused vocabulary practices are more influential than the narrow reading approach for expanding target vocabulary acquisition and retention in secondary students of English as a foreign language.

In a recent corpus study by Gardner (2008), 14 reading materials for children were investigated in order to verify this claim that a group of authentic passages with the same theme, or written by a single writer, give the reader the opportunity to expose to new words. But unrelated materials do not give them this opportunity as much. The collections were distinguished based on the relative thematic relevance, the number of writers (1 Vs. 4 writers) and the register (narrative vs. expository). They were examined in order to find out how often and in which situations specialized words reappear in the materials. The results showed that thematic relevance influenced specialized words reappearing in the expository collections (mainly content words), while authorship influenced reappearing in the narrative collections (mainly the names of characters, places...). The percentage of theme- relevant vocabulary was more in theme – based expository collections than their percentage in theme – based narrative collections. The results were slightly different from the claims of word reappearing of narrow reading and from general theories and activate related to extensive reading.

Though we reported some researches here, little research are done in this realm in EFL. So, in this study, we are going to fill the gap in the literature by discovering the influence of narrow reading on the lexical enhancement in pre- intermediate level Iranian EFL students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Methodology

Overview

This study is going to find out the influence of narrow reading on lexical enhancement in pre-intermediate level Iranian EFL learners. In this chapter, we explain the way we chose the participants, tools, the way we used the tools, the design of the research, and the way we analyzed data.

Participants

75 male students who were between twenty to thirty years old were identified pre-intermediate by Oxford placement test. They were then, put randomly in 3 classes of twenty five students. Two classes were experimental groups and one class was the control group. This is done in order to control between and within group differences.

Instruments

Four instruments were used in this study. The instruments included Oxford placement test, the first and the second 1000- words test (the first one is used as the pre- test and the second one was used as a post – test), the treatment (the instructions which are topic-limited and author- limited narrow reading) and the on- line vocabulary profiler software.

OPT Placement Test

The participants were homogenized two times; the first time for their level of proficiency (using OPT test) and the second time for their knowledge of vocabulary (using Nation's 1000- vocabulary test). We can use OPT with any number of students of English so that we make sure that placing the students in proficiency levels of elementary to advanced was accurate and reliable. The test has two main parts: listening and grammar. Each section includes 100 items.

The two sections of OPT make it easy for teachers to decide what kind of materials (which level) is suitable for each group.

In the first part, the listening skill is measured based on the morphemic and graphemic systems of English. In the second part, the grammatical structures which are found frequently in tests at elementary, intermediate and advanced levels are measured. All items have been examined in five years on various samples with different proficiency levels and nationalities. Furthermore, when possible, lexis has been controlled carefully and was kept natural in different sections of the test. So, the OPT gives a basis for the first assessment of students in English.

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The First and the Second 1000-Vocabulary Tests

Two equivalent tests of 1000 high frequency words is designed by Nation (1990), considering the content and the number of words. Each test had 40 items. This number was enough to reach to the desired conclusions. The format of the test considers three types of answers for each item: “true”, “false” and “do not understand”. The content of the test is not problematic for learners because it was tried to use most frequent word in the definitions. Furthermore, the sentences containing the words which are going to be tested were controlled considering their grammatical complexity. Just content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs) were tested.

Sometimes some photos were used in order to avoid less frequent content words. For instance, a photo of a dog was put in front of the definition “This does not let people to approach your house”. In comparison to the word “keep”, the word “dog” is less frequent. So, in the mentioned sentence, a photo of a dog was put instead of the word “dog”. Moreover, since many most frequent words have a lot of meanings, it is tried to test the highly frequent meanings of the words.

Nation (1993) believes that test results have many functions. Three of those functions are used in this study to reach its aims:

A) Diagnosing Areas of Weakness

The first 1000- vocabulary test is useful for diagnosing the students’ weakness in receptive and productive areas of language, if it is because of not enough lexical knowledge. This test makes it easy for us to search for the problem and find where the problem is. According to Nation, If the pretest score in any special word list (1000, 2000, etc.) is less than 83 %, the student should be instructed to use narrow reading, so that the gap in his knowledge of that word list is filled.

B) Setting Learning Goals

If the students have not learnt the first 1000- vocabulary, When the teachers knew the lexical knowledge of a student, they should help them in a systematic way to enhance their knowledge. considering the aim of this study, narrow reading is considered as the best chance for above elementary students to reach their aims.

C) Measuring Vocabulary Growth

The second 1000- vocabulary test was given as a post test. By giving this test, the teacher will be aware of the students’ level of improvement toward the first 1000- vocabulary. it is necessary to know the first 1000 – vocabulary of English for each student of English as a foreign or second language who wants to use the language.

Instructional Treatment

The two experimental groups’ treatment was two sets of narrow reading texts: author- limited and topic-limited. The first experimental group was given the author limited narrow reading. It was a collection of eight small pieces of news from The Elephant Man story by Tim Vicary (2000), (a writer who lives and works in York). The second experimental group’s treatment was eight texts on one subject (“Animals in Danger”). Most of the students chose the subject as the most interesting one among a set of subjects introduced. The subject was chosen by students because narrow reading materials should be motivating so that the vocabulary enhancement happens. The control group was given ten non- narrow reading texts written by different writers on different subjects.

All texts were checked with the lexical profiling in order to ensure the passages’ lexical appropriateness for the participants. The vocabulary profiler software (Cobb, 2002) divided the passages into the Nation’s vocabulary frequency groups which are similar to the primary levels of Nations’ level test. According to lexical profiling, the texts were suitable in two significant ways. First, more than 95 percent of the vocabulary in each text is among the first 1000- vocabulary. So they were appropriate for the participants. Second, less than 5 percent of the words in the text were from the off list, university (UWL) and academic word lists (AWL) items.

On-line Vocabulary Profiler Software

Vocabulary profiler (Cobb, 2002) is a software package for data- driven language learning. It is used in vocabulary assessment in English as a second or foreign language. The vocabulary profiler software

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divides the passages into the vocabulary frequency groups which are similar to the primary levels of Vocabulary Levels Test in these features:

- 1) The list of the high frequency 1000 vocabulary.
- 2) The list of the high frequency 1001- 2000 vocabulary.
- 3) The Academic Word List (AWL)
- 4) The University Word List (UWL)
- 5) Off list words.

Procedure

One of the subsets of the true- experimental research which design is “pretest- posttest- control group” is the most suitable design to answer the research questions and reject the hypotheses of this study. The primary feature of this design is that it lets you to avoid problems related to internal and external validities. For this reason, the procedures in this design are these steps:

- A. Choosing pre-intermediate students by using OPT.
- B. Putting learners randomly in three classes.
- C. Choosing the experimental and control groups randomly.
- D. Checking the learner’s lexical level according to Nation’s level test.
- E. Administering pre-test in order to recognize the learner’s lexical sizes.
- F. Giving treatments
- G. Giving post- test to recognize the influence of the treatment (which is an independent variable) on the lexical size (the dependent variable)
- H. Statistically analyzing data in order to accept or reject the null hypothesis.

First, the recently registered students were given OPT in order to discover their level of proficiency in English. This was done because of the registration requirements of Jahad Daneshgahi Language center. Based on the test results, they are put in nine groups which are from pre- elementary to upper- advanced levels. After that, based on the goal of the research, three pre-intermediate classes were chosen. The participants were all men aging from twenty to thirty. The classes were held 1/5 hour each day, six days per week, and ten weeks in a semester.

In the OPT, the vocabulary size is not tested separately. So, Nation’s (1990) Vocabulary Level test A was taken by the participants. They had sixty minutes to take the test. The findings showed that the learners were not proficient at the first 1000- vocabulary level. The students’ scores were below 83 percent. According to Nation, those whose score is in this range should be instructed the same word list. The method of instruction is narrow reading.

Then, because there were three study groups in design of the study, the two experimental groups were chosen randomly by toss- up technique.

A week after the pre-test, the treatment started. The reason of a week interval between the pre-test and the treatment was to avoid the possibility of learning words which have been seen in the pre-test, instead of learning them in the treatment, because the of the frequency of the words used in the test and that of the treatment were the same.

The students of all three groups participated in the dialogic course of the language center each session. After the pre-test, on odd days they read their suitable treatment texts instead of reading classroom texts. The two experimental groups, EG1 and EG2, were given suitable treatments which were author- limited narrow reading (ALNR) and topic – limited narrow reading (TLNR). By flipping a coin, the treatments of each group was chosen randomly.

The students were not allowed to ask questions for clarifying the words during reading. The reason was that the test was assessing acquisition from reading. Asking questions might affect the vocabulary comprehension. So, the students were asked to try to realize the meaning of the words as they can. The teacher read the text one time. Then, the participants themselves had to read the text again in fifteen minutes. They had the chance and time to read the text again three times. At the end, the texts were taken back from the students. The reason was to avoid the consequences of students’ rereading the text after the end of the class.

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A week after the treatment, the post test, which was equivalent English 1000 – vocabulary test was given to the experimental and to the control groups. The post – test was given in order to see if the vocabulary sizes had been affected (table 4). Post test scores of each group were analyzed by the analysis of variance, between group mean scores of the posttest to find out whether there was a significant difference among the groups.

Design

The design of this study is experimental. There were two experimental and one control group in this research. The independent variables were narrow reading and non – narrow reading and the dependent variable was the amount of the students’ knowledge of vocabulary.

Data Analysis

The data gathered from the pre-test were analyzed by SPSS computer software. The pretest score of all groups were analyzed by the analysis of variance (ANOVA) to make sure that there is no significant difference among the three samples before the treatment was given to the experimental groups. After that, the post test scores were ranked and put beside the pretest scores for each person in each group. Then, using ANOVA, we analyzed the differences which were most probably the effect of the treatment.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Overview

The aim of this research was to answer three questions about lexical enhancement by using three types of reading (author-limited narrow reading, topic-limited narrow reading, and non-narrow reading). So, the pre-test and post- test data about the first group of English vocabularies were analyzed statistically in order to accept or reject the hypothesis which was behind the above mentioned questions.

Results

Pre- test Results

The numerical data of the pretest on English 1000- vocabulary were analyzed statistically by the SPSS computer software (11.2 versions). Therefore, the pretest scores of each group were ranked and then analyzed descriptively in order to find the mean of each class’s scores and judge the significance of mean differences before the treatment.

Based on the descriptive statistics of the pretest, the mean of the scores of all groups revealed no significant difference. Furthermore, the measures of distribution (Skewness and Kurtosis) showed that all groups’ distribution was from -3 to +3. It means that the distribution of all groups were normal distributions (Table 1).

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

| | | ALNR | TLNR | NNR |
|---------------|---------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Number | Valid | 25 | 25 | 25 |
| | Missing | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mean | | 24.6 | 21.6 | 26.5 |
| Std.deviation | | 2.48 | 2.76 | 3.19 |

The descriptive data analysis did not show exactly the between group differences (which may be very small). Therefore, the pretest scores of all groups were analyzed by the analysis of variance (ANOVA) to make sure there is no significant difference among the samples before the treatment for the experimental group.

The results showed that there wasn’t any significant difference among the groups before the treatment, because the observed F ratio was less than 1 (table 2).

Table 2: ANOVA among pretest means

| Source of variance | S.S. | Df | MS | F |
|---------------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Between group | 8 | 2 | 4 | 0.49 |
| Within group | 5321.65 | 72 | 8.32 | |

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Post test Results

After the treatment, the scores gathered from the other equivalent English 1000- vocabulary tests were ranked and put beside the pretest scores for each student in each group. Next, using ANOVA (which makes it possible to compare many sample means at the same time), the differences which were most probably because of the influence of the treatment, were examined. The F ratio is more than one and it is more than the critical F for the given degree of freedom. So, we conclude that there is a meaningful difference among the means (table 3).

Table 3: ANOVA among posttest means

| Source of variance | S.S. | Df | MS | F |
|--------------------|--------|----|--------|-------|
| Between group | 498.32 | 2 | 312.21 | 41.54 |
| Within group | 571.34 | 72 | 9.12 | |

Table 3 shows that we should find the intersection of 2/72 in F- distribution table. We found out a ratio between 3.11 and 3.33 at 0.01 level of probability and a ratio between 4.88 and 4.92 at 0.05 level of probability. The reason is that there is no place for n= 72 in the vertical column of the table.

So, we should look at somewhere between 70 and 80. Table 2 shows that the F ratio was more than 1. So, we can be confident enough to conclude that there is a meaningful difference among the samples.

So, we used the Scheffe’s post hoc test to find out where the difference lies. It is a conservative test. It is less probable that the claim of having significant difference in the comparisons be wrong. Table 4 shows that, the post hoc t observed values of the first two comparisons (E EG1 vs. EG2 and EG1 & CG) are more than the critical value at 0.05 level of probability. So, we were able to claim that the author- limited narrow reading was efficient, because the sample who received author- limited narrow reading input was significantly different. But, the table shows that the difference in EG2 vs. CG comparison was not significant statistically. (Table 4)

Table 4: Scheffe' test for the effect of narrow reading.

| Comparison Groups | T observed values |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| EG1 vs. EG2 | 8.12 |
| EG1 vs. CG | 6.43 |
| EG2 vs. CG | 0.32 |
| T critical value: 3.18 | |

Discussion

Iranian English learners always had problems in comprehending a passage. It was mostly because of their very small vocabulary knowledge storage. The most current and general solution which worked out was using comprehensible input, especially contextualized comprehensible input. So, the two types of reading (author-limited and topic- limited) were chosen in this study. We want to find out which one is better in enhancing the lexicon knowledge of Iranian students of English as a foreign language. The findings of this study showed that author- limited narrow reading was the most influential way to help the learners to expand their lexicon. This is a claim supported by a lot of scholars in the field of vocabulary. Decarrico (2001) recommend using narrow reading at two levels of author and topic limited for elementary or intermediate students of English as a foreign language. Also, comprehending a passage is easier for the learners who read narrowly. They can also develop their mental dictionary more than the students who don’t use narrow reading. Furthermore, Krashen (2004) claims that when the students read narrowly, they will be exposed a lot to a large amount of vocabulary and syntax. It expands the lexicon and the syntax and causes language autonomy. In this research, it is proved that the author limited narrow reading is more influential than the topic limited narrow reading and the non-narrow reading. Table 4 shows that the value of Scheffe’s’ test for the comparison between EG1 vs. EG2 and EG1 vs. CG was statistically significant. It means that EG1’s performance was significantly different from the other two groups. But,

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the value of Scheffe's test for the comparison between EG2 and CG was not significant at all. Based on the findings of this study, we reach to the conclusion that the author limited narrow reading is the most efficient reading input, because the participants in EG1 were able to expand their lexicon more than the participants of the other groups.

The results of this study are similar to the findings of other studies in this realm such as Lamme (1976), Cho & Krashen (1994, 1995), Cho *et al.*, (2005). These studies generally support this claim that narrow reading (without considering its type) makes the students interest in English grow quickly, so that they read more. These researches showed a would-be contaminating feature, which is "not being interested" in the interpretation of findings of this study. This study also supports the results of the research by Schmitt and Carter's (2000) which claim that narrow reading makes the readers fluent. Furthermore, it is emphasized that narrow input is better than non narrow input in listening comprehension in the researches by Krashen & Rodrigs (1996); Dupuy (1999). Hui-Tzu Min (2008) was aware of the superiority of narrow reading. So, he did a research to find out if narrow reading is more important than reading plus vocabulary expanding tasks (RV) in EFL students' vocabulary enhancement. In this research, narrow reading was not better. One logical rationale for this is that in that study the focus was just on one kind of narrow reading (thematically relevant texts), not those written by the writer.

The present research which used the previous researches, is fresh because it considers a more comprehensive aspect of narrow reading in expanding the lexicon in Iranian students of English as a foreign language.

Implication, Conclusion, & Suggestion for Further Research

Overview

The aim of this research is to find out if narrow reading as a type of narrow input (with two levels of topic limited and author- limited) makes it easier for learners to boost their second language lexicon. Because, vocabulary is one of the most significant components of a language. Therefore, good reading programs and vocabulary courses should be held.

Implications

The findings of this study reminds us of the significant role of narrow reading in expanding and developing a student's lexicon. Therefore, it implies some instructional points which follow:

1. Now, it is clear that the knowledge of lexicon is important for the students of English as a foreign or second language with different language needs. Therefore, narrow input reading should be given more consideration as proved in this research.
2. Considering the results, the syllabus designers and material developers should consider narrow reading as a comprehensible input to make more helpful materials.
3. The findings show that narrow reading can help learners to overcome their lexical needs, because each meaningful language communication depends mostly on words and no inadequate word store can compensate for it.

Conclusion

The results of this study showed that the learners who read author-limited narrow reading texts were able to expand their knowledge of lexicon more than the other two groups. Furthermore, considering the descriptive analysis of mean scores in pretest and posttest, the other experimental group which was given the topic limited passages were able to expand their lexicon not as much as the experimental group, but more than the control group. It means that both author-limited and topic- limited narrow readings have been more influential than non- narrow reading. In other words, the learners can be exposed to both type of reading texts in order to increase their knowledge of words. In order to make the process of expansion faster, we should rely more on author- limited narrow reading texts. Considering the fact that in narrow reading texts, the words are repeated, the results of this study show that one single writer, instead of a single subject, gives the chance of more repetition.

One thing that makes this research interesting is that it compares two types of narrow reading texts – topic based, which is known by many people and author-based that a few teachers use for instruction at schools. Therefore, before this research many people might have wrongly thought that reading texts with

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the same theme is more effective. But, statistical analysis of data shows that author- limited narrow reading is not more influential than non-narrow reading and it is more useful than the topic- limited reading. Regarding this fact, we can reach to the conclusion that giving students the passages which focus on one writer or a single subject will have more positive influences on the learner's mental lexicon than various works and subjects.

According to the results of this research, much of the way for expanding the students' mental dictionary is paved. So, these results are beneficial and useful for the material designers and teachers.

Suggestions for Further Research

This research, like any other one is limited to a certain situation. So, because of the recursive nature of research, it should be completed by other later studies to find more general findings. So, the suggestion for further research needs other researchers to complete this study by confirming or rejecting the results of this study.

1. The study can be conducted in a longer time. It means that this study can be done during a university semester.
2. The study can be completed by giving more hours of teaching and giving more than about 220 word narrow reading passages. This will naturally make the time of instruction longer.
3. The research questions can be investigated on university students in order to see if the findings are the same in the university environment.
4. The same research questions can be investigated in co-educational situations and to female students.
5. The participants of this study were all below intermediate. But, it is also possible to investigate the research questions to upper elementary and intermediate participants.

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