FLIPPED VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION EXPERIENCE WITH ADULT LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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Abstract

This paper reports on the longitudinal experience and insights gained from numerous flipped vocabulary instruction episodes with adult language learners. The instruction program was vocabulary and meaning focused, and the target words were chosen from the New GSL dataset. Several different tutoring groups were formed in different time periods. The participants were instructed and trained to deal with the target words outside the class to the extent that their skills and abilities allowed. The aspects of learning that required higher cognitive skills were carried out in the classroom with the instructor. The sessions were discussed and modified with the participants considering the participants' instructional needs. As a result, a flipped vocabulary instruction model was developed. It is suggested that many principles of second language vocabulary acquisition can be applied with a flipped learning approach, and this approach has the potential to resolve the related issues.

Keywords: second language vocabulary, flipped learning, adult learners

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1. Introduction

1.1. Statement of the problem

Vocabulary is the core of all languages, be it native or second. Native vocabulary is acquired naturally, but second or foreign language vocabulary (L2 as a generic term will be used throughout this paper) is learned. In both cases, the process takes a considerable amount of time and effort. Around their first birthdays, toddlers start acquiring their native vocabulary by building up a lexical network that grows about 1,000 words per year on average under normal conditions (Biemiller & Slonim, 2001; Coxhead et al., 2015; P. Lightbown & Spada, 2013). The issue is naturally different in the L2 developmental process.

L2 vocabulary has been the core of research studies in applied linguistics. When communicative language teaching appeared as a reaction to the classical language teaching methods in 1980s, vocabulary discussions took a different turn, and researchers claimed that if language learners are exposed to L2 vocabulary in natural settings, vocabulary growth would take care of itself. According to this paradigm, no intentional focus is needed on vocabulary; incidental and repeated encounters with L2 words in meaningful contexts (comprehensible input, as Krashen called) will be enough to learn L2 vocabulary (Krashen, 1989). However, we now know that even if this paradigm makes sense to a certain extent, for a language learner, it will take many years of incidental encounters with L2 words to become lexically competent. Based on a research study, it was suggested that after reading a simplified reading text of about 20.000 words, learning rate appeared to be 3-4 words per book (Lahav, 1996), and Hill and Laufer (2003) suggest that "At this rate of growth, a second language learner would have to read in excess of eight million words of texts, or about 420 novels to increase their vocabulary by 2,000 words." (p. 88).

There are numerous aspects of L2 vocabulary that have been discussed throughout the years (Schmitt, 2019), but the aspects of L2 vocabulary acquisition process that we are confident about are fewer than the aspects about which we are not certain.

1.2. Related literature

L2 vocabulary acquisition is a process that involves many factors and is far from being simple and one-dimensional. One of the most well-known and agreed-upon frameworks for lexical knowledge was proposed by Nation (2001) in which vocabulary knowledge was examined in three main dimensions as form, meaning and use with several other sub-dimensions. According to this model, language learners must go through several connected stages and be exposed to target vocabulary in different learning episodes and manners. In one of these episodes, a learner might be exposed to the written form of one of the target words for the first time; in another, they might hear it in a listening activity; and in another, they might have to use it in a productive skill activity like speaking or writing. In addition to this, the

body of research tells us that learners need from six to 20 times of exposure to new words for effective learning, and this process is affected by factors such as, age, proficiency level and exposure type (Uchihara et al., 2019).

1.2.1. L2 Vocabulary Size

How many words do L2 learners need to know in order to be lexically competent? This is another important issue in L2 vocabulary research. The problem begins with the definition of lemma and stretches across to all levels of language including pragmatics. According to Crystal (2019), there are over one million words in the English language; a typical college graduate native speaker of English is predicted to know about 20,000 words; a non-native speaker of English needs at least 8,000 or 9,000 words for reading, and 6,000 or 7,000 words to listen effectively (see a detailed discussion in Ünaldı and Bardakçı, 2021).

1.2.2. L2 vocabulary and the taxonomy of knowledge

How L2 vocabulary acquisition should start is another practical issue to be dealt with. Generally speaking, learning occurs in stages, and the revised Bloom's Taxonomy is one of the attempts to explain these stages (see Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001 for details). The taxonomy emphasizes the hierarchical relationship among remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating in terms of new input. The remembering stage, the lowest level of learning, is where rote learning takes place. At this stage, the learner memorizes new items as they encounter it. Although the term rote learning has gone through a pejoration process throughout the years, there are solid discussions claiming that without some level of knowledge base, it is nearly impossible to move on to higher order thinking skills (see discussions in Christodoulou, 2014). Flashcards is a good example of the application of rote learning. Studies related to the use of digital flashcards in adult language learners suggest that adult language learners learn more effectively through flashcards (Yüksel et al., 2022). In a study, Lightbown et al. (1999) analyzed L2 vocabulary input at primary and secondary levels and found that there were insignificant differences in vocabulary input between a group of learners where an audio-lingual method was used and another which received communicative instruction. This result was interpreted as a proof against the assumption that communicative teaching should automatically result in incidental vocabulary acquisition (Zahar et al., 2001); some sort of rote learning might work as well when used in integration with other techniques and activities. For example, rote learning could be used to build background to prepare learners for the contextualization of the new target words.

1.2.3. Contextualization of L2 vocabulary

It has often been discussed that contextualizing L2 vocabulary in context is an effective way of learning (Brown & Lee, 2015). The rationale behind this approach is that words rarely

appear in isolation in natural contexts, and all words are parts of a dynamic lexical network (Schmitt, 2019). Although there are some cases where learning L2 vocabulary in isolation at lower proficiency levels seems to work better (Ünaldı et al., 2013), it is now a well-established argument that encounters with new words in authentic contexts will facilitate lexical development of language learners. Furthermore, contextualization of L2 vocabulary seems to work better when a social dimension is added to the process.

1.2.4. Social learning

The social aspect of language learning has been discussed deeply since Long's (1981) interaction hypothesis and the concept of negotiation of meaning, and the related discussions have gained positive connotations over the years. Interaction clearly refers to conversations, which are sources of comprehensible input in second language acquisition. Pica and Doughty (1985) defines negotiation of meaning as "…activity that occurs when a listener signals to the speaker that the speaker's message is not clear, and the speaker and listener work linguistically to resolve this impasse." (p. 116). In the L2 contexts, negotiation of meaning happens during communication breakdown episodes, and the main reason is incomprehensible input. In these episodes, any attempt to make the input comprehensible is believed to lead to L2 learning (Storch, 2017).

1.2.5. Frequency of encounters with the new words

L2 vocabulary studies have been meta-analyzed (Uchihara et al., 2019), and it has been suggested that although some levels of repeated encounters are needed to learn vocabulary, older learners tend to benefit more from them compared to younger learners. Another finding suggests that L2 learners with larger vocabulary size do not need to encounter new vocabulary compared to L2 learners with smaller vocabular size. The meta-analysis also showed that compared to spaced repetition, mass repetition seemed to have worked better in most cases. In other words, L2 learners might be benefiting from mass repetitions of target words in any given day rather than spreading the learning process over time. One interesting finding implies that the positive effects of repeated encounters is not enhanced by visual support. Moreover, the frequency-learning correlation does not seem to increase beyond a range of around 20 encounters with a word. In addition to these issues, it is suggested that forewarning learners of an upcoming comprehension test has a positive impact on gains in vocabulary learning.

Another interesting finding in Uchihara's (2019) study was that when all the available factors in vocabulary learning were analyzed, the frequency of encounters could explain only 11% of the variance in vocabulary learning through meaning-focused input. This could only mean that, according to the researcher, there are many factors that determine L2 vocabulary acquisition other than repeated encounters.

1.2.6. Flipped learning

Flipped learning (FL) is a relatively recent term used to refer to teaching/learning episodes where traditional classroom activities are carried out outside the classroom and traditional extramural activities are performed in the classroom. The basic rationale behind contemporary flipped learning is that learning outcomes are presented to learners mostly through digital learning environments. In terms of language learning, flipped classroom model has been reported to offer chances for language learners to learn at their own speed with rich course contents presented with technology support (Shih & Huang, 2020). Learners are free to decide when and how to learn, which brings flexibility on the learners' side. This seemingly chaotic nature is resolved with the help of Learning Management Systems (LMS). With the introduction of HTML5 and advanced database technologies, LMSs help instructors track their students' progress. LMSs provide instructors with opportunities to understand learner behaviors better through real-time tracking, keeping attendance, and providing statistics about individual learners, which leads to continuous evaluation.

In pedagogical terms, the FL paradigm embraces the idea that basic skills like remembering, understanding, applying, and analyzing (to a certain extent) can be dealt with individually, and instructors are required when the aim is to reach higher order thinking skills such as evaluating or creating.

Flipped vocabulary instruction has been compared to the traditional ones. For example, Knežević et al. (2020) compared the flipped vocabulary instruction model with the traditional approach in an experimental study. The efficiency of the flipped vocabulary teaching process was examined by using participants' post-test performance, mental efforts employed during the tasks, and perceptions regarding the experience. The flipped model yielded higher instructional efficiency in all three dimensions compared to the traditional one. Similarly, Ebadi et al. (2022) investigated the effects of flipped vocabulary learning in terms of listening skills by using an experimental design. During the experimental process, the experimental group studied new words using an online dictionary. The results revealed a significant difference between the control and the experimental group; the flipped vocabulary instruction seemed to work better regarding both vocabulary instruction and listening skills.

1.2.7. Focus on Form and Focus on Forms

Lexical and structural knowledge are inseparable from each other; neither of them can be reasoned, taught, or learned in isolation from the other. All words act on patterns, and words with the same patterns tend to share similarities in terms of meaning (Hunston et al., 1997). Therefore, any type of L2 vocabulary instruction needs to tap into the structural domain of the target language. However, this is not as straightforward as it might sound. L2 grammar instruction has been an important topic of discussion for years, and we now know that

extended grammar instructions do not work effectively. In L2 teaching contexts, when the primary emphasis is on L2 structure, this is referred to as Focus on Forms (FonFs); on the other hand, when the focal point of L2 instruction is primarily on meaning-focused interaction, and when spontaneous attention is drawn on linguistic forms, this is called Focus on Form (FonF) (Loewen, 2018). Although many researchers tend to regard these two approaches as opposing dichotomies, Ellis (2015) sees them as complementary to each other suggesting that focus on form is "inherently remedial" and "pedagogically efficient" (p. 4).

After an analysis of research studies on L2 vocabulary, Schmitt (2019) proposes six areas of vocabulary research for future studies as follows:

> developing a practical model of vocabulary acquisition, (2) understanding how vocabulary knowledge develops from receptive to productive mastery, (3) getting lexical teaching/learning principles into vocabulary and language textbooks, (4) exploring extramural language exposure and how it can best facilitate vocabulary acquisition, (5) developing more informative measures of vocabulary knowledge, and (6) measuring fluency as part of vocabulary competence. (p. 261)

How L2 vocabulary is acquired is an incomplete and ongoing discussion. Matters about L2 vocabulary acquisition have been studied and discussed separately and with a quantitative paradigm mostly. Agendas have been proposed to get a better understanding of this process (Schmitt, 2019), and one of the concerns in this agenda is related to "developing a practical model of vocabulary acquisition process" (p. 261). In addition to this, the related literature lacks the practical and qualitative aspects of what the theory suggests. In the current study, by taking the related literature into account, a flipped vocabulary instruction model is proposed. Each step in the model is directly related to the findings in L2 vocabulary research and common sense. The main research question of the current study is: What are adult EFL learners' perceptions concerning flipped vocabulary instruction?

2. Method

2.1. Research Design and Sampling

In the current study, a systematic approach was adopted in the sampling process. The potential resources, or the participants, for the current study are quite limited; that is, adult L2 learners trying to deal with L2 vocabulary for academic purposes are not that common, at least in our own context. In such situations, Patton (2015) suggests the purposeful sampling technique for the most effective use of limited sources; Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) make a similar discussion. With this rationale in mind, in the current study, the purposeful sampling technique was used. The participants were informed about the nature of the study and they signed a consent letter. The participants were five groups of EFL learners. There were three participants in each group (N=15). When the study was continuing, their ages varied from 25

to 40, and all of them were males. Their proficiency level varied from A2 to B1. They were taking the English course for academic purposes; mainly to pass an official language test. This test mainly focuses on reading as the macro skill and vocabulary and grammar as micro skills.

2.2. Data collection procedures

The current study was carried out with a qualitative paradigm. In order to understand the L2 vocabulary acquisition process better, focus group interviews were carried out with each group. The interviews were carried out at the end of the instructional process, which took about 10 weeks. The interviews lasted about 90 minutes on average. With semi-structured questions, the participants were asked to elaborate on their learning experience.

2.3. Instructional procedures

This instruction model is highly dependent on digital learning platforms. Quizlet, one of the globally popular learning platforms, is a web-based learning platform and is suitable for flipped L2 vocabulary instruction. As explained below, Quizlet has four basic learning modules that promote rote learning, and each of these modules can be used to help learners to develop essential lexical skills which are prerequisites for higher order cognitive skills. The target words used in this project were chosen from New GSL (Browne et al., 2013), a data set which is based on word frequency paradigm.

Phase 1: Multisensory rote learning of the target vocabulary

In the first phase of the instruction, form-meaning associations for the target vocabulary were created. In the taxonomy of knowledge, this phase is related to the remembering stage. Learners are introduced to the target words of the relevant week through digital flashcards through Quizlet, which provides learners with a variety of learning activities. Although it is not designed for L2 learning purposes per se, Quizlet's rationale and design fit well with the L2 vocabulary learning process.

The Quizlet platform provides learners with multichannel rote learning activities. With these activities, just like with the conventional physical flashcards, learners try to remember the target words with a basic rationale: On one side of the card, the target word is presented and on the flip side of the card, the translation, synonym, or related visuals appear. The aim for the learner is to move the cards in the *study deck* to the *learned deck*. The obvious advantage of digital flashcards over the conventional ones is that it is possible to provide multichannel input in the target language; the learners not only see the orthographic representations of the target words, but they also get the chance to hear their pronunciation or see related visuals.

There are four basic modules in quizlet: Cards, Learn, Test and Match, and all four operate on simple and mechanical learning skills. In the *Cards* module, the learners are introduced with the target vocabulary through visual, orthographic, and auditory input. The learners see

one of the random target words, hear its pronunciation, and when they click on the flashcard on the screen, the flashcard flips, and the learners see the L1 translation of the item. In the next module, *Learn*, the learners try to remember the target words through multiple-choice tests. The last module in Quizlet is the *Test* module where the learners are free to test their own progress in the study deck. This module involves *Written*, *Matching*, *Multiple Choice,* and *True/False* question types. The instructor prepares all the materials, and the learners complete this phase without the instructor.

Phase 2: Contextualization of the target vocabulary

In this phase, the learners were instructed to see the target words in meaningful contexts. This step mostly corresponds to the understanding stage of the taxonomy where learners try to make sense of the target words in short interesting and controversial sentences. For example, the target word *happiness* is presented in a sentence as follows: *Money doesn't bring happiness*. The individual learner, remembering the meaning of the word from Phase 1, tries to make sense of the target word in a meaningful context. Again, the instructor prepares the materials, and the learners complete this phase without the instructor.

Phase 3: Negotiation of meaning

The third phase of the model requires learners to come together in small groups and discuss the target words and the context in which they appear. In this phase, the learners applied their vocabulary knowledge, and some level of analyses took place. Since the contexts of the target words were controversial most of the time, a field of uncertainty emerged naturally. In other words, the learners were encouraged to realize the flexible nature of vocabulary. The main objective of the negotiation activities at this stage is to overcome the simplistic and one-dimensional understanding of form-meaning connection that L2 learners frequently embrace. The learners are encouraged to see that meanings of words might change from context to context, and words might mean different things to different people. The learners go through this phase without the instructor.

Phase 4: Evaluation of the target vocabulary with the instructor

This is the last phase in vocabulary instruction, and it corresponds to the evaluation stage in the taxonomy. The instructor was involved in this phase and together with the instructor, the learners evaluated the target words. In this phase, the instructor tries to help learners resolve any issues that emerged during the negotiation of meaning phase. This stage is particularly critical on the instructor's side because the instructor needs to focus on both form and meaning. While trying to settle meaning related problems with the learners, the instructor also emphasizes structural issues that have direct bearings on meaning with a focus on form approach. As the primary goal of the participants was to pass an official reading test, no activities regarding the creative stage of the taxonomy were performed. The following figure

summarizes the relationship between each phase of the instruction process and the stages of the taxonomy.
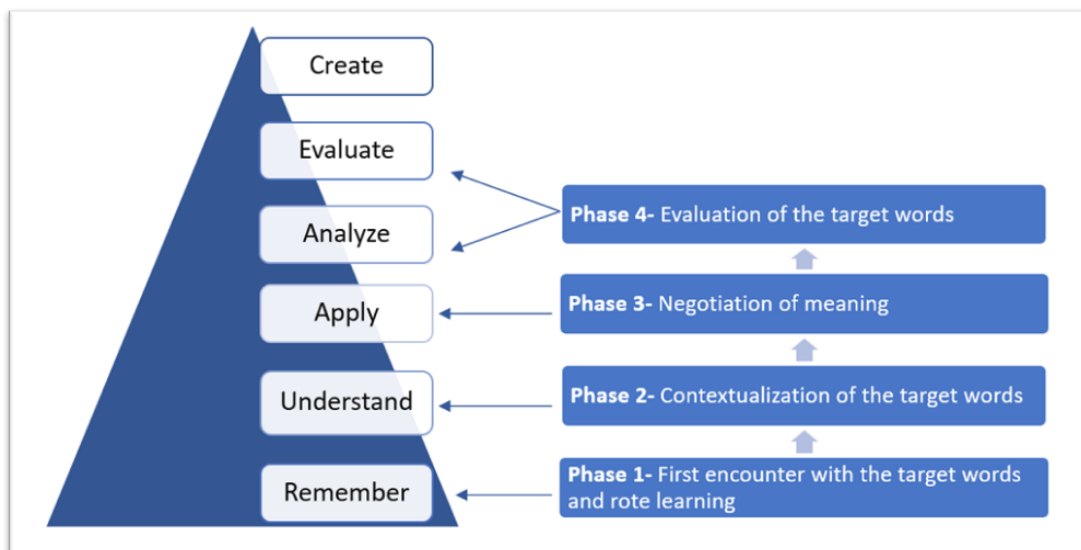
Figure 1. *Phases of Flipped Vocabulary Instruction in Relation to the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy*

2.4. Data analysis procedures

As the first step of the analysis procedure, the data were transcribed and digitalized. Content analysis was used in the analysis process with an inductive approach. The transcriptions were read and reread to make sense out of the data and initial coding was performed at this stage (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). No predetermined categories were used, but categories emerged after the initial coding procedures (Dörnyei, 2007). The codes were share with two experts to check the reliability of the coding procedure, and certain modifications were made in line with the suggestions coming from the experts.

3. Results

The results of the current study come from three sources. The first set of results comes from years of systematic observations by the researcher. The second set comes from the focus group interview sessions, and the third one comes from unofficial interviews with some of the learners about the instruction process. The main rationale behind this approach is to triangulate the results, which will validate and consolidate the analysis process (Dörnyei, 2007).

3.1. Observations

Years of systematic observations of EFL classes for vocabulary instruction yielded the result that L2 instructors were wasting considerable amount of time trying to teach new words. The problem was especially with the learners' first encounters with the new words. When we think about it, EFL learners are somehow forced to make sense of new words in almost every lesson they participate in. Joining the lessons with a background of the new words that they will encounter during the lessons will sure help EFL learners not to mention the time endowed to the instructors this way, which will allow them to work with the aspect of the target language with which the learners cannot deal by themselves.

3.2. Focus group interviews

The analysis of the focus group interviews performed with the participants yielded four main categories as *systematicity*, *sustainability*, *flexibility*, and *autonomy*. First and foremost, the participants believed that it was comforting to know what vocabulary items would be covered each week. None of the participants mentioned anything in favor of surprise encounters with the words to be learned. Apparently, familiarizing themselves with the target words before coming to the classes gave them some level of confidence. Mistakes were mostly made outside the class without anyone noticing them. Of course, there were frequent incidences where the participants made mistakes but went unnoticed. Most of the time, the participants realized their mistakes during the last phase, the evaluation of the target words with the instructor. One of the participants reveals this situation with the following words.

> *Participant 7: I liked trying to deal with the target words on my own, at home. I was making mistakes. Mispronunciation, misspelling or misunderstanding… But they weren't much of a problem for me. I wasn't ashamed or embarrassed in front of my friends. Many times, when you were explaining the target words to us, I was realizing my own mistakes. (Translated by the researcher.)*

In the same vein, another participant mentioned how they benefited from the systematicity of the instruction process.

> *Participant 3: The target words were clear from the very beginning. This was a reassurance for me. I felt like I was in a working system. I didn't like what we did back in high school years. I couldn't learn anything that way. I want to know what words are more important than the others. (Translated by the researcher.)*

The next category that emerged during the focus group interviews was *sustainability*. As a matter of fact, this category appeared as a problematic issue concerning the instruction process. The participants held the common belief that the instruction process that they had

gone through, albeit being effective, was not sustainable; they believed that if they had to go through this process for more than a couple of terms, they would not be able to continue with it. The following is an excerpt from the interviews:

Participant 1: Like my friends did, I really liked this type of learning. But I have some questions in my mind. I don't think I would be able to carry on like this for more than six or seven months. The program is intense, and I feel that it is working. But, as I said, I don't know what I would do if I had to keep on going like this for another six months. (Translated by the researcher.)

Another participant also believed that the instruction process was effective, but the intensity was something that might cause problems in the long run.

Participant 8: I benefited a lot, really a lot. But I can afford three to four months studying like this. You really need to concentrate a lot both inside and outside the classroom. (Translated by the researcher.)

The next common idea among the participants concerning the flipped vocabulary instruction was related to its *flexibility*. A common belief among the participants was that the instruction program was flexible enough to be dealt with. As the target words for each week was predetermined, and the participants were free to decide on the time and duration that they were going to spare every day, most of the issues related to timing seemed to have been resolved through this flexibility. In addition to this, as the participants knew that they were being tracked digitally about their online learning activities by the instructor, the flexibility did not cause any sidetracking problems on the learners' side. One of the participants voiced this common belief with the following words:

Participant 2: Our lesson days were fixed, but I decided on the time to study and to take a break. I have a family and many responsibilities. When I wanted to study, I made some arrangements about my everyday life and responsibilities and studied effectively during those periods. I knew that you were checking us online, so I didn't have the chance to slack off. (Translated by the researcher.)

Another important common idea that emerged among the participants was related to the aspect of the flipped instruction that promoted *autonomy*. Nearly all of the participants agreed that their having a say in the learning process influenced them positively. As was explained previously, one of the features of the flipped instruction is to let learners deal with the target subject outside instructional settings and let them progress as far as their individual skills allow them to. This aspect of flipped instruction seemed to have suited to the needs of this particular group. This common belief among the participants can be deduced from the previous extracts as well as the following one:

Participant 6: I know you're the teacher. You make the big decisions about our education. But sometimes I felt that I was the one making the decisions about my learning. Especially about how long and how much to study outside the lessons. I know myself better than you know me. It's obvious. So, I believe that during these lessons, I made many right decisions about my learning. It was motivating. (Translated by the researcher.)

3.3. Informal interviews

Other than systematic observations and focus group interviews, the participants' opinions were also noted during unofficial short interviews. All the notes taken were compared against the findings exhibited so far; almost all of them seem to match with the findings from the observations and focus group interviews. In one of these episodes, two of the participants shared their ideas about the instruction process. From their perspective, this type of instruction was more effective when compared to hours of grammar instruction in class. They mentioned their previous experience with official language classes where the instructors seemed to be wasting valuable time; both theirs and their students'.

In another such episode, one of the participants mentioned the social aspect of the program. He believed that the amount of learning that he experienced during the negotiation phases of the program was considerably more compared to the traditional language learning classes. It was fun and effective to be able to discuss the problems that they faced in the target language with peers and without a teacher nearby. The problems that they could not resolve in the group were taken to the teacher, and in this way, the episodes with the teacher were regarded to-the-point.

4. Discussion

For over three years now, this flipped vocabulary instruction model has been applied to and modified with several groups of adult L2 learners aged between 25 and 40 in private tutoring sessions which were carried out for two to four hours per week. Each modification was realized on demand coming from the learners' side. For example, the sessions were completely meaning-focused for a period of time. This was a process that was agreed upon with the learners before the sessions began. At the beginning, the learners did not want to deal with the structural aspects of the target language as they believed that they had had more than enough grammar instruction during their school years, and as their primary goal was to pass an official reading test. However, after some time, a common understanding emerged among them, and they wanted to analyze the target language only briefly and only when needed.

During these sessions, the learners were observed and informal interviews about the instruction process were also carried out, and some patterns emerged as a result of these observations and interviews. First of all, all of the participants were in favor of this systematic and step-by-step vocabulary instruction. They were especially comfortable with the intentional vocabulary learning aspect of the process, and they easily agreed to deliberately focus on predetermined L2 vocabulary through the use of flashcards. This insight coming from the learners' side is in line with the related literature. As Nation (2013) suggests, "… the deliberate learning of vocabulary for example is much more efficiently carried out through the use of word cards by learners working by themselves than through teachers teaching vocabulary." (p. 4). In addition to this, the learners also seemed to be aware that incidental vocabulary learning will take a considerable amount of time and felt anxious about not being able to tell the important words from the less important ones.

The extramural and social aspects of the process were also favored by the learners. They wanted to have a say in their learning process and decide the optimal time to study and learn. They also liked the idea of being able to analyze and discuss the target language together as a group without the presence of an instructor. During these discussions, whose time and place were again decided by the learners, the learners took notes about the lexical or structural issues that came out and these were further discussed with the instructor. In a way, the learners decided the topics to be learned for each session. This is also in line with the related literature where L2 learners in a flipped class environment expressed significantly more positive perceptions about vocabulary instruction compared to the traditional group of L2 learners (Knežević et al., 2020).

During the instructional period, the learners were not forced to guess new words by using contextual clues. Guessing vocabulary from context sure is a valuable skill for L2 learners. In our sessions, the learners were instructed on how to make informed guesses when encountered with new words. However, the reliability and effectiveness of this approach to L2 vocabulary acquisition have been questioned. Guessing the correct meaning of new words from context has been reported to have an accuracy ratio of less than 50% (Nassaji, 2003). Common sense tells us that informed guessing from the context might be an effective complementary factor in the acquisition process and that the whole system of L2 vocabulary acquisition should not be totally based on it.

Observations and interviews yielded a common and noteworthy problem among L2 learners. Although L2 learners have an innate knowledge as to the flexibility of words in their native language, they seem to suffer from misconceptions concerning L2 vocabulary. They understand and use the same L1 words in different contexts with different meanings; however, when it comes to L2 words, language learners are frequently appalled when one word means something in one context and something else in another. L2 learners' natural tolerance towards

context dependent meaning changes in their native language seems to disappear during the L2 vocabulary learning process.

L2 vocabulary instruction is an important investment both on instructors' and learners' sides. However, when we analyze research findings, the outlook doesn't look so promising. Hundreds of hours are spent teaching L2 vocabulary, and the results are less than satisfactory. The findings suggest that, typically, one word is taught every hour and half of that amount is retained by the learners (Carlo et al., 2004; Lesaux et al., 2010). This is obviously a problem both for the L2 instructors and learners.

Theory and practice tells us that principles are much more important than approaches or methods (Nation, 2018). When we look at the related literature and discussions concerning L2 vocabulary, and add some common sense to it, some corollary principles appear. The followings are some of them:

- Vocabulary should be taught in context with some level of rote learning.

- The separation of grammar and vocabulary is not practical in terms of instruction.

- Both intentional and incidental vocabulary learning should be a part of L2 vocabulary instruction, the emphasis being on the former.

- Systematic repeated encounters of target L2 vocabulary are needed.

- Mass repetition of L2 vocabulary works as well as spaced repetition.

- The social aspect of learning should be taken into account.

As Nation (2018) suggests, "we need to put research findings and our practice up against common sense" (p. 140), and in this project, this is just the point that we are trying to make. Principles concerning L2 vocabulary instruction have potential to be integrated into flipped learning. In an L2 vocabulary instruction scenario, where learners are ready to consolidate the predetermined target words to some extent, the instructor will have enough time to take learners where they cannot go by themselves. After all, trying to help L2 learners with issues which they can resolve on their own makes no sense at all. In addition to this, flipped learning paradigm can be effectively used to deal with nearly all the problematic issues discussed in the related literature concerning L2 vocabulary instruction.

5. Conclusions

Schmitt (2019) claims that vocabulary knowledge is "an extremely complex construct" (p. 261), and single explanations will fall short in helping us understand and teach L2 vocabulary.

According to Nation (2018, as cited in Schmitt, 2019) over 30% of research concerning L1 and L2 vocabulary learning in the last 120 years has been carried out in the last 12 years; L2 vocabulary knowledge has been analyzed from numerous perspectives. Nevertheless, we are still uncertain about many aspects of the process. A solid theory of L2 vocabulary learning is still missing since Meara (1983) pointed it out decades ago. However, technology has been providing us with new perspectives on L2 acquisition. Now that linguistic behaviors of L2 learners can be recorded digitally, a massive collection of data are available, and we are definitely in a more advantageous position compared to the previous era.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests and Ethics

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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