



The Effect of Online Source on Iranian EFL Learners' Vocabulary

MATIN RAMAK^{1*}, SINA RAHMATTALAB ZIABARI²

¹M.A, Instructor of ELT, Azad University, Iran

²M.A, Instructor in Law, Azad University, Iran

Email:m.ramak90@yahoo.com¹;rahmattalab@yahoo.com²



MATIN RAMAK



SINA RAHMATTALAB
ZIABARI

ABSTRACT

This paper was devoted to exploring the effect of online source on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary. To carry out the investigation, 80 students majoring in English Translation at Chabahar Maritime University were selected; in order to determine their basic vocabulary knowledge a TOEFL test of vocabulary was administered and based on the results, 60 participants were randomly assigned into two groups - control group and the experimental group. Students in the experimental group received the necessary treatment and no special internet-text based vocabulary training for the control group. Finally, after implementing training in several sessions, experimental group students' status in retention of vocabulary were compared by giving them a two immediate post-tests and to investigate the long-term effect the vocabulary taught a delayed post- test was administered to both experimental and control groups. The results was analyzed by SPSS and showed that experimental group significantly improved during the period of instruction and at the end. The reported mean and standard deviation scores illustrated a significant difference ($p=.02$ and $.00$. $p\leq .05$) within the experimental groups' performances. The mean score results of the implemented independent t. test indicated that the experimental group significantly ($p= .00$ $p\leq .05$) outperformed the control group in the vocabulary test which was administered to all of the subjects of this study. Therefore, the second null hypothesis was also rejected.

Key words: Web, strategy, online source, vocabulary, EFL learners

1.1 Introduction

Vocabulary teaching and learning is a very challenging and demanding process while learning any foreign language. University students try to find out which vocabulary learning method is more beneficial or even the best one. However, not surprisingly, their first approach is to try to memorize every word that they do not know. According to the studies, beginners prefer learning words separately, that is, using a list of words to memorize, whereas advanced students, although there are some exceptions, try to learn words in context (Ellis, 1994, p. 553). Likewise, vocabulary teaching is generally restricted to presenting new items as they appear in any activity without preparing the learners through activation of prior knowledge or helping them regularly revise the previously learned vocabulary items until they are thoroughly learnt. In order to overcome this restriction and provide learners and teachers with better opportunities and a variety of activities, computers and the Internet especially online source and tools have been put into use in the foreign language instruction. Encompassing concordance, dictionary, close-builder, hypertext, a database with interactive self-quizzing feature (all freely available at www.lex Tutor.ca), and online workbooks are a set of online sources. The researcher will use multimedia-enhanced electronic dictionaries designed specifically for English language



learners, and which have several built-in aids that their book counterparts cannot provide (e.g. the Longman Interactive English Dictionary, the Oxford Picture Dictionary Interactive, etc.) (Butler-Pascoe and Wiburg, 2003: 126-127) and provide a variety of information about words, including synonyms, collocations, and sentences along with examples in which the applications of the word in the context have been presented. Chia and Ellis (2003) argued that the internet is an effective instrument for getting access to authentic news that seems to be crucial in enhancing students' skills.

Increasing the students' vocabulary knowledge through using the online source as a model to boost vocabulary learning will be the aim of this study.

Two major purposes in this study will be as follows:

1) Theoretically

a) The finding of this research will enrich the theory of teaching vocabulary and using vocabulary online source.

b) The result of the research can be used as a reference for those who want to conduct a research in English teaching and learning process.

2) Practically

a) The research will give way to solve the problem in teaching vocabulary.

b) Vocabulary online source can motivate the students to learn English in order to be more interested in learning vocabulary and enhanced their vocabulary knowledge.

c) Other teachers can adopt this strategy and also utilize them to judge students' performance.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Vocabulary acquisition is a key component of successfully developing communication and literacy skills. Developing a rich vocabulary is a top priority and an ongoing challenge for both L1 and L2 instruction. Researchers and theorists have pointed out to the fact that vocabulary acquisition is a complicated process and due to this complexity, teachers must make a comprehensive approach to lexical development in order for students to reach a higher quality and quantity of L2 output. But it seems that students' achievement in this area is not satisfactory.

In the context of Iran, even though students realize the importance of vocabulary in learning language, most of them learn vocabulary passively. They consider the teacher's explanation for the meaning or definition, pronunciation, spelling and grammatical functions, boring. They are often passive in a vocabulary section of the class, just listening to their teacher. Their young faces do not hide the frustration in EFL classes. Most of them complain about the heavy burden of words. In reading and listening sections, they are awed by the many unknown and unfamiliar words and they cannot understand the underlying message. In other words, their competence in the target language is being held because of their limited vocabulary. With a limited vocabulary they cannot rely on the strategy of guessing the meaning from context. EFL learners in Iran often complain about forgetting new words soon after learning them and look for effective ways to increase opportunities for retaining new words in long-term memory. Because vocabulary acquisition is an important component of successfully developing communication and literacy skills, so in this research I am going to study online source as an effective approach in retaining new vocabularies in long-term memory of Iranian EFL learners. Although different studies confirmed the positive effects of CALL and the internet on vocabulary, there is a lack of research to examine the influence of online source for lexical items especially in academic settings. (Lim & Morris, 2009, p. 283).

Some boring and traditional vocabulary teaching and learning strategies such as memorizing or motivating learners to memorize long lists of words are used by Iranian EFL learners in order to have a good performance on general English language tests. This is one of the challenging problems of Iranian EFL learners that in some cases make them disappointed in their attempt to learn the language. Also, lack of innovative and



updated strategies for vocabulary learning and placing all vocabulary learning responsibilities on learners' shoulders created some negative attitudes towards the current vocabulary teaching methodologies. In addition, the majority of EFL learners complain that their lexical knowledge is transient, since there is no opportunity to practice their knowledge out of class time.

Therefore, regarding all problems mentioned above, the need for a study to address these problems and provide some suggestions and implications to solve them is indispensable.

1.3 Research Questions and Hypotheses

The major objective of this study is to determine whether the online source has any impact on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary. In order to pursue the purposes of the present study, the following research questions are posed:

Q1: Does online source have any significant effect on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' vocabulary?

Q2: If online source has any significant effect on Iranian EFL intermediate learners' vocabulary, would it be a long term effect?

On the basis of the above research questions, the two following null hypotheses are formulated. Hence, the statistical results of the study would either support or reject the null hypotheses.

H0 1: Online source has no significant effect on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' vocabulary.

H0 2: Online source has no significant long term effect on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' vocabulary.

2.1 Review of Related Literature

Vocabulary teaching and learning is a constant challenge for both teachers and students because historically minimal attention has been paid to vocabulary instruction in the ESL classroom. For years, the familiar methodology for learning a second language was to pay attention to grammar and sentences first and then vocabulary. In fact grammar was viewed as the main task and mastery of its structures was the primary goal in SLA. In contrast vocabulary development was approached as some kind of auxiliary activity while it is important in expressing ideas and thoughts. Vocabulary knowledge is essential when using a foreign language since no one is able to communicate without words. Wilkins (1976), verifies the importance of vocabulary in communication. He declared insufficient vocabulary will result in communication barriers or failures; without the mediation of vocabulary no grammatical or other types of linguistic knowledge can be employed in second language, communication or discourse. Nation's statement (2005: cited in Nation and Waring, 1997) also explained its importance; "vocabulary knowledge enables language use, language use enables the increase of vocabulary knowledge, knowledge of the world enables the increase of vocabulary knowledge, language use and so on (p.6).

The crucial role that lexis plays in second language learning and teaching has been repeatedly recognized in theoretical and empirical second language acquisition (SLA) vocabulary research. Hence, in the introduction of his seminal book on the mental lexicon, Singleton states that "the major challenge of learning and using a language- whether as L1 or as L2- lies not in the area of the broad syntactic principles but in the "nitty- gritty" of the lexicon" (Singleton, 1999, p. 4), an idea which is also shared by Hunt and Beglar (2005, p. 2), who argue that "the heart of language comprehension and use is lexicon".

Other authors have gone even further in debating that "the single most important task facing language learners is acquiring a sufficient large vocabulary" (Lewis, 2000, p. 8) , or that the most noticeable difference between native speakers and foreign learners is in the amount of vocabulary they know or in their word knowledge (Laufer, 1998). From perspective of pedagogy, questions have developed around the "what" and "how" of vocabulary teaching (Read J. , 2004). Much attention has been allocated to verifying the best pedagogical practices in improving students' lexical development. A general discussion in SLA research is related to the nature and function of explicit and implicit learning processes (Sanchez & Manchonn, 2007); one issue is whether or not implicit attention in vocabulary acquisition is necessary (Nation P. , 2005 ;Coday &



Huckin, 1997). The general agreement seems to be a compromise between explicit and implicit lexical instruction. The former would be implemented through activities such as the study of decontextualised lexis, the use of dictionaries and so on (Hunt & Beglar, 2005), while implicit instruction would involve engaging students in language use activities, especially reading and listening. In fact Nation (2005, p. 585) summarized it in his own declaration that “every course should involve some deliberate attention to vocabulary as well as opportunities to meet the words in meaning-focused use”. Consequently, through the evolution of language teaching and learning methods and approaches, vocabulary came to its own. TBLT with a focus on employing authentic material, involving learners in real-like activities and enjoying the support of some robust perspectives tend to significantly promote EFL vocabulary knowledge. Richards and Rodgers (2001) indicated task-based instruction tries to teach vocabulary both directly and indirectly in a natural context. Vocabulary like other aspects of language learning can be facilitated when done via cooperative learning.

It is indicated that vocabulary learning is a very learner-centered activity (Mehring, 2005). Many researches proved that learners in a cooperative atmosphere learn better because they feel more relaxed and learn more from peers since making mistakes is accepted and it can be fun.

2.2 Techniques in vocabulary teaching

Learners acquire vocabulary in various ways. Students are exposed to a lot of new vocabularies during lessons: by the teacher, by texts or other materials they work with. A lot of this vocabulary is automatically absorbed (Harmer 1993, p. 159). Beside this incidental acquisition there are “pre-planned lesson stages in which learners are taught pre-selected vocabulary items” (Thornbury 2004, p.75). Various techniques and activities are aimed directly at learning vocabulary, which is usually put into sets of somehow related words, often by topic or meaning.

As McCarty (1992) proposes, before presenting new language, pre-teaching activities might be beneficial “to activate existing knowledge to make the encounter with new words more meaningful” (McCarthy 1992, p. 108). Pre-teaching activities often stimulate students’ attention and desire to explore a particular topic or subject in greater detail. Both McCarthy (1992, p. 110) and Thornbury (2004, p.76) suggest two general possibilities of arranging vocabulary presentation. The teacher provides the learners with the meaning of the words and then progresses to introduction of their forms or vice versa – the form is introduced first, followed up with illustration of the meaning. In the latter, forms are often presented in text or another form of context and students are asked to discover meanings and other properties of words themselves. This type of activity is called the ‘discovery technique’ (Harmer 1993, p. 160).

There are many possibilities of how to explain or illustrate the meaning of the words. In the first place, it is necessary to mention techniques typical for ‘Direct Method’ as Thornbury (2004) specifies them “using real objects (called realia) or pictures or mime” (Thornbury 2004, p. 78). The same author keeps going that these means are especially appropriate for teaching elementary levels, where many concrete objects are taught. These types of presentation are usually supplemented with the use of TPR (Total physical response), which is a technique where the teacher gives commands and students perform the actions. In TPR, “the intention is to duplicate the experience of learning one’s mother tongue” (Thornbury 2004, p. 79). As Harmer (1993, pp.161-162) suggests, sense relations, definition and direct translation of words might function as yet another helpful tool for clarifying the meaning of words.

Thornbury (2004) listed these options as well and furthermore included an idea of clarifying the meaning by examples, such as “providing an example situation” or “giving several example sentences” (Thornbury 2004, p. 81). All these techniques are more or less useful for a particular situation, level and vocabulary, the best way would be in many cases to combine them and use several together.

Besides explaining the meaning in vocabulary presentation, it is also essential to focus on forms, since the sound of words is one of the aspects influencing the organization of the mental lexicon (Thornbury 2004, p.



84; McCarthy, 1992, p. 110). This is arranged by various drilling activities. From experience, songs and chants are very suitable for drills, providing rhythm, catchy rhymes and an element of fun. As Thornbury (2004, pp. 86-7) suggests, introducing the written form of the word should follow not long after the presentation of the pronunciation.

After presentation, learners should be provided with plenty opportunities to practice the newly gained language. This is done by various forms of practice activities. In the first stage, usually mechanical practice is applied "in the form of some of kind of oral repetition" (Thornbury 2004, p. 93). Furthermore as he claims, it is necessary to integrate new vocabulary into existing knowledge in the mental lexicon, which is done by types of activities, where students make judgments about words, e.g. matching, comparing etc. This mechanical drill is then followed by more open and communicative activities "where learners are required to incorporate the newly studied words into some kind of speaking or writing activity." (Thornbury 2004, p.100). This is mostly provided by various pair-work or group-work activities.

2.3 Vocabulary teaching strategies

Over the last decades, researchers have shown that vocabulary teaching plays an important role in comprehending what language learners read and in what they write or say (McCarthy, 1992). It is important to know which vocabulary technique is the most effective and advantageous one. Vocabulary instruction includes different techniques ranging from translation of word and giving definitions to filling in the gaps and matching. Each technique also consists of different stages of practice to fix the words in the learners' mind.

Generally, this instruction consists of various strategies. In this research, the researcher is going to examine the impact of two kinds of techniques. One is classical method and its classical techniques and the other one is the use of task-based instruction, mostly information-gap and jigsaw one which involves learners in the process.

Task can be as broad as mastering a second or foreign language or as specific as recalling the meaning of a word. For instance, in vocabulary learning process, learning a word in a word list is different from learning the same word in a passage. It also must be noted that remembering a word meaning is completely different from being able to use the same word in real life situation. Therefore, the researcher is going to show which method is superior to the other, and is more effective in helping learners to be able to use the learned words in such situations.

2.3.1 Translation: Translation requires no demand on the part of instructor to teach as well as learners to learn a new word. Translation as a technique of teaching new words to the second and foreign language learners may be regarded as a simple technique, but there arouse a big question in regard of its efficiency, whether it works or not. The most important aim of learning a new word is being able to use the same word in the upcoming situations.

2.3.2 Using dictionary: There has been a debate of whether a dictionary should be used in the second or foreign language classroom between language teachers and researchers. Empirical researches on the impact of using dictionary on vocabulary learning have focused on comparing the use usefulness of dictionaries with that of guessing (Knight, 1994). Generally, results of these studies favored the contextual guessing approach (Crist, 1981). However, in recent years researchers have witnessed a shift of interest in dictionary research in L2 context, for example (e.g. Hulstijn, 1996; Knight, 1994; Laufer, 1998). In 1994(Knight) found that while incidental vocabulary learning through contextual guessing took place, those learners who have used a dictionary not only learned more words immediately after reading but also could remember the words more after two weeks.

The advantage of using dictionary was confirmed to be true in a study of 293 Japanese EFL university students done by Luppescu & Day (1993). Their participants were randomly assigned to a treatment (dictionary group) and a control group. Participants were asked to read a short story in class. The treatment



group used a bilingual dictionary and the control one was not permitted to use any. Then both groups were tested and the results suggested an advantage for treatment group in learning vocabulary, but they took almost twice as long to read the text as did control group. Therefore, it's not crystal clear whether using dictionary is beneficial or not.

2.3.3 Memorization of word lists: One of the other techniques of learning a new word is the memorization of the new words, although it seems to be more a stage of doing exercise for putting words in mind rather than a technique of learning. Learners simply repeat new words until they can recognize them. It seems that not only researchers have not done enough researches in this field but also most of researches that have been done in this area were carried out before 1970s.

2.4 Basics of E-learning

Schank (2002), Roffe (2002), Sambrook (2003) and Tsai & Machado (2002) refer to e-learning as "communication and learning activities through computers and networks (or via electronic means)". To be more specific, Fry (2000) defines e-learning as "delivery of training and education via networked interactivity and a range of other knowledge collection and distribution technologies." Wild, Griggs and Downing (2002) also had the same definition as Frys – they defined e-learning as the creation and delivery of knowledge via online services in the form of information, communication, and education and training. Bleimann (2004) stated that e-learning is a self-directed learning that is based on technology, especially web-based technology. He also stressed that e-learning is collaborative learning.

Internet and web technology is important in e-learning; Horton (2001) defines e-learning as "the use of the Internet and digital technologies to create experiences that educate fellow human beings." Apart from web-based technology, e-learning seemed to require multimedia based courseware (Evans & Fan, 2002; Lahn, 2004). Therefore, it is clear that e-learning is centered on Information and Communication Technology (ICT). It is not surprising that Hamid (2002) and Lytras, Pouloudi and Poulymenakou (2002) mentioned that e-learning evolved around Information Technology to enhance the learning performance and efficiency. Furthermore, Evans & Hasse (2001) pointed out that technology is indeed needed in e-learning to educate the learner through the usage of two-way video, two-way computer interaction, cable, satellite downlinks and Internet. Honey (2001) provided many good examples of learning activities that involved ICT. From these definitions and examples, we can therefore define e-learning as learning activities that involve computers, networks and multimedia technologies.

Research about e-learning as part of a blended approach to learning, which appears to hold significant promise, would be particularly beneficial. "Additional research will allow academicians and practitioners to make better decisions about where e-learning can be applied most effectively, how, and under what circumstances" (Cappel & Hayen, 2004, pp. 55-56).

2.4.1 The Value and Effect of Internet and Online Source on Vocabulary: Internet technology especially online source, which has become a fixture in many homes nowadays, has significant impact on education and has been more and more integrated into classrooms.

Teachers have been using online communication in the language classroom since 1980s. From an experience of dozens teachers around the world who have used the Internet in language teaching technology can motivate students, foster cooperation and remove barriers (warschauer,1995). Schon (1986) justly cited: a reflective teacher needs a kind of educational technology which does more than extend her capacity to administer drill and practice. Most interesting to her is an educational technology which helps students to become aware of their own intuitive understandings, to fall into cognitive confusion and explore new directions of understanding and action. (Cited in William & Burden p.57)

According to Gajek (2004, cited in Schmitt 2002,), preparation of web-based courses become a challenge to teachers, especially when autonomous learning is pointed out nowadays. She also claims that e-



learning is the only efficient teaching system which bring together family and vocational life with the need to study languages and understanding in which the main role of the internet, which according to many become “catalyst for new kinds of teaching and learning”, is to enable learners to achieve education goals first. Language learning and teaching has been impacted by growing social requirements and the need of knowledge. Alexander (1999, cited in Richards and Rennandya, 2002) says that the usage of the Internet can be regarded as “a ‘tool’ for learning” while Krajka (2005, cited in William & Burden, 2003.p.63) speculates about the incorporation of the Internet as a medium for classroom instruction. When using technology, foreign language learner can become an autonomous and independent learner. According to Louis (http://www.iatefl.org.pl/call/j_esp25.htm) a learner is autonomous when they become responsible for their own learning. They take their own decisions how to develop language competences; they become self-sufficient and believe in themselves, which results from reflection and “independent action”. Such autonomous persons also “want to learn and develop a meta-cognitive capacity”. This results in being able to communicate with others and taking risk when using a foreign language. Such an effective blending of interests, needs and wants requires teachers’ support and help which will develop learning strategies.

The educational system has been dependent in majority on teachers. Connection to the internet, using online source sending e-mails or using messenger services brings communication between learners and teachers out of the classroom. First of all, when we consider technology as the helpful tool to achieve autonomy, according to Louis the internet is a “good source of authentic materials” being aware of their interests.

According to Scrivener (2005), using the word 'lexis' instead of 'vocabulary' underlines the shift. Apart from this categorization choosing words to teach separately is impossible because the super ordinate, here language, doesn't happen in isolation. So we as teachers should keep this point in mind that, having the traditional so-called atomistic view of language not meet learners' needs. so we should consider the theoretical philosophy behind it and the process we are going to work on, undoubtedly we should take a holistic look and follow language as a means to an end not and end in itself. When dealing with the aspect of teaching new English words each teacher faces the problem of what words should be chosen. Harmer (1991) stresses the fact that it is clearly known what grammar should be taught at a specific level, but this is not so obvious when it comes to teaching words. The fact is that there are many syllabuses but none of them include the same list of lexical items.

According to Harmer (1991), there was a tendency in the past to teach concrete words (physically reachable) at basic levels and then introduce the abstract ones at higher levels. Frequency and coverage are other criteria when selecting words to be taught. The more frequently a word is used in a particular language the better it is for a learner to absorb it. He puts: “the words which are most commonly used are the ones we should teach first” (Harmer 1991 p. 154).

Moreover, the usefulness of a word increases if it conducts more than one meaning (covers more than one thing). Contrary to the fact that we can estimate the frequency of words, “it does not necessarily give us the only information we need when selecting vocabulary” (Harmer 1991 p. 156) and the question what words to introduce still remains open. The decision if a proper word should be taught also depends on a particular student and their needs. Another aspect strongly connected with teaching lexical items is word formation.

Methodology

3.1 Method and design of the study: Based on what Burns and Grove(1997) said, regarding how much structure the researcher imposes on the research situation and how much flexibility is allowed once the study is under way, research design vary. The research design of most quantitative studies is highly structured.



This study is set out to explore whether applying to intermediate Iranian EFL learners has any influence on improving their vocabulary knowledge or not and make them ready to encounter real world out of classroom for an effective communication.

It is a quantitative study as it was done to compare the effects of online sources on the subjects' vocabulary knowledge and to find out the difference between impacts of two kinds of tasks on learners of this study. Furthermore, it aimed to scrutinize subjects' attitudes toward implemented tasks. In nature, it is an experimental study because the researcher randomly selected the subjects.

3.2 Subjects

All subjects of this study were Iranian male and female EFL learners between the age ranges of 18-21 and were native speakers of Persian who were participating in English classes of Chabahar Maritime University.

All the subjects had had the same amount of exposure to materials before the experiment and all of them have studied English in high school. Therefore, they were judged to be almost at the same level of language proficiency, namely intermediate level of English proficiency, however, their level was established via implementing TOEFL proficiency test. They were 60 students who were put in two groups equally. 30 in control group, and 30 in experimental group. The list of unknown words to be worked on through the instruction was ensured by the use of vocabulary word list as the pre-test.

3.3 Instrumentation

This study utilized two different instruments: instructional instrument and testing material. Here an overview of instruments utilization is presented.

3.3.1 Pre-tests: In this study two pre-tests were administered: a TOEFL proficiency test in order to ensure the homogeneity of subjects' level of language proficiency as intermediate EFL learners and a vocabulary test, a list of vocabularies from course materials, to find the unknown words for instructor to be worked during the instruction.

3.3.2 Vocabulary test: A vocabulary test also was used as the second pre-test of this investigation. This test was a list of vocabularies taken from the reading course book. This test included 105 vocabularies and all of these vocabularies were from the related book. The aim of administering such test was to find out the list of unknown words for the researcher in order to work on them during the instruction. All the subjects a week later after taking the TOEFL test were asked to participate in it and the result was 50 common unknown words to all subjects. They were asked to mark "√" if they know the word and explain it in Persian and if they don't know the meaning mark "?" in the brackets.

3.3.3 Post-tests: Generally speaking, this study consists of 3 post-tests. Two immediate post-tests which were administered monthly only to experimental group during the instruction and was compared with their pretest scores to show the short term effect of online source on vocabulary retention of the subjects; one delayed post-test was also given to all the subjects of two groups. Immediate post- tests answered the first question and delayed one could answer both questions of the research. Besides, the delayed post-test also revealed final answer to the second research question i.e. it could reveal whether the retained vocabulary by the experimental group remained in long term or not.

3.4 Procedure

All the subjects in groups received the same amount of materials, just the treatment was different. The experimental group attended in separate sessions before starting classes in order to be justified about electronic based tasks and how the techniques should be done; they worked with online passages selected for them in the classroom in which they could connect to internet through Wi-Fi. The control group worked on vocabularies as ordinary classes and no especial method was administered.



Almost 10 vocabularies were worked on in each session and this was done in both groups. Every session took about 90 minutes; nearly 30 to 35 minutes of every session was spent on working vocabularies. In experimental group, target words that may facilitate subjects' task completion were sometimes presented to them with their definitions and sample sentences on the web. The instructor pre-taught vocabularies in this phase. It should be mentioned that the definitions and sample sentences presented by web correspondence were removed during online teaching.

Data analysis

4.1 Data Analysis Prior to the Experiment: Pre-test Findings

For the purpose of this study, 60 intermediate Iranian EFL learners were selected, 30 as treatment group and 30 as control group, forming an intact group design. To measure the subjects' language proficiency, a TOEFL (Paper-Based Test) proficiency test was administered.

4.1.1 Performance of subjects' on TOEFL pre-test: All subjects were administered TOEFL proficiency test to ensure they were intermediate EFL learners. Table 4.1 displays the TOEFL pre-test results. The estimated language proficiency mean of all participants amounted to 435.57 which put them as intermediate learners. The following table indicates the results more tangibly.

Table 4.1 results of TOEFL proficiency pre-test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
score	60	435.57	39.041	5.04

The results of this table indicate that all of the subjects are in the intermediate level ($M=435.57$) and ready to be put into different groups as control and experimental groups.

4.1.2 Performance of groups in TOEFL proficiency pre-test : After assigning all subjects as intermediate students, the researcher did the test of homogeneity of variances between groups to ensure their comparability at the beginning of the study. Table 4.2 summarizes the result of this test.

Table 4.2 test of homogeneity of variances

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
0.191	2	57	0.826

In this table the reported sig. is ($P>.05$) 0.826 > .05 which is larger than 0.05. So there is no significant difference between these groups at the beginning of the instruction and they are comparable.

4.2 Data Analysis for Research Question 1

The first research question of this study dealt with the impact of online source on vocabulary learning of intermediate Iranian EFL learners. It was hypothesized that this instruction has no significant effect on intermediate Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning.

As it was mentioned in the previous chapter of this research, the subjects of this study were put into two groups of thirty. The experimental group was involved in a three months vocabulary learning instruction sessions. The control group benefited the same amount of time and sessions of vocabulary learning practice without being involved in online instruction. Every session subjects worked on learning ten vocabularies; experimental groups with the application of electronic sources and the control group was conducted as ordinary English classes. Every session took 30 to 35 minutes working on ten selected vocabularies. After completing the whole instruction, all the subjects participated in a multiple choice 50 –item vocabulary test.

All scores were out of 50 for each subject and all the mean scores below were calculated out of 50 as well. Two successive immediate posttests with the interval of one month were conducted to check the within



group difference of the experimental group who benefited the online instruction. Therefore paired sample t tests were conducted to test the first hypothesis of the research.

4.2. 1 Performance of experimental groups in first immediate post-test: A paired-sample T-test was conducted to compare the effect of a one month online based instruction. Reported statistics by this test showed that there is significant difference in scores of the experimental group compared with the pretest. These statistics are presented by tables 4.3.1, 4.3.2 and 4.3.3

4.3.1 First Paired Samples Statistics between post & pretest of experimental

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Post test	14.6667	30	1.24106	0.22659
	Pretest	14.2667	30	1.08066	0.1973

4.3.2 Paired Samples Correlations of experimental

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Posttest & Pre test	30	0.686	0

4.3.3 First Paired Samples Statistics between post & pretest of experimental

		Paired Differences					t	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
					Lower	Upper		
Pair 1	Post test -Pretest	0.4	0.93218	0.17019	0.05192	0.74808	2.35	0.026

4.2.2 Performance of experimental groups in second immediate post-test: The second test was given to students immediately after the end of the second month session. In order to analyze this test, another paired t-test was administered. The results of this test are shown in tables 4.4.1, 4.4.2. and 4.4.3.

4.4.1 Second Paired Samples Statistics between post and pretest experimental

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	post test	14.6667	30	1.24106	0.22659
	pre test	13.9	30	1.02889	0.18785

4.4.2 Second Paired Samples Correlations of experimental

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Post test & pre test	30	0.54	0.002

4.4.3 Second Paired Samples Statistics between post and pretest of experimental

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	posttest -pre test	0.76667	1.10433	0.20162	0.3543	1.17903	3.802	29	0.001



The reported mean score and standard deviation for the experimental group's performance on pretest and second immediate posttest were ($M=13.90$, $SD=1.02$) and ($M=14.66$, $SD=1.24$) respectively. Based on observed statistics for t (3.80) and $p= .001$, the significant difference between performances of these two administrations on the second test was reported.

4.2.3 Performance of experimental and control groups in delayed post-test: After participating three months of learning vocabulary based on online and regular or ordinary setting sessions, subjects participated in the post test. The obtained scores of this test were examined by SPSS software. So an independent sample T-test was conducted and the statistics for experimental ($M=15.46$, $SD=.93$) and control ($M=14.36$, $SD=.92$) groups with p value= $.000 \leq 0.05$ showed that these two groups performed significantly different on the post test. The findings are presented in details in tables 4.5.1 and 4.5.2.

4.5.1 Group Statistics of experimental and control groups

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental	30	15.4667	0.9371	0.17109
Control	30	14.3667	0.92786	0.1694

4.5.2. Independent Samples Test of experimental & control groups

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Scores Equal variances assumed	0.158	0.693	4.569	58	0	1.1	0.24077	0.61805	1.58195
Equal variances not assumed			4.569	57.994	0	1.1	0.24077	0.61805	1.58195

4.3 Discussion

The reported mean and standard deviation scores of the 10-item tests, which were given only to experimental groups in after two immediate posttests, illustrated a significant difference ($p \leq .05$) within the experimental groups' performances therefore the first null hypothesis was rejected.

The mean score results of the implemented independent t. test indicated that the experimental group significantly ($p \leq .05$) outperformed the control group in the 50-item vocabulary test which was administered to all of the subjects of this study. Therefore, the second null hypothesis was also rejected.

The reported statistics revealed the better performance of online based instruction pupils. Similar to the experimental group subjects' better performance on the immediate posttests, in the final post-test they outperformed the control group as well. According to the comparison made between experimental and control groups it was supposed that the online based instruction would be more effective in promoting vocabulary acquisition, since it offers pupils the access to a comprehensible input and a relaxed learning atmosphere.



Unlike pupils performing in online group, those of control group experienced relatively less involvement in task completion. Since the target words were introduced in the pre-task phase and also embedded in instruction by teacher, pupils needed to comprehend them to be able to complete their activities toward vocabulary retention in accordance with the given instruction. However, due to the fact that they were not allowed to discuss with other classmates, they lost the opportunity to search for assistance. They also only needed to receive the input from teacher instead of describing their own part to others in a more comprehensible and accurate fashion. Therefore, it was concluded that online based instruction group promoted intermediate learners' vocabulary knowledge in long-term word meaning retention. Based on the above mentioned points, the second null hypothesis was rejected because it was proved that there was a significant difference between the effects of the online system on vocabulary learning remains for a long term.

5. Conclusion

Due to the importance of English as an international language, people in the world rush toward learning this language. Accordingly, research on all aspects of ESL teaching is increasing rapidly, as is demonstrated by publication of a large number of books with this subject all around the world. Lots of books on this subject would be found in well-stocked bookshops. The role of vocabulary is crucial in language teaching. Recent studies of ESL acquisition suggest a heavy concentration on vocabulary learning, demonstrating that vocabulary is a prerequisite for later proficiency in the language (Thornbury, 2002, p. 160). Various language teaching methods and approaches appeared and after a while of time faded away. Moreover, none of these methodologies noticed the importance of the use of authentic materials or involving learners in the learning process in ESL/EFL context. Online source with a novel view had a special focus on employing authentic materials, involving learners in task completion and enjoying robust theoretical foundations could have a remarkable effect on successful teaching and learning vocabulary.

As evidenced in chapter two of this study, Online source has enjoyed considerable popularity in different parts of the world during the past two decades. A series of studies of Computer Assisted Language Learning have been conducted and various articles and theses are published. Many of these studies just investigate the impact of ONLINE SOURCES on language learning. The present study was an attempt to make clarify the impact of online source language on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' vocabulary learning. Moreover, the differences between the impact of the two implemented tasks and their relation with pupils' vocabulary learning and recalling in addition to considering the impact of online source in vocabulary learning was discussed. In fact at first, it aimed to establish the effect of online source on vocabulary learning and then to set up whether the strategy promotes learners' vocabulary learning and recalling in long period as well .

To satisfy this end, sixty intermediate EFL learners who were in third grade of high-school were asked to participate in this study. As it was mentioned in chapter three, they were put into one treatment group and one control group. All of them received the same amount of materials during the instruction just the way of conducting classes was different. Different vocabulary tests were assigned to students (mostly experimental groups). In order to answer the posed research questions and to probe the null hypotheses, the gained data were analyzed. Based on the results of data analysis done in chapter four, the effectiveness of online source on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' vocabulary learning was confirmed. Besides, the differences between the effects of the two methods on pupils' vocabulary learning and recalling was approved. According to the statistical results of performed t. tests, it can be concluded that employing online source on vocabulary learning led to a significant difference between experimental groups and control one. An independent t. test at the end of the project conducted as a posttest also revealed that the retention of vocabulary in experimental group is for long term.



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