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**Theorized Vocabulary Teaching: An Analysis of the
Teachers' Views and Practices in Primary Schools in
Tizi Ouzou**

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Dedications

As my journey of 18 years of studies has come to an end; today, I am honored to dedicate this humble work and associate my success to my beloved parents and sisters, who have always been there for me to support me through thin and thick in all possible ways

Dear parents, even though it seems clear, none of this would have been possible without you. No words can ever be strong enough to express my gratitude for your unconditional love, efforts and sacrifices you have done to support my education and wellbeing. After all, I might not be the person I am today without the values of hard work, perseverance and dedication you have instilled in me. Your unwavering faith in me has given me the courage to take risks, embrace challenges and strive for excellence. I am grateful for the countless hours you have spent helping with my studies, listening to me when I needed someone to talk to, and cheering me on through every trial. I appreciate you giving me so much without expecting anything in return. Thank you for being my constant source of motivation and my bright shining light of inspiration. Thank you for everything you have done and all the ways you have helped me grow. I dedicate this work to you as a token of my eternal gratitude for all the affection you have never ceased to show me.

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Abstract

The present research aims at exploring teachers' views and practices while teaching vocabulary to children in primary schools in Tizi Ouzou, and determining whether these practices align with established vocabulary teaching theories. Moreover, it seeks to examine whether the inclusion of English in primary schools is favorable. In order to achieve these objectives, an analytical framework that incorporates three main approaches has been selected: Hunt and Beglar's explicit instruction (2002), word wall approach (1993) by Joseph Green and the use of color (1998) by Anna Gnoinska all viewed from a social constructivist perspective. The study is conducted using a mixed-methods research combining qualitative and quantitative methods. That is, classroom observation is conducted and four (04) EFL teachers are interviewed in four (04) different public primary schools in Tizi Ouzou. As to data analysis, descriptive statistical analysis and qualitative content analysis are adopted. The results obtained show that teachers view vocabulary as a main component of any language learning. Thus, they employ various strategies to ensure its acquisition while adhering to particular pedagogical theories. Additionally, it can be concluded from the entire investigation that it is convenient to introduce English in primary schools as the teaching environment endorses this new reform.

Key words: *Elementary Education, Explicit Instruction, Social Constructivism, Using Colors ,Vocabulary Instruction, Word Wall Approach.*

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language.

FL: Foreign Language.

L2: Second Language.

QCA: Qualitative Content Analysis.

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development.

CBA: Competency Based Approach.

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General Introduction

Statement of the Problem

English is currently one of the most widely spoken languages. Due to the requirements for a universally recognized international language, it has attained the status of a global language and has become the language of technology and science i.e. it is a means of communication to open up to the modern world and learn about one another's cultures. Thus, the mastery of this language becomes a top priority for the educational systems in many countries.

In today's world, where globalization necessitates the use of English as a worldwide language and a key to international communication, Algeria has developed a full awareness about the importance of embracing English into its educational system, which can be fundamental for the future of the country (Baghoussi& El Ouchdi, 2019). Over the years, it has witnessed remarkable changes as concerns foreign language teaching and learning, and has established new teaching reforms. One of its recent reforms is adopting English language teaching into public elementary schools. By the beginning of the academic year 2022/ 2023, third year children have started to learn English as a foreign language (EFL) along with French. This makes the teaching/learning process challengeable for both teachers and learners. Being exposed to different languages simultaneously at a young age can be confusing if not presented appropriately. Thus, according to Bavi (2018), teachers are required to develop ludic ways in order to get learners motivated and involved in the teaching/learning process. This involves incorporating suitable vocabulary activities that place learners at the core of the learning process and empower them to construct their own knowledge and apply it as necessary in real life situations (Baghoussi& El Ouchdi, 2019).

Learners of English as a second or foreign language find it challenging to understand meanings while engaging in cross-cultural conversations due to their lack of appropriate

words to express themselves. On that account, having a strong vocabulary is essential to properly use a second or foreign language. Vocabulary is the foundation of any language learning and effective communication. This is why the first and most crucial stage in learning a language is building a strong vocabulary since without it students cannot communicate effectively in the target language (Richards& Rodgers, 2001).

The teaching of English vocabulary to young learners has been the subject of a significant amount of research. Among these studies we can find “Techniques in Teaching Vocabulary to Young Learners at LIA English Course” conducted by Astuti Pratiwi Rahmadhani (2015), whose focus is to review the techniques teachers frequently adopt to teach vocabulary in LIA (Lembaga Indonesia Amerika) English courses. The results of the study reveal that the three most frequently used methods for teaching vocabulary to young learners are the use of flashcards for presentation, sorting exercises for practice, and sentence completion exercises for revision. Another study is conducted by Setiani Lelawati, Selma Dhiya, Putri Nurazijah Mailani (2018) entitled “The Teaching of English Vocabulary to Young Learners”. This study has been conducted with the intention of describing the strategies teachers employ to teach vocabulary to young students. The study findings demonstrate that teachers employ a variety of strategies, including flashcards and miming.

Since it is the first time in our country’s history that the adoption of English language teaching into Algerian public primary schools saw the light, no prior research has been done on the implementation of any vocabulary teaching theory or strategies in this new context of language development. Hence, this lack of studies enhances our interest to explore the issue and shed light on the ways vocabulary teaching is done in the classroom.

Aims and Significance of the Study

The overall aim of this research is to explore whether the vocabulary teaching in selected primary schools in Tizi Ouzou is based on any theory or speculated. The work is focused on four objectives. For a start, it considers teachers' views and perceptions toward teaching vocabulary to children. The second objective focuses on analyzing how vocabulary is taught by identifying the classroom strategies teachers use. As for the third one, it seeks to establish a connection between whether the teaching strategies used to teach vocabulary are part of a given theory or are just chosen in a random way. Finally, it examines how well the educational environment is suitable for the introduction of English in primary schools.

This research topic of investigating teachers' views and practices concerning vocabulary teaching in primary schools is an important issue that should be addressed. As a relatively new area of study, it is important for researchers and language teachers to be aware of the different practices that are used in the classrooms to teach vocabulary to young learners, and to determine whether these strategies are based on specific principles or are just chosen randomly. Researchers can also gain valuable insights into the importance of teaching vocabulary. Therefore, it can serve as a starting point for further investigation and in depth study, which can lead to the development of more effective teaching methods and techniques.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

In the light of this study, the following questions are suggested:

Q1: What are the perceptions of EFL teachers about the teaching of vocabulary to children in selected primary schools in Tizi Ouzou?

Q2: What are the classroom strategies EFL teachers employ to teach vocabulary in selected primary schools in Tizi Ouzou?

Q3: Do EFL teachers in the selected primary schools in Tizi Ouzou relate to theory while teaching vocabulary or not?

Q4: How conducive is the teaching environment to the introduction of English in primary schools?

To answer these questions, four working hypotheses are advanced:

H1: EFL teachers think that it is important to teach vocabulary to children in order to develop their fluency.

H2: EFL teachers in the Algerian primary schools employ various classroom strategies to teach vocabulary.

H3: EFL teachers in the Algerian primary schools relate to theory while teaching vocabulary.

H4: The teaching environment is adequate for the implementation of the English language in primary schools.

Research Techniques and Methodology

This study relies on the mixed methods approach, which uses both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection and analysis. In terms of data collection, two main instruments are used; namely an interview and a classroom observation. The interview is conducted with four (4) teachers in four selected public primary schools in Tizi Ouzou. It attempts to investigate their opinions as concerns the importance of teaching vocabulary to children, while the classroom observation in the same schools is conducted to obtain reliable data and gain a better understanding of the teachers' practices to teach vocabulary relying on an observation checklist. The study combines three (03) distinct theories that are explained from a social constructivist view: Hunt and Beglar's explicit instruction (2002), word wall

approach (1993) by Joseph Green and the use of color (1998) by Anna Gnoinska. The samples of the study are randomly selected.

Structure of the Dissertation

The present study follows the simple traditional model. It includes a ‘General Introduction’, four chapters and a ‘General Conclusion’. It starts with a ‘General Introduction’ that is a space reserved mainly for introducing the topic of the research, making claims and listing the goals, research questions and hypotheses. It is followed by ‘The Review of the Literature’ which defines concepts and elaborates on the theoretical framework while accounting for earlier studies that have been done in relation to the topic under consideration. Then ‘Research Design’ that describes the methodology adopted and the research procedure used to collect the data. As regards the next chapter which is called ‘Presentation of the Findings’, it describes the results gathered from the investigation. The fourth chapter, ‘Discussion of the Findings’ provides an explanation of the findings presented in the preceding chapter in order to identify appropriate responses to the earlier study questions. The ‘General Conclusion’, which comes last, offers a summary of the main research findings as well as further research.

Review of the Literature

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the review of the literature, being designed to discuss the main concepts in relation to the research. It is divided into five main sections. The first section is devoted to the status of English in Algeria and its adoption in elementary education. The second section deals with the definition of vocabulary, its main types and importance in second language (L2) learning. The third section consists of a review of what is perception. The fourth section comprises an overview of constructivism as a theory of EFL learning. As for the last section, it presents the theoretical framework of the research study.

1. Elementary Education in Algeria

1.1. Status of English in Algeria

The importance of English as a global language makes it a priority in foreign language study. According to Crystal (1997), a language can be recognized as a global one if it is acknowledged in every nation as having a special role. He has emphasized the fact that a ‘lingua franca’ is a language that is taught as a foreign language (FL) in countries where it is not their mother tongue. English happens to be compatible with the characteristics specified by Crystal and has gained its worldwide status. Throughout the world, English has been prioritized in FL instruction. Algeria is one of thousands of countries where it is required to teach English as a FL. It is primarily taught in schools as a subject of instruction (Ouahmiche et al., 2017). In other words, English has been positioned as a second FL after French (Slimani, 2016). However, the use of English in Algeria is growing on a regular basis, particularly among the young generation especially with the rise of social media and the internet as Marouf and Moulay (2017, p. 23) state: *“one cannot consider himself as part of this globalizing world unless he masters two things: English and computing”*. It is crucial to assess how much English might be needed in everyone’s future careers. Not to mention that

more people are becoming aware of the benefits of learning English in the modern era of remarkable technological advancements. Even sectors that have long been dominated by French are on the verge of shifting in favor of English (Ouahmiche et al., 2017). All fields of science, economy, industry, trade and education are undergoing tremendous growth and change, creating new demands and requirements for using English as a language of science and technology, which could be due to its widespread use in these fields around the world (Benmoussat, 2015). This is a departure from the traditional dominance of French in many academic domains in Algeria (Ouahmiche et al., 2017), which means that English is gaining more importance and recognition in different fields and it will gradually replace French to become the primary language used in administration and higher education.

1.2. EFL in Elementary Education in Algeria

When English becomes more and more important, the demands to teach it grow even more. In order to enhance the English communicative skills in our country and prepare the coming generations to take part in this new globalizing world, Algeria is calling for making adjustments to its national education system, with a particular emphasis on introducing English language teaching at the elementary school level. As far as second language education is concerned, the earlier the better. The most noteworthy reform is that of 1993, when English substituted French as the main foreign language in schools out of a sudden. Therefore, it was introduced into elementary schools (Marouf& Moulay, 2017). However, this amendment doomed to failure as indicated by Miliani (2000). Two different perspectives have emerged on this subject. On the one hand, there have been supporters who extremely wanted to eradicate French, and thus would opt for any other language to take its position. This language happens to be English considering its international value. On the other hand, opponents mainly the elites who use French in their daily lives have argued that a child would rather learn a language that he can use every day than any other alternative (Marouf&

Moulay, 2017). Similarly, Miliani (2000) affirms that the learner's understanding of a language improves with increased exposure to it. English is therefore in a poorer position than French. This emphasizes the importance of the context of language acquisition. Besides, learning English at a very young age is not conceivable. As a result of the inadequate consideration of the procedures to follow while selecting a language planning, teaching English in Algerian primary schools has failed back in the time. It was until 2022, that this reform was reconsidered after high demands from parents and researchers (Henache, 2022). Currently, English is presented as a required subject in the third year of primary school (at the age of 9) in the Algerian educational system, for it is typically thought that children are able to pick up new languages easily and quickly than adults (Marinova-Todd et al., 2000).

2. Vocabulary

2.1. Definition of Vocabulary

According to the Longman Dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics (2010, p. 629), vocabulary is “*a set of lexemes, including single words, compound words and idioms*”. In other words, it is the word list used in a language, comprising single words such as ‘father’, ‘mother’, ‘cat’ and ‘dog’, phrases like ‘in the corner’ and ‘of great beauty’ ; and groups of words that together represent a single meaning such as ‘a piece of cake’ and ‘rain cats and dogs’ (Lessard-Clouston, 2013). Yet, vocabulary encompasses much more than just individual words; it also includes the comprehension, acquisition, and use of words; it is “*the students’ knowledge of word meanings*” (Stahl& Nagy, 2006, p. 3). It is a means we use to communicate our ideas, emotions and thoughts like saying ‘the human brain never stops working until you stand up to speak in public’; that is, there is no language without vocabulary, and the latter determines how much of a language an individual can comprehend and produce.

2.2. Types of Vocabulary

2.2.1. Receptive Vocabulary

Receptive vocabulary includes “*words that we recognize when we hear or see them*” (Lehr et al., 2004, p. 5) or the number of words a person is able to comprehend whether hearing them spoken or reading them in context (Blachowicz& Fisher, 2005). In the sense that, receptive vocabulary is more likely to focus on guessing word meaning from context (Webb, 2005) like when watching movies, listening to songs or reading a text in the target language. These are words that students can recognize and understand when they are used, yet they cannot produce on their own (Kamil& Hiebert, 2005), which means that they can distinctly assign meanings to words even though they do not encounter them constantly, but cannot use them spontaneously.

2.2.2. Productive Vocabulary

Contrary to receptive vocabulary, productive vocabulary includes “*words that we use when we speak or write*” (Lehr et al., 2004, p. 5). Broadly speaking, it represents the amount of words a person uses to speak and write or express ideas (Blachowicz& Fisher, 2005). By way of explanation, those words that learners are expected to understand, pronounce correctly, and use effectively in speaking and writing are known as productive vocabulary. It involves the capacity to communicate effectively and express oneself clearly both in speech and writing.

2.3. Importance of Vocabulary in EFL

Vocabulary learning is the core component of any language acquisition, whether it is first, second or foreign because it affords language proficiency and successful communication which is the main goal of any foreign language teaching and learning (Decaricco, 2001). Whereas, having insufficient vocabulary size makes communication difficult (Susanto, 2017).

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Indeed, when you have a limited vocabulary consisting of only ‘hello’ and ‘good morning’, it becomes challenging to find the appropriate words to express one’s thoughts and ideas which hinders communication. That is, the conversation will instantly end after ‘hello’ without elaborating. Whilst having a wide range of words can help better understand what others are saying and exchange accurately. Considering the importance of vocabulary acquisition, Susanto (2017, p. 185) affirms that *“it is almost impossible to learn a language without words; even communication between human beings is based on words”*. That is to say, having a store of vocabulary plays a vital role in the development of meaningful spoken and written texts. For instance, having a broad and academic vocabulary will help you communicate your ideas more clearly and efficiently while writing an essay in English. You can use words such as ‘essential’, ‘vital’, ‘significant’, ‘fundamental’ or ‘prominent’ to refer to the importance of something and convey your thoughts with clarity. In the contrary, if you do not know and understand these words, it is difficult to properly comprehend the meaning. Therefore, vocabulary sets the stage for how well speakers, listeners, readers, and writers communicate (Richards& Renandya, 2002). It serves as the foundation for the development of all other skills, including speaking, writing, listening comprehension, spelling, and pronunciation. That is, the development of comprehension and written expression depends on vocabulary instruction (Blachowicz& Fisher, 2005). Moreover, the ability to teach and learn a foreign language effectively depends on having a strong vocabulary. When teaching a foreign language, having a wide range of vocabulary allows you to explain, give clear instructions and provide relevant examples to help learners understand and acquire the language easily. Likewise, having a diverse vocabulary when learning a foreign language helps you communicate effectively in that language. Put differently, Word knowledge of students is strongly associated with academic success. Overall, vocabulary is an essential component of language learning, effective communication and academic success.

3. Definition of Perception

As defined by the Longman dictionary of contemporary English, perception is “*the way you think about something and your idea of what it is like*” (cited in Qiong, 2017, p. 18). It is easy to see that in our contact with the world, we all see and encounter the same things and events, whilst each and every one of us reacts to it differently, and creates a personal intrinsic interpretation that can serve us as a personal view or opinion of the world around us. A simple example is when we look at a piece of painting; it evokes different interpretations among individuals. The difference may be perceived at the level of colors, shapes or lines. Some may interpret it as a lively artwork while others may interpret it as being calm and serene. This is due to people’s beliefs, values, attitudes, needs, interests, etc., and these are social factors that shape one’s perception of the outside world (Qiong, 2017). As McDonald (2011, p. 8) specifies: “*perception is a personal manifestation of how one views the world which is colored by many sociocultural elements*”. So, perception is more about each individual’s personal thoughts and particular way of perceiving the world. Thereupon, EFL teachers may all agree that teaching vocabulary is a part of the curriculum and obvious to teach. Yet, its significance in L2 acquisition is controversial among them. Thus, their perspectives on it can differ considerably.

4. Constructivism

Constructivism is a student-centered theory of learning that explains the nature of knowledge. From the constructivist point of view, individuals actively construct their own knowledge by engaging in experiences and reflecting on those experiences (Gao, 2021). This clarifies that learning is an active process that is developed on the idea that knowledge is created by learners as they work to make sense of their own experiences. Thus, in vocabulary instruction children must develop their own understanding of word meanings rather than simply being told what words mean (Lin, 2015). Still, teachers’ assistance is essential to the

development of learners' capacity for independent construction; that is, teachers are only facilitators of learning rather than givers of knowledge (Gao, 2021). Teachers should encourage pupils to actively engage with words and their meanings through exploration and experimentation in a variety of contexts (Lin, 2015). This introduces us to the social aspect of constructivism.

4.1. Social Constructivism

Social constructivism is a learning theory advanced by Lev Vygotsky (1968). The theory states that learning is significantly influenced by social interaction and culture (Powell & Kalina, 2009). People's interactions with one another, their culture, and society as a whole all contribute to the development of knowledge. Students depend on others to help them establish their foundations, and learning from others enables them to build their own knowledge (Adams, 2006). The idea is that, as opposed to constructivists who view knowledge as something that learners create on their own based on the experiences they receive from their environment, social constructivists perceive it as something that students create in collaboration with other students and teachers.

As a result of social interactions and instruction, cognitive abilities of a learner are enhanced. This takes place in what is known as the zone of proximal development (ZPD), that is, *"the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers"* (Vygotsky, 1978, p.33). When learners are engaged in challenging and meaningful activities, they find difficulties in learning. This is why guidance from more knowledgeable ones is needed; hence, they can perform independently what they have performed previously with assistance, as Vygotsky puts it *"what a child can do with assistance today she will be able to do by*

herself tomorrow” (Vygotsky, 1978, p.33). In short, the ZPD refers to the difference between what learners can accomplish on their own, and what they can accomplish with help of competent adults.

The fact of benefiting from teachers’ guidance to access and go beyond the ZPD is called scaffolding; namely, a way in which teachers provide learners the opportunity to expand upon their prior knowledge and incorporate new abilities (Powell& Kalina, 2009). Overall, social constructivism stresses the importance of collaboration, interaction, and dialogue in the learning process and it encourages students to be active participants in their own learning. This can be an important approach to vocabulary instruction, as it emphasizes the prominence of collaborative learning practices such as students engaging in pair or group works, playing instructional games and creating projects collaboratively all by using the target vocabulary words in order to reinforce vocabulary learning. By working collaboratively with teachers and peers, and engaging in the word learning process together, students are able to construct their own definitions of words and develop a deeper understanding of their meanings. Hence, collaborative scaffolding is an effective way to promote dynamic word knowledge that goes beyond simply memorizing definitions. This type of knowledge involves more than just the ability to recall meanings; it also encompasses a thorough comprehension of how words are used in different contexts, including their metaphorical uses (Moody et al., 2018).

5. Theoretical Framework

5.1. Explicit Instruction

Explicit instruction has been given various interpretations and is synonymously referred to as intentional learning (Hulstijn, 2003) that is “purpose-oriented” and involves conscious awareness of learning (Chen et al., 2021). In other words, it entails the involvement of the L2

learners' efforts and cognitive awareness during the learning, or as put by Hulstijn (2013, p. 2632) it is “*a deliberate attempt to commit factual information to memory, often including the use of rehearsal techniques like preparing for a test in school or learning a song by heart.*” Within the same approach, Chen, Tang, and Zheng (2021) add that learners gain new knowledge effectively and permanently as well as develop more sophisticated semantic use in the communication process. In contrast to the constructivist method which is student-centered, explicit instruction is teacher-centered, it involves the direct transmission of knowledge to the learner, who then mimics the teacher and memorizes the new input (Lin, 2015).

This approach includes four principles (cited in Hunt & Beglar, 2002, pp. 259-262):

1. Diagnose which of the 3000 most common words learners need to study:

It is important to decide how many words and which words to teach.

2. Provide opportunities for the intentional learning of vocabulary:

Intentional learning through instruction is essential for beginners with limited vocabulary as it makes the process manageable.

3. Provide opportunities for elaborating word knowledge:

Giving learners the chance to expand their word knowledge by being able to use a word both receptively and productively, as well as making connections between the previously known and the newly discovered information.

4. Provide opportunities for developing fluency with known vocabulary:

Learners' fluency is improved through practicing and recycling the material.

From a social constructivist view, this approach can be effective when combined with scaffolding. In some cases, when encountering difficult words, it is helpful to give explicit guidance (Sedita, 2005) to set a basis for the formation of several extremely complicated internal processes in children's thinking, that only result from effective social interaction and cooperative learning (Vygotsky, 1978). In other words, the definitions and meanings of these words must be clearly explained by teachers, who must also give students the opportunity to construct their own knowledge. Therefore, the development of students' autonomous construction ability is intrinsically tied to the teachers' guidance. Teachers should provide necessary assistance and guidance as well as the right materials that explicitly address the concepts (Gao, 2021). That is, using a number of social factors such as gestures, movements of the entire body, gaze and facial expressions (Gobet, 2015) or bringing ideas, playing, reading stories, asking questions and showing objects that they can see and touch (Cameron, 2001), in addition to providing students with repeated exposures to words (Graves, 2016). As novice language learners, they can't make use of the language without receiving the necessary support for building a rich and powerful vocabulary i.e. teachers mediate the world for the child and pave the way for successful L2 acquisition.

5.2. Word Wall Approach

Joseph Green developed a vocabulary immersion strategy in 1993. In order to encourage vocabulary learning and enhance the development of language abilities, the word wall strategy consists of choosing mostly often used terms to build a panel of words and then placing them on a wall where it is visible to all pupils. For instance, if the class is studying 'school items', the word wall panel might include words like 'ruler', 'pen', 'eraser', 'pencil case' and 'book'. Each word would be attached to a corresponding illustration to make it easier to reinforce the meaning of the word. The word wall can be used by students as a thesaurus, a spell checker, and a resource during language development lessons. Because it

offers opportunities for repeated exposure to lexical items, it ensures that students retain more vocabulary. It can be applied in response to meaningful context or to create pertinent context around new words, and it encourages students to make connections between new and known words (Eyraud et al., 2000). The word wall approach helps learners recycle as many words as possible and thus it enhances second language acquisition.

5.3. Using Colors

In visual thinking, color is a key tool to attract and direct attention. This is why it is widely used in vocabulary instruction. Teachers underline or color letters or words to draw students' attention to the new linguistic input they need to acquire (Gnoinska, 1998). For instance, the teacher writes 'I love my pet cat' on the board and highlights the word 'cat' with a red color to focus the pupils' attention on that word to be taught. This technique is shown to be effective in vocabulary acquisition as it makes learners easily behold the particular highlighted units. Another point is that using specific colors captures learners' curiosity increasing the likelihood that they will perceive, understand and recall the forms (Aljehani, 2022). Gnoinska (1998) adds that making colored drawings for words, using bright and lively flashcards, cue cards and posters makes learning much simpler and highly motivating for all pupils. All in all, young learners recall words effectively by generating one's own visual image. This helps learners actively engage with the words and construct their own meaning which makes the learning process beneficial, enjoyable and memorable.

Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter has put a focus on the important notions related to our research work. We have mentioned the status of English in the Algerian educational system and its introduction into primary schools. Then, we have focused on the main component of language development that is vocabulary, and have presented a brief definition of perception. Later, we

Review of the Literature

have reviewed the main principles of social constructivism. Finally, we have introduced a theoretical framework that brings altogether three approaches to vocabulary teaching (explicit instruction, word wall approach and the use of colors) from a socio-constructivist view. Whilst, the next chapter is devoted to the presentation of the methods and materials that we have used to investigate our research work.

Research Design

Introduction

This chapter is the methodological part of the dissertation. It explains the research design of the study. It is intended to present the procedures and materials used to collect and analyze data. The current study investigates theorized vocabulary teaching in primary schools in Tizi Ouzou and this chapter describes the two research techniques used in the study in order to answer the research questions stated in the General Introduction that are a classroom observation and an interview. It outlines the entire inquiry from context and sample of the study to data collection and analysis.

1. Research Method

The present study adopts the mixed- methods approach to data collection and analysis, using both qualitative and quantitative methods. It *“involves the collection or analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study with some attempts to integrate the two approaches at one or more stages of the research process”* (Dornyei, 2007, p. 163). That is to say, in a mixed methods study, quantitative and qualitative data are gathered, analyzed, and merged in a single study. The quantitative method is concerned with numerical data, which is subsequently analyzed using statistical methods, while qualitative method involves non-numerical data and focuses more on understanding the meanings people assign to social or human situations (Dornyei, 2007). In our inquiry, the quantitative data is gathered through classroom observation checklist which is then analyzed statistically. In contrast, a semi-structured interview is used to collect qualitative data, which is then analyzed and interpreted using qualitative content analysis (QCA). By using the mixed methods, we can obtain a more thorough understanding of a target phenomenon and compare one set of data to another (Dornyei, 2007). In simple terms, results gathered through several methodologies are considerably insightful and can provide stronger evidence than each individual method.

2. Research Design

This investigation is an exploratory case study. A case study is “*an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context*” (Yin, 2003, p. 13). That is, it often offers comprehensive account of an emerging issue within a particular population and setting. The exploratory case study is “*used to develop an initial understanding of the program or phenomenon of interest*” (Chopard & Przybylski, 2021, p. 1). It is notably effective for developing feasible hypotheses, research questions to be answered, and alternative designs or approaches that can be used in a subsequent, more specific and in-depth study (Yin, 2003). Teaching English as FL in Algeria is not something that goes back to yesterday and has always been a topic of interest to language researchers. However, as elementary schools have been added as an additional context for EFL development, more focus is altered on this new setting. Thus, we purposefully use the case study design to address the contextual conditions of teaching vocabulary to young learners, particularly the exploratory one to pave the way for additional research.

3. Data Collection Procedures

3.1. Context and Sample of the Study

The investigation is carried out in four (04) public primary schools in Tizi Ouzou. This work has been investigated in four public primary schools because it is a recent context where English is only taught to third year pupils, resulting in just one (01) EFL teacher per school. The overall aim of this research is to explore whether vocabulary teaching is theorized or done at random. Thus, more participants are required to collect relevant data. However, the sample design of the study is random sampling that “*involves selecting at random from a list of the population (a sampling frame) the required number of subjects for the sample*” (Cohen et al., 2007, pp.110-111), which means that each participant in the population being studied

has an equal chance of being selected, and the probability that a participant will be chosen is unaffected by the selection of other participants in the population (Cohen et al., 2007). That is to say, from a total of (173) EFL teacher in public primary schools in Tizi Ouzou, any teacher could have been selected to accomplish this investigation. Thus, the four (04) teachers are randomly selected.

3.2. Data Collection Tools

For a better understanding of the topic and in order to confirm or deny the hypotheses stated in the general introduction, two instruments are chosen to collect the necessary data. The qualitative data is collected via an interview, while the quantitative data is gathered through classroom observation using an observation checklist.

3.2.1. Classroom Observation

The first instrument that is used in the study is classroom observation. It offers direct information rather than just reporting others' narratives (Yin, 2016). Classroom observation is conducted using a checklist that contains eleven (11) items based on the theoretical framework discussed in the previous chapter and the research objectives of the investigation (see Appendix 01). It allows us to discover the classroom strategies teachers employ to teach vocabulary and analyze whether teachers follow theories of vocabulary instruction while presenting new words to the pupils. The classroom observation has started from April 23rd, 2023 until May 11th, 2023, for a total of fifteen (15) sessions.

3.2.2. Interview

An interview is also adopted as a second research tool in the current study through which data is gathered. It is defined by Cohen et al. (2007, p. 153) as “*an unusual method in that it involves the gathering of data through direct verbal interaction between individuals*”. It allows researchers to examine phenomena that cannot be directly observed such as self-

reported perceptions (Mackey& Gass, 2005). In this study, we have opted for a semi-structured interview *“in which the researcher uses a written list of questions as a guide, while still having the freedom to digress and probe for more information”* (Mackey& Gass, 2005, p. 173), which means that, although there are a number of pre-prepared guiding questions, the structure is open-ended, and the interviewee is invited to comment on the problems raised in an exploratory manner (Dornyei, 2007). The interview has been conducted with four (04) EFL teachers in the selected public primary schools in Tizi Ouzou. It consists of fourteen (14) fixed open-ended questions (see Appendix 02) that have been conducted in a face to face format. The research objectives as well as the terms of ethics and confidentiality have been communicated to the teachers in advance.

4. Data Analysis Procedures

To analyze the acquired data, two data analysis procedures are selected. Descriptive statistics for the numerical data collected via the observation checklist, and the qualitative content analysis (QCA) for qualitative data gathered via the interview.

4.1. Descriptive Statistical Analysis

In order to save time and space, numerical data are summarized using descriptive statistical analysis. That is, assessing the quantitative data gathered from the observation checklist in relation to the teachers. The descriptive statistical analysis is used to determine how many teachers employ certain vocabulary teaching techniques.

4.2. Qualitative Content Analysis

In order to interpret and describe the data obtained from the teachers' interview, qualitative content analysis (QCA) is adopted. It is defined as *“an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytical rules and step by step models, without rash quantification”* (Mayring,

2000, p.1). It goes beyond simply counting words or collecting factual information from texts, rather it allows researchers to understand social reality while maintaining subjectivity (Zhang& Wildemuth, 2005) through reducing and summarizing the material in an analytical way in order to develop or test a theory (Cohen et al., 2007). After analyzing the responses provided by the teachers, we have identified recurring themes and patterns that are guided by the theoretical framework used in the study and grouped together all occurrences that represent a specific principle, which has helped us to explore and evaluate their perspectives concerning the teaching of vocabulary to young learners.

Conclusion

This chapter has covered the methodology used to carry out the study. It has first described the research method followed. Then, it has provided information about the context and participants of the study. After that, it has focused on both the tools used to obtain necessary data and the procedures that have assisted in describing and interpreting the data. While the following chapter presents the findings of the investigation.

Presentation of the Findings

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the presentation of the findings of the study. It presents the results achieved through the teachers' interview and the classroom observation. It is divided into two parts. The first part displays the statistical presentation of the results obtained from the classroom observation checklist using the rule of three. Whereas, the second part reports the results of the interview conducted with four (04) EFL teachers in public primary schools in Tizi Ouzou.

1. Presentation of the Results of the Classroom Observation Checklist

The following results have been obtained from the classroom observation attended from April 23rd, 2023 until May 11th, 2023. It has allowed us to have a direct and clear sight of the classroom strategies used to teach vocabulary to young learners. The classroom observation has been conducted following a particular checklist that has been prepared earlier. The checklist contains eleven items all of which are set up on the principles of explicit instruction, word wall approach and the use of colors from a social constructivist perspective.

Items	YES	NO
1. Teacher introduces new words in every unit	04	00
2. Teacher recalls words in every lesson	04	00
3. Teacher uses colors to teach new words	04	00
4. Teacher uses drawings to explain the meaning of words	04	00
5. Teacher uses realia to teach new words	04	00
6. Teacher plays the role of a facilitator while pupils try to find the meaning of words	04	00
7. Pupils have created a word panel that they check all the time	01	03

Presentation of the Findings

8. Teacher asks pupils to check the meaning of words from the word wall	00	04
9. Pupils are active in the classroom	04	00
10. Pupils are able to understand the teacher's instructions	04	00
11. Pupils are able to produce sentences using the already acquired vocabulary	04	00

Table 1: Presentation of the findings of the classroom observation checklist.

As Table 1 clarifies, all the teachers present new words at the beginning of every unit and pupils are encouraged to review them during every session. In terms of item 3, all of the four teachers employ colors as a technique to teach new words. Similarly, item 4 and item 5 demonstrate that primary school EFL teachers use drawings to clarify word meanings in addition to real objects. For item 6, when teaching vocabulary, all the teachers play the role of a facilitator in the classroom. As far as item 7 is concerned, only one teacher has created a word panel. Meanwhile, the other teachers have not invested in using the word wall approach. Item 8 distinctly shows that none of the teachers use the word panel as a spell checker and thesaurus of words. In the case of item 9, pupils are actively engaged and fully participate in the classroom. Item 10 and item 11 share a pattern that is; all pupils without any exception can both comprehend and produce English language using the already acquired words.

2. Presentation of the Results of the Teachers' Interview

In this part, we present the results obtained from the second research tool used to gather the needed data for our research that is the teachers' interview. The latter has been conducted with four EFL teachers in public primary schools in Tizi Ouzou in order to learn about their views concerning the importance of vocabulary in developing pupils' fluency and having a general survey on the different strategies they employ in the classroom to teach vocabulary. The interview has been conducted through the process of questioning and note taking. In the following representation, the teachers' answers are summarized and paraphrased, and they are identified as Teacher 01 till Teacher 04.

Presentation of the Findings

Question 1: How important is the teaching of vocabulary to your learners?

All the teachers' answers are focused on communication and all agree that vocabulary is important for both oral and written production. As Teacher 04 says "*vocabulary is vital and the foundation of language production either spoken or written*". Meanwhile, Teacher 03 adds that "*learners cannot understand or speak any language if they do not have enough vocabulary, and we cannot say that someone has learned English if s/he did not acquire at least basic words to express their needs*".

Question 2: What are the strategies you use to teach new words?

All of the teachers' responses to this question are essentially identical. Flashcards, realia, pictures, mimicry, songs, games, role play, colors and drawings are the common techniques they all employ to teach vocabulary. Except for Teacher 01, who adds another strategy that involves using data show in the classroom.

Question 3: What sort of words do you teach? Abstract, concrete or both.

Once again, all teachers' answers are similar. They all focus on teaching concrete vocabulary rather than abstract vocabulary for that "*children need to use their senses to acquire new things*"; using Teacher 02 words, and goes further in explaining that "*we need to always have illustrations and sensory examples to demonstrate*". Similarly, Teacher 04 clarifies that "*abstract words lack visual representations that can assist pupils in remembering them; for instance, 'love' we can agree that it is something that they can readily acquire because it is something known to them. However, words like hope, freedom or even sympathy are beyond their abilities compared to their age*". While Teacher 01 and Teacher 03 settle for a very simple answer that is "*children assimilate better what they can see and touch*".

Presentation of the Findings

Question 4: How do you teach ‘days of the week’, ‘months of the year’, ‘the alphabet’ and ‘numbers’?

Teachers’ answers varied when they are asked how they teach ‘days of the week’, ‘months of the year’, ‘the alphabet’ and ‘numbers’. Teacher 01 uses flashcards, while Teacher 02 teaches through songs. From another point of view, Teacher 03 claims that “*words as ‘days of the week’ and ‘numbers’ are words that pupils already know in other languages and are obvious to learn. So, I just pass the information and they take it. For example, I say: today is Sunday, tomorrow is Saturday*”. Regarding Teacher 04, he varies techniques according to the situation. Using his words Teacher 04 says: “*concerning ‘the days of the week’ and ‘numbers’, I use songs and flashcards, and at each time, I use a certain technique to make sure they have acquired ‘the days of the week’ (yesterday was..., today is..., tomorrow will be...)*”.

Question 5: According to Hunt and Beglar (2002), it is important to know which of the 3000 most common words learners need to study. Do you limit yourself to the words you have been requested to teach or allow yourself to add more? Why?

For this question, all the teachers responded the same way. The curriculum has been extremely clear in giving a limited number of words to teach, that is thirty (30) words for the entire year. Even so, occasionally teachers allow themselves to add more vocabulary, particularly when pupils show interest and ask about certain words. Thus, teachers advocate teaching more vocabulary since pupils’ memory is still fresh and assimilates easily.

Question 6: According to research in the field of EFL teaching and learning, the use of colors and drawings helps learners to better recall words. What do you think?

As mentioned by Teacher 01 “*as novice and young learners, they easily remember what they see, and colors are one factor that attracts most of their attention and stimulates*

Presentation of the Findings

their memory". A quite similar answer has been given by Teacher 03 and Teacher 04 where they claim that colors and drawings attract pupils' attention and make them enjoy the process of learning. Teacher 03 adds that vivid flashcards are way better and more appealing to children than black and white flashcards, and the same applies to drawings "*as drawing a cat on the board can better help pupils understand what is a 'cat' in English than just writing the word on the board*". Teacher 02 has given us this answer: "*we are dealing with children, so we need to put them in the right environment of learning which consists of colors and drawings*".

Question 7: How do you use colored pens to teach words?

All teachers reveal that they use colored pens for phonemic awareness. That is, they highlight specific letters at each time. Whereas, Teacher 04 uses it also for teaching new vocabulary by writing the new targeted words in a different color to direct the pupils' focus on those words.

Question 8: Creativity and innovation are favored while teaching vocabulary to young learners. How do you explain this?

Teacher 03 and Teacher 04 focus more on the teacher's creativity in preparing the teaching materials. They stress the value of using various strategies of vocabulary instruction, and emphasize the significance of creating a joyful and productive learning environment as Teacher 04 puts it "*we always have to think outside the box*". Teacher 01, Teacher 02 and Teacher 03 encourage and induce pupils' creativity by giving them assignments where they gather all of the acquired vocabulary and create a sort of a Pictionary using images or drawings and colors. Yet, Teacher 02 hangs on the wall some of the pupils' finished products, while the others complain about not having much time to do the same due to the curriculum

Presentation of the Findings

and time constraints. Teacher 04 on the contrary says that the time allotted for instruction do not support assigning projects or fostering students' creativity.

Question 9: I have noticed that there are French and Arabic word panels but not for English words. Why didn't you create one?

With the exception of Teacher 02 who has already made a little space for English words on the wall, the other teachers argue that there is not enough time or budget to allow themselves decorate the classroom and that the curriculum does not enable extra sessions for creativity and productivity.

Question 10: What is the role of the teacher in the classroom while teaching new words?

All of the teachers agree on the fact that the actual role of the teacher in the classroom while teaching new words is no more than a facilitator, a guide and a monitor who should allow his pupils construct their own understanding of the words being taught. According to Teacher 03, the teacher *“supplies his pupils with appropriate materials to learn and acquire vocabulary effectively”*.

Question 11: When dealing with difficult words, how do you manage to transmit their right meaning?

Teachers' ways of explaining meanings of difficult words differ from one teacher to another. Teacher 01 turns to using the mother tongue or any other language that could be of use to the pupils, generally speaking translation of words. Sometimes he also uses pictures, flashcards or realia just as Teacher 03 and Teacher 04 do.

Another technique that Teacher 04 uses is mimicry, which Teacher 02 describes as *“paralinguistic features”* and explains that it is *“maximizing body gestures and allowing yourself to be silly in your gestures”*.

Question 12: How do you help your pupils develop fluency with known words?

Every teacher adopts the same process for increasing pupils' fluency, which involves recycling and recalling previously learned vocabulary at the beginning of every lesson, either by asking the pupils to tell the date, playing roles or demonstrating flashcards and asking pupils to say what they illustrate. Another point that Teacher 03 emphasizes is reading and choral repetition, that is, encouraging students to read sentences in which the teacher models the language and the class repeats it.

Question 13: What theory do you use to teach vocabulary?

All the teachers assert that they try to work in an eclectic way when they present new words and do not adhere to any specific theory of vocabulary instruction. All that matters is meeting pupils' needs as Teacher 03 says *"I teach new words in a way that best helps my pupils acquire the right meanings effectively. Also, I try to vary strategies to avoid routine because routine kills children's motivation"*. However, teachers have specified that they work under the Competency Based Approach (CBA). They have mentioned completing a two-week training where they have seen in a global way various ways of teaching and the fundamental rules to go by, such as being a monitor in the classroom and allowing the pupils to construct their own knowledge. Teacher 02 says *"we have been introduced to didactics briefly and have been provided with basic instruction, which we are going to deal with deeply in the upcoming training"*.

Question 14: What other techniques do you think are most efficient for vocabulary acquisition?

Teacher 01 contends that all the strategies of teaching vocabulary have already been discussed. In contrast, the other teachers highlighted their need for a data show and videos for a more effective and practical vocabulary acquisition.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the findings of the empirical study gained from the two tools; classroom observation and interview. The results of the classroom observation checklist were presented in the first section, and they demonstrate that EFL teachers use a variety of strategies to teach vocabulary to young learners. While the second section has reported the results of the teachers' interview which reveal their perceptions regarding the teaching of vocabulary to young learners. The following chapter provides a detailed interpretation and explanation of the results.

Discussion of the Findings

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the results presented in the previous chapter. The discussion of the findings is intended to provide answers to the research questions and confirm or refute the advanced hypotheses. The findings are examined and evaluated in accordance with explicit instruction (2002), word wall approach (1993) and the use of color (1998) from a social constructivist perspective. This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section is dedicated to the discussion of the results concerned with the teachers' perceptions regarding vocabulary teaching to children. While the second section discusses the strategies teachers use to teach vocabulary to young learners. As for the third section, it is devoted to the discussion of whether EFL teachers in the selected primary schools in Tizi Ouzou follow theories of teaching while presenting new vocabulary or not. Finally, the last section deals with evaluation of the convenience of the educational environment for the introduction of English in primary schools.

Section One: The Perceptions of EFL Teachers about the Teaching of Vocabulary to Children

The results obtained from the teachers' interview indicate that all EFL teachers are aware of the importance of vocabulary in learning English and developing strong communicative skills. The answers to the first question provide a glimpse into how teachers view the role of vocabulary in second language teaching, particularly to young learners. Vocabulary serves as the foundation for language development, which is crucial for pupils' speech production. That is, teachers prioritize speaking on writing and encourage pupils to speak and use English orally by developing their phonemic awareness and providing them with good extensive vocabulary. In this way, by having a good grasp of words and pronunciation, pupils will be able to produce language appropriately and fluently. As it is

described in the first chapter of our dissertation, some research believe that vocabulary is a key element of language acquisition. This is in accordance with Susanto (2017, p. 185) who states that *“it is almost impossible to learn a language without words; even communication between human beings is based on words”*. Our findings also go in tune with Decaricco (2001) who believes that vocabulary development promotes effective communication and language proficiency.

Additionally, without extensive vocabulary knowledge, communication in second language cannot be successful. Hence, the teachers’ viewpoint can be highlighted by making reference to Al-Dersi (2013, p. 74) who claims that *“mastery over vocabulary makes a learner an effective speaker whereas lack of vocabulary leads him/her to failure in establishing and achieving successful communication”*. This means that, without vocabulary, learning a second language or even communication are extremely hard and almost impossible due to the fact that *“words are the building blocks of language”* (Al-Dersi, 2013, p. 74). Furthermore, these findings are supported by numerous scholars who believe that since language is primarily made up of words, second language learners should not only be familiar with grammar rules but also have a solid grasp of vocabulary (Decaricco, 2001; Susanto, 2017; Richards& Renandya, 2002; Blachowicz& Fisher, 2005; Graves, 2016).

Section Two: The Classroom Strategies EFL Teachers Employ to Teach

Vocabulary to Young Learners

According to the results displayed in the preceding chapter, EFL teachers in the selected primary schools in Tizi Ouzou adopt several strategies to teach vocabulary, namely flashcards, realia, pictures, mimicry, songs, games, role play, colors and drawings.

Harmer (2007) points out that age plays a significant role in how and what we decide to teach by putting emphasis on the different needs, competencies and cognitive skills of a

learner. He asserts that contrary to adults who can use abstract thoughts frequently, young learners' understanding "*comes not just from explanation, but also from what they see and hear and, crucially, have a chance to touch and interact with*" (p. 82). Our findings correlate with these words. Indeed, teachers prioritize the teaching of concrete rather than abstract words while taking into account the requirements and cognitive skills of their pupils in that they retain better what they see and touch. As one of the teachers says "**children need to use their senses to acquire new things**". That is, teachers make an effort to incorporate various tools into vocabulary lessons in order to ensure that their pupils learn adeptly all while being actively engaged. Nonetheless, teachers occasionally have to teach abstract concepts like numbers, days of the week and months of the year. Hence, they concretize the abstract and teach them in the same way they teach concrete words. The various strategies teachers use to teach vocabulary to young learners are thoroughly discussed below.

1. Flashcards and Pictures

According to Baleghizadeh and Ashoori (2011, p. 4) "*a flashcard is a cardboard consisting of a word, a sentence, or a simple picture on it*". They generally include visual representations of the words to be taught. As observed in the classroom, teachers stick on the board a set of pictures or flashcards that illustrate specific concepts such as 'pets'. Then, they ask their pupils if they are familiar with them. Children certainly can recognize cats and dogs looking at their pictures as they all have pets at home. They either respond in their mother tongue or, if someone already knows the answers in English, they proceed and provide their classmates with the required vocabulary. This is in accordance with Lin (2015, p. 645) who firmly says that "*interaction is helpful for the students to construct their personal meaning of the words*". By doing so, teachers allow pupils to learn from one another while assessing their previous knowledge. Afterwards, teachers provide the pupils with the accurate knowledge or vocabulary related to 'pets', which they practice later on collaboratively to reinforce their

pronunciation and assimilate the words effectively, usually through choral repetition or drill. That is, in the early stages of language learning, teachers model language and the pupils repeat it aloud in order to help them memorize the words. Teachers assert that visuals are a powerful tool for making word meaning simple and apparent. This lines up with Alqahtani (2015, p. 27) who states that, “*visual support helps learners understand the meaning and helps to make the word more memorable*”. Similarly, Komachali and Khodareza (2012) explain that flashcards are a creative and simplest way to assist learners retain and recall vocabulary items. Pupils tend to understand and remember the meaning of the English word ‘dog’ if they associate it with a picture rather than just trying to grasp the word meaning verbally. This notion has been supported by Carpenter and Olson (2011, p. 1) who believe that “*pictures are remembered better than words because they are more likely to be represented by both verbal and image codes*”.

2. Realia

Realia is “*considered as real objects, which are used to aid in practicing a new language, as a way to present meaningful examples from the real world*” (Hadi, 2018, p. 66). As observed in the classroom, when initiating a unit entitled ‘My Fancy Birthday’, teachers have brought real objects such as a glass, a spoon, a fork, a plate, a candle, balloons and sweets. Using the same processes as the previous strategy, they have exhibited the items to introduce the new input to the pupils. They start by reviewing the pupils’ knowledge. Then, they explicitly teach the words and practice till they ensure the pupils’ memorization of the words. Alqahtani (2015, p. 27) points out that “*introducing a new word by showing the real object often helps learners to memorize the word through visualization*”. Indeed, pupils have participated more actively during the lesson. Therefore, word memorization has been quite significant, and pupils could easily recall and repeat the words, especially when they have the opportunity to see the concrete objects. Moreover, the pupils’ behavior and involvement in

class reflects that they are eager to learn in this atmosphere and under these circumstances. This consistently lines up with Irawan (2017, p. 42) who indicates that *realia* “can make young learners or students learn more with fun and can raise their creation activity”.

3. Mimicry

Mimicry refers to using body movements, facial expressions or hand gestures while teaching (Tellier, 2008). We noticed from the classroom observation that teachers frequently teach word meaning with body gestures or sounds. For instance, to illustrate the meaning of the term ‘glass’, one of the teachers acted as if he was sipping a drink. He also imitates the sound of a cat to refer to an actual cat. To ensure that students understand words correctly, teachers use a variety of gestures and sounds. One of them suggested that maximizing body gesture is important to capture the pupils’ attention and make the lesson more dynamic. As Tellier (2008, p. 220) thinks that gestures “*help learners in the process of memorizing the second language lexicon*”. In fact, when teachers perform a gesture in the classroom, pupils recall the words more quickly.

4. Colors and Drawings

Our findings demonstrate that teachers use colors and drawings to teach vocabulary, and assert that it helps to grab pupils’ attention and make learning fun. Considering the pupils’ age, the ideal learning environment for children to pick up a second language is actually one where there are particular elements that trigger their memory. Notably, one teacher says that **“as novice and young learners, they easily remember what they see, and colors are one factor that attracts most of their attention and stimulates their memory”** and another has added **“we are dealing with children, so we need to put them in the right environment of learning which consists of colors and drawings”**. Teachers draw objects on the board such as a birthday cake, a cat, or a face to teach the terms specific to these

illustrations and help pupils in quickly memorizing them. For instance, the teacher wants to teach the parts of the face. He could easily teach them by just pointing at his face and naming the parts in English. However, for an effective memorization, he draws on the board a face or sometimes the items can be presented as drawings on flashcards, and uses different colors to highlight the important areas he wants to be seen as one of the teachers suggests that **“drawing a cat on the board can better help pupils understand what is a ‘cat’ in English than just writing the word on the board”**. This helps pupils to better internalize the information as Altun (2015, p. 91) claims *“simple drawing can have a strong effect in enabling students to store vocabulary in their minds upon sight of the picturization (visualization) of words”*. In this way the young learners instinctively understand and recognize the key concepts they have learned in the classroom (Alqahtani, 2015). It is also important to mention that colors are used in this process to enhance the pupils’ experience, the observed teachers not only use colorful flashcards or draw in different colors, but also they highlight the words. For example, they either write the whole word in red to attract the pupils’ attention on those words or they use it frequently for phonemic awareness which completely confirms Aljehani (2022, p. 24) when he says that *“specific colors draw people’s interest and variations of tinges, which increase the probability of students seeing the forms studied”*.

5. Songs

As our findings display, teachers use songs to teach abstract concepts such as numbers, days of the week and months of the year. It is a ludic way of breaking up the monotony of learning new words, especially when they lack visual representations. In order to catch the pupils’ attention into it, teachers opt for songs. For instance, one teacher has taught the days of the week using the song *“Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Seven days in the week (×2); One, Two, Three, Four, Five, Six, Seven, Seven days in the week (×2)”*, which proved to be effective as the pupils master the days of the week and

they can easily recall it. Millington (2011, p. 134) highlights that *“songs can play an important role in the development of language in young children learning a second language”*. Another point is that teachers have introduced a new unit entitled ‘My Fancy Birthday’ using the ‘Happy Birthday’ song as a warm up and a pre-vocabulary instruction task. This corresponds to Millington (2011, p. 135) who states that songs *are “usually based around a theme or topic that can provide the context for vocabulary learning”*.

6. Role Play

Teachers use role play as a post-vocabulary instruction activity. They use it to put the acquired vocabulary in context and encourage pupils to create small conversations where they practice their vocabulary. For instance, after teaching vocabulary related to ‘pets’, teachers ask the pupils to interact with each other, this includes questions like *“have you got a pet? What is it? What color is it? What has he got?”*. In this way, pupils not only learn words in isolation, but also they learn how to use them in their daily lives. In line with that, Lin (2015) affirms that it is crucial to demonstrate to children how words are used in context while teaching vocabulary. Of course, pupils are very motivated to participate in this fun task. In Harmer’s (2007, p. 82) words, young children *“are keen to talk about themselves and respond well to learning that uses themselves and their own lives as main topics in the classroom”*. That is, pupils are extremely excited to talk about their pets. Another example is when one of the teachers has brought two simple marionettes and birthday hats and has modeled a birthday invitation conversation. Then, the pupils have been asked to perform the same conversation and play roles. Pupils have all been involved in the activity. This supports Alabsi (2016, p. 229) point of view *that “role play engages learners in activities that bring realism to their learning and help them to apply it in real situations”*. That is, the application of words in real life situations is improved through the process of playing roles.

7. Games

It is observed that, teachers adopt games in the classroom as a post-vocabulary teaching activity. That is, after teaching words, teachers assess their pupils' word acquisition through instructional games. To illustrate this, one of the teachers has placed all the words covered during the lesson on one side of the board and the pictures that illustrate the words meaning on the other side. Then, pupils have been asked to match each word with its picture, and each time the teacher asks the others to raise a green card if their classmates' response is correct and a red card if the response is incorrect. This shows that instructional games inspire active involvement, motivation and problem solving skills, as well as it enables teachers to establish a vibrant learning environment. This goes hand in hand with Harmer (2007, p. 83) who believes that *"a good primary classroom mixes play and learning to an atmosphere of cheerful and supportive harmony"*. That is, games play a significant role in any foreign language teaching as they serve as a valuable tool to keep learning engaging and enjoyable. They also foster innovative and vibrant language use. Furthermore, games encourage learners' active participation, promoting student-centered activities. When playing games, learners can improve their abilities to disagree politely, ask for assistance, and collaborate effectively within small groups. They promote collaboration, competitiveness, teamwork, and turn-taking (Bakhsh, 2016). All in all, through games, children gain independence, knowledge and application of new vocabulary in real life situations.

8. Translation

According to the findings, one of the teachers has mentioned translation as a strategy to present word meaning. Instead of allowing the pupils to construct their own knowledge, the teacher provides them with direct translation of words. However, Thornbury (2002) argues that relying on translation leads to the failure of L2 acquisition due to the fact that pupils do not make efforts to understand word meaning *"a case of 'no gain, no pain'"* (p.77). In fact,

not all words in L2 have necessarily their equivalents in the first language. Thus, translation should be avoided because it makes learning unavailing (Gairns & Redman, 1986). From the classroom observation, we have noted that all the other teachers consistently promote the use of the target language and never make recourse to translation which is something that is crucial to maintain in an L2 class.

9. The Importance of Varying Vocabulary Teaching Strategies in One

Lesson

According to the results displayed in the previous chapter, teachers use multiple techniques to teach vocabulary to young learners, and tend to be creative in preparing the teaching materials as one of them suggests “**we always have to think outside the box**” by taking into account the pupils’ age and major needs. During the classroom observation, we have noticed that teachers vary teaching strategies and try to work in an eclectic way for it is the best way to break the monotony in the classroom and foster active involvement. To strengthen this view, Hadi (2018, p. 67) says that “*students learn more when information is presented in a variety of modes than when only a single mode is used*”. That is, the use of various ways of teaching plays an important role in how quickly the pupils understand and retain the words. For instance, when teachers have introduced the new unit of ‘My Fancy Birthday’, they have not only committed to one strategy all along the lesson, but they have combined the use of flashcards, realia, mimicry, songs, games, role play, colors and drawings to create a rich learning environment that fits the pupils’ different learning styles. Note that, these strategies are used for both presenting new vocabulary items and practicing them.

As far as the last question of the interview is concerned, teachers insist on their need for data show and videos as additional vocabulary instruction strategies due to their practicality in affording effective learning. That is, they can improve learning by accessing knowledge in a

very fast and fun way. In line with that, Hariyono (2020) argues that it's crucial that we have instructional techniques for young learners that can assist them to increase their enthusiasm to learn, and videos are one of those tools that can enhance language proficiency in using simple expressions in English as well as offer favorable vocabulary learning.

Section Three: Theorized Vocabulary Teaching

1. Explicit Instruction

According to the findings, a teacher is merely a learning facilitator who **“supplies his pupils with the right materials to learn and acquire vocabulary effectively”**. That is, teachers employ numerous techniques to guide vocabulary learning and monitor the classroom. Even when dealing with challenging words, teachers attempt to scaffold their lessons by giving the pupils access to tools like flashcards, realia, mimicry, drawings and role play, etc. that can help them learn the word meaning on their own, as well as the right pronunciation. According to some research, certain vocabulary should be introduced explicitly, especially when we are dealing with novice learners (Sedita, 2005; Vygotsky, 1978; Gao, 2021; Gobet, 2015; Hunt & Beglar, 2002). Cameron (2001, p. 9) states that *“the teacher is doing what children are not yet able to do for themselves”*. Indeed, teachers implement explicit word instruction in order to make the language approachable for children to eventually be able to independently use.

Additionally, teachers promote cooperative learning and provide opportunities for pupils to learn from one another by correcting each other's mistakes. This is supported by Vygotsky (1978) who explains that learning stimulates a series of internal developmental processes, but these processes can only function when the child interacts with others in his surroundings and works cooperatively with his classmates. Once internalized, these processes become an integral component of the child's autonomous developmental achievement.

Discussion of the Findings

According to our observations, pupils often copy one another and construct their word meaning comprehension from both their teachers and classmates.

Hunt & Beglar (2002) highlight the significance of diagnosing which of 3000 most common words learners need to study. That is, teachers should decide which words to teach and how many from the beginning. In this account and according to our findings, teachers are required to teach thirty (30) words for the whole year. This is due to the pupils age and curriculum constraints. According to Cameron (2001, p. 8) *“the adult tries to mediate what next it is the child can learn”*. With the role of a facilitator, teachers lead the learning process by providing the necessary input to pupils such as ‘pets’, ‘toys’, ‘my house’ or ‘family’ and provide a limited number of vocabulary specific to each category. In tune with that, Graves (2016, p. 46) asserts that *“there is a limit on how many words you can teach”*. However, teachers do not stick to this limited number and add more if necessary. Despite restrictions, teachers encourage pupils to learn as much vocabulary as conceivable due to their easy assimilation, which lines up with Graves (2016, p. 46) point of view that teachers can *“teach as many as is reasonable”* and Cameron (2001, p. 13) who instinctively supports that *“young children can learn a second language particularly effectively before puberty because their brains are still able to use the mechanisms that assisted first language acquisition”*.

The findings also demonstrate that teachers not only introduce new words in every unit but also tend to frequently recall them in every session. At the beginning of every lesson, teachers recycle the already acquired vocabulary in a variety of ways. Either as a warm up activity i.e. they see how many items pupils can recall or they involve them in other activities such as reading simple sentences or writing. The writing session involves practicing to write letters appropriately, and teachers ask their pupils to brainstorm all the words they are familiar

with that contain those letters. Meanwhile, teachers assess the pupils' word acquisition. As a result of repeated exposure, these activities assist pupils to retain the words. Hunt and Beglar (2002) recommend that it is crucial to give learners many opportunities to practice words. Other scholars such as Stahl (2005), Schmitt & Schmitt (1995), Laufer (2014) and Cameron (2001) support the idea that recalling and recycling a word increase the likelihood that the pupils will be able to memorize it. Thus, teachers always ensure that pupils remember the vocabulary they have already learned by putting them in situations where they may use it both receptively and productively for example, performing a role play. This consistently lines up with Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 93) perspective that *"it is clearly necessary that we create opportunities in the classroom for students to practise what they have learnt"*, which inevitably enables pupils to understand and decode teachers' instructions as well as produce simple sentences.

2. Word Wall Approach

Our findings show that only one teacher has created a word panel on the wall from the projects created by the pupils such as 'Family tree' or 'School items', while the others did not have enough time to do so. Pupils have made a Pictionary containing drawings or pictures accompanied by their labels, and the teacher has hung them on the wall. However, contrary to Eyraud et al. (2000, p. 4) who state that *"students consulted the word wall as a thesaurus and spell-check during writing assignments; they used it as a resource during language development lessons"*. Our pupils cannot check the word wall because it is not hung somewhere visible. Additionally, the teacher does not use it as a tool for vocabulary instruction. The other teachers on the contrary, do not use it at all. They claim not having enough time and budget since each teacher works in three different schools which necessitates a high budget to spend on each class and extra sessions. We can tell from their responses that they want to use the word wall but the circumstances do not assist them to.

3. Using Colors

As discussed in the first section and according to our results, teachers use colors during vocabulary instruction. This is in accordance with Gnoinska (1998, p. 15) who indicates that *“teachers will have their own ideas and will use color to suit their own students’ needs. Whether they introduce colorful flashcards, posters, or notes on the board, they may find them all helpful and enjoyable”*. Indeed, pupils are actively engaged and this helps them better memorize the words than when only presented in one color and tedious way because *“color is an important tool in visual thinking”* (Ibid, p. 12). That is, it captures the pupils’ attention and stimulates their memory.

Overall, we can deduce that vocabulary teaching is theorized even though teachers assert the contrary. According to their answer of question 13, teachers do not appear to be fully aware of the entirety of the theories of teaching. However, they are aware of the trends that influence the educational system and the guidelines to follow in order to provide the pupils with knowledge appropriately. This is clearly displayed when they have mentioned CBA in their answers. In our case, we have dealt with non-experienced teachers _except for one of them_ whom theoretical background is not up to date. Thus, apart from what they have dealt with in their training in general and considering the short period of that training, they are not provided with sufficient instruction and full details about everything they should apply in the classroom. Yet, this cannot disprove that they teach vocabulary in a systematic and theorized way.

Section Four: The Conduciveness of the Teaching Environment to the Introduction of English in Primary Schools

According to the findings of the empirical study and the above discussion, it is worth noting that teachers’ practices are chosen in a systematic way. They consider the learners’

Discussion of the Findings

age, competencies and major needs which in some degree increases their awareness of both the didactics of language teaching and the psychology of learners. Their ability to manage the classroom and involve the pupils into the teaching/learning process can best work as an auspicious argument to the debates generated in the second language acquisition area on how conducive is the educational setting to the introduction of English in primary schools.

Parents at the beginning were afraid of the implementation of English language teaching in primary schools and what it can propose due to the fact that children have to work on three different languages simultaneously in the region of Tizi Ouzou, which is an exhaustive task for them. However, according to Cameron (2001) early studies of second or foreign language learning assert that there is a ‘critical period’ prior to puberty in which children can learn a language fluently enough to sound like native speakers. She argues that *“older learners will learn language differently after this stage, and particularly for accent, can never achieve the same levels of proficiency”* (Cameron, 2001, p. 13). In other terms, children are more adept at picking up new languages than adults are. They absorb knowledge easily and quickly and tend to be flexible learners who can acquire L2 in similar ways to their mother tongue (Hunt et al., 2005). This is also supported by Baker (2006) point of view that with children *“language is caught rather than taught”* (cited in Kihlstedt, 2019, p. 83). This elucidates the active involvement of the pupils and their mere assimilation and accommodation.

Nonetheless, Teachers as well as the educational environment also add to it and play a significant role in affording favorable learning conditions. They assist young learners throughout the process and provide them with the utmost tools and opportunities to construct their own knowledge by benefiting from their flexibility of acquisition. This is all the outcome of the training they have received to get them ready to integrate properly into this new context of EFL development. Therefore, being aware of the ways of teaching and the

basics that surround the milieu makes them thoroughly prepared and ready to venture in this journey despite the challenges that may arise.

Conclusion

The present chapter has discussed the results gathered through the classroom observation checklist and the teacher's interview during the empirical study. The research questions asked in the General Introduction are answered, and the four hypotheses are confirmed. Therefore, this chapter shows that the first hypothesis is correct; indeed, EFL teachers think that it is important to teach vocabulary to children in order to develop their fluency. In addition, the obtained findings affirm the second hypothesis and demonstrate that EFL teachers in the selected primary schools in Tizi Ouzou employ various classroom strategies to teach vocabulary. Besides, from this discussion, it is displayed that EFL teachers in the Algerian primary schools relate to theory while teaching vocabulary. Finally, it demonstrates that the teaching context is conducive to the introduction of English in primary schools.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

The present study has investigated teachers' views and practices concerning vocabulary teaching in four selected primary schools in Tizi Ouzou. As a relatively new context of EFL development, it has caught our interest to explore the educational setting aiming to probe teachers' perceptions as regards teaching vocabulary to young learners as well as the classroom strategies they use to introduce words. Besides, the study seeks to determine whether vocabulary teaching is theorized or not along with evaluating the conduciveness of the teaching environment to the implementation of English in primary schools. The theoretical framework adopted for this study consists of three approaches; Hunt and Beglar's explicit instruction (2002), word wall approach (1993) by Joseph Green and the use of color (1998) by Anna Gnoinska from a social constructivist perspective.

In order to answer the research questions advanced in the General Introduction and confirm or refute the hypotheses suggested, we have adopted the mixed methods research, which combines quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and analysis. These data, indeed, are drawn from two distinctive research instruments; a classroom observation checklist and an interview. Four EFL teachers have been interviewed and fifteen observation sessions have been attended. The observation checklist has been analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis; whereas the QCA has been used to interpret the data gathered from the interview.

The research findings have answered our research questions and confirmed the hypotheses suggested in the General Introduction. They have revealed that EFL teachers consider vocabulary as a pillar of second language acquisition, without it communication or even the acquisition of any second/foreign language cannot occur. This confirms the first hypothesis that claims the salience of teaching vocabulary to children in order to develop their

fluency. Additionally, the results show a variety of prominent vocabulary-teaching techniques, including flashcards, colors, drawings, mimicry, realia, games, songs and role play. The findings also demonstrate that even though they may not be fully aware of it, EFL teachers follow theories of teaching when presenting vocabulary to pupils and do not rely on random instruction. That is, teachers claim they have no recourse to theories, yet when looking at how they teach, we can see that all of their techniques revolve around specific theories, leading us to the conclusion that vocabulary instruction is theorized. Moreover, the study has shown that the implementation of English language teaching in the early years of learning is advantageous and the educational environment fully supports it due to the flexibility of the pupils and their fresh memory.

Some of the teachers lacked prior experience. It is their first time to deal with young learners in addition to the short training period they have done which was not long enough to cover everything necessary for instruction. As a first implementation of EFL teaching in primary schools, the curriculum and the time teachers had to teach constrained their creativity and productivity. Thus, the outcomes were also constrained. In spite of its limitations, the study certainly adds to our understanding of the various practices teachers rely on while teaching vocabulary.

The study adds to the rapidly expanding field of EFL teaching in elementary education. Thus, it is believed that this modest endeavor would create space for additional research in this context. Considering that English is being taught in elementary schools for the very first time, this research can lay the groundwork for further research and thorough study. Obviously, there are a number of important changes which need to be made. However, researchers can still concentrate on a different sample of expert educators while addressing the same research topic. It could also focus on the evaluation of classroom teaching

techniques and the effectiveness of particular theories for vocabulary instruction by adopting an experimental study.

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Appendices

Appendix 01: Classroom Observation Checklist

Items	YES	NO
Teacher introduces new words in every unit		
Teacher recalls words in every lesson		
Teacher uses colors to teach new words		
Teacher uses drawings to explain the meaning of words		
Teacher uses realia to teach new words		
Teacher plays the role of a facilitator while pupils try to find the meaning of words		
Pupils have created a word panel that they check all the time		
Teacher asks pupils to check the meaning of words from the word wall		
Pupils are active in the classroom		
Pupils are able to understand the teacher's instructions		
Pupils are able to produce sentences using the already acquired vocabulary		

Appendix 02: Teachers' Interview

This interview is a part of an investigation that focuses on theorized vocabulary teaching in primary schools in Tizi Ouzou. The information will be used for academic purposes.

Thank you in advance for your collaboration.

Q1: How important is the teaching of vocabulary to your learners?

Q2: What are the strategies you use to teach new words?

Q3: What sort of words do you teach? Abstract, concrete or both.

Q4: How do you teach 'days of the week', 'months of the year', 'the alphabet' and 'numbers'?

Q5: According to Hunt and Beglar (2002), it is important to know which of the 3000 most common words learners need to study. Do you limit yourself to the words you have been requested to teach or allow yourself to add more? Why?

Q6: According to research in the field of EFL teaching and learning, the use of colors and drawings helps learners to better recall words. What do you think?

Q7: How do you use colored pens to teach words?

Q8: Creativity and innovation are favored while teaching vocabulary to young learners. How do you explain this?

Q9: I have noticed that there are French and Arabic word panels but not for English words. Why didn't you create one?

Q10: What is the role of the teacher in the classroom while teaching new words?

Q11: When dealing with difficult words, how do you manage to transmit their right meaning?

Q12: How do you help your pupils develop fluency with known words?

Q13: What theory do you use to teach vocabulary?

Q14: What other techniques do you think are most efficient for vocabulary acquisition?

Thank you!