

## Intentional vs. incidental vocabulary learning through games by young EFL Persian speakers

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### **Abstract**

The present study is an attempt to investigate the effect of intentional vs. incidental practicing through games on young EFL Persian speakers' vocabulary learning. To this end, thirty six male learners were divided into one intentional group and one incidental group. In order to determine the effect of intentional vs. incidental practicing on young EFL Persian speakers, the intentional group was informed about the final exam in advance. However, the incidental group did not receive any information about the final exam in advance and had no idea about it. The vocabulary items were constantly practiced with the two groups through an amusing game. The posttest results revealed that the incidental group outperformed the intentional group in the comprehension task.

**Keywords:** young learners; incidental learning; intentional learning; receptive knowledge; EFL Persian speakers

## **Intentional vs. incidental vocabulary learning through games by young EFL Persian speakers**

### **1. Introduction**

In first language (L1) research, it has been documented that vocabulary knowledge makes an important contribution in language comprehension (Anderson & Freebody, 1981; Mezynski, 1983). In second language (L2) research, the relationship between vocabulary and L2 comprehension is, however, just to gain attention. Second language vocabulary acquisition process involves several different learning processes and, hence, is a very complex phenomenon. Read (2001) stated that vocabulary learning is seen as an essential area of language teaching by ELT researchers in which words are the basic building blocks of language, the units of meaning from which larger structures such as sentences, paragraphs and whole texts are formed. Thus, in recent years, great attempts have been made to come up with problems that happen in this procedure. Moreover, many teachers and learners are likely to say that processing good vocabulary leads to more efficient communication and comprehension. In fact, students often comment that the primary source of difficulty and frustration in language learning is insufficient vocabulary knowledge (Nation, 1999).

Bridal (2003), argues that experienced teachers have not given an adequate attention to the importance of teaching vocabulary in foreign language teaching. Teaching the grammar and sound system of the language was emphasized over vocabulary teaching, one of the reasons being that learning too many words before grammar being mastered, might give rise to the mistake in sentence construction. Furthermore, teaching vocabulary in the classroom was considered to be useless with a claim that word meaning could only be comprehensible through experience and giving so much time to it was seen as a waste of time.

Another important matter to be discussed is the concept of young learners. Young language learners are those who are learning a foreign or second language and who are doing so during the first six or seven years of formal schooling. In the education systems of most countries, young learners are children who are in primary or elementary schools. In terms of age, young learners are between the ages of approximately five and twelve. Ersöz (2007) argues that very young learners are 3-6 years old, young learners are 7-9 years old, and 10-12 years olds are older/late young learners. Besides, English classes for young learners can be enjoyable and engaging if the teachers use a large variety of activities through which they make sure that language acquisition takes place. Games, songs, and chants are fun ways to learn.

### **2. Literature review**

Unfortunately vocabulary learning has traditionally been neglected in second language learning research. According to Tylor (1990), vocabulary has been an underestimated area for a long time, yet it is quite essential for the mastery of language. However as Scurfield (2003), has pointed out after a long period of neglect, research into vocabulary learning has blossomed since the 1980s, to such a point that it is now regarded a bona fide sub branch of SLA research. One of the benefits of this work is that we now know more about how, where, when, why and how much of lexical acquisition by L2 learners.

#### *2.1 The significance of vocabulary in second/ foreign language learning*

A golden role for learning a second language is that learners are exposed to the language, in writing and speech. Such language input can either be comprehensible or incomprehensible to the students. Since lexicon is a very important component in the learning processes, learners across proficiency levels will come up with situations where they can comprehend only part of the written language, or a phrase due to the fact that they do not comprehend all the words. Encountering some unfamiliar words could not impede the overall comprehension

of a text, but if too many words or the most important ones are unfamiliar, then comprehension will suffer (Curties, 2006).

Rivers (1983) said that the acquisition of proper vocabulary is vital for proficient second language users because without an adequate amount of vocabulary, the learner will not be able to produce the structures and functions he/she may have acquired for successful communication. Laufer and Hstinj (2001) and Read (1989) also stated that many second language users are hindered in reading comprehension. Anderson (1984) and Eskey (1973) also relate the incapability for communicative competence in English to a poverty of vocabulary. This idea was expressed by Savington (1997) who regarded the inadequacy of vocabulary as an essential factor and said that: "this is a critical problem in speaking, reading and even writing". Grammar skill does not work properly unless you learn the vocabulary to communicate (p.78).

## *2.2 Incidental Learning vs. Intentional Learning*

Nation (2001) argues that there is a distinction between incidental and intentional vocabulary learning by arguing that the vocabulary learned incidentally refers to all the words that have been learned from a special context, while vocabulary that is learned intentionally is learned in another way. Nation considers the difference in the way in which the vocabulary is acquired, but Tode (2008) states that there is a qualitative difference in what the learner does with the word. Laufer (2001) explains this point by stating that one has to differentiate between what is being done with the word, quality, and how often the word is being met, quantity. It is out of the question that the amount of the vocabulary learned incidentally through a particular context is smaller than the vocabulary taught intentionally and this is a fact that all vocabulary specialists, without any exception, support (Huckin & Coady, 1999; Hulstjin, Hollander & Greidanus, 1996; Nation, 2001; Read, 2004; Tode, 2008). Tode (2008) was the only researcher to observe the nature of incidental vocabulary learning.

Nation (2001) elaborates on his research in the field and said that explicit learning is "more conscious" (p. 341) than implicit learning. This does not mean that incidental vocabulary learning is unconscious; on the other hand, incidental learning is conscious especially when it comes to inferring meaning from a particular context, such as when reading newspaper, participating in a conversation, listening to the radio, or watching movies (Nation, 2001). At the end Nations (2001) concludes that the "distinction is not so easy to observe particularly if we consider the fact that all learning involves some conscious attention" (p. 233).

## *2.3 Who are young learners?*

Young learners are those who are learning a second or foreign language during the first six or seven years of formal schooling. The education systems of most countries consider young learners children who are in primary or elementary school. Regarding age, young learners are between the ages of five and twelve.

## *2.4 What is a word?*

It is difficult to explain the concept of a word because there are various views concerning what a word actually is. In vocabulary testing, a fundamental point is that knowledge of words is being assessed. Therefore, it is quite essential to realize the nature of words. However, it is a challenging issue at both theoretical and practical levels, essentially the latter.

Singleton (1999, p. 9) states that "words possess a rather confidential status in the general understanding of what a language is and that is because they are vital to linguistic communication". In other words without vocabulary there is no means to communicate and it is evident to everyone. However different people have different perspectives and define vocabulary differently. Singleton (1999, p. 10) points out that " although the word is vital to comprehending a language one can find a simple definition of the general concept of a word because there are many scholars who have discussed on finding a right definition for describing a word". Singleton (1999, p. 10) elaborates his view by saying that " what is considered by the term word will be defined

on the level of abstraction at which the language user is operating, the linguistic levels being clarified and even the semantic component of the situation.

Another important matter is that there is a variety of word forms in English. As an example, we have the word *accept*, but then there are also *accepts*, *accepted*, *acceptable*, *acceptability*. Are they treated as six different words or different word forms? We know that the word formation is consisted of two categories: inflection and derivation. Inflections are those which are added to a base form or root, without altering its meaning and its word class (Carter, 1998). Therefore, among the given examples, *accept* is the base and *accepted* is its inflection. On the contrary, those elements which alter the meaning of the base or change its word class are known as derivations (Carter, 1998), such as *acceptable*, *acceptability*. Therefore, in the given example, they can be considered as six different words, as they are shown or as one root (*accept*) plus its inflected forms (*acceptable*, *acceptably*, and *acceptability*). For example Carroll, Davies and Richman (1971) considered words based on their displays due to the use of computer programs. So *accept*, *accepts*, *accepted*, *acceptable*, and *acceptability* are treated as six different words in this regard.

### 2.5 What does it mean to know a word?

Many scholars have claimed that second language vocabulary comprehension plays an important role in the process of language acquisition. Successful acquisition of a second language vocabulary is essentially vital for learners of English as a foreign language who constantly learn impoverish lexicons after years of formal education (Hunt & Beglar, 2005). Considering word counts, Nation (2001) states that comprehending a word means knowing the elements of its word family and the elements of the word family will improve as proficiency develops. A language user may know the word "*rich*", "*richly*" and "*richness*" in early stages of language acquisition and later he or she elaborates on this word family with "*to enrich*" and "*enrichment*". There is research evidence which support the claim that families are psychologically actual phenomena and that rather than discussing about "comprehending a word", a language user should be concerned about "comprehending a word family" (Nation, 2001, p. 47).

Mezynski (1983) stated that "knowing the meaning of a word can be 'realized' to varying degrees. Considering the task, a language learner could use the words adequately well with relatively imprecise knowledge. Nation (1990) with regard to the definition of words says that while word meaning, register, frequency, and syntactic properties are important elements of depth of word knowledge, pronunciation, spelling, and morphological properties are also regarded primarily components of word depth for reading comprehension. Nation (1990) furthers suggests a list of criteria a language user must have in order to comprehend a word properly (R: receptive knowledge, P: productive knowledge).

### 2.6 The importance of vocabulary teaching

The significance of the study of L2 vocabulary is quite clear from various research findings. As Gass and Selinker (2001) points out, lexical errors lead to most L2 errors and both language learners and native speakers regard lexical errors as the most essential barriers to real communication. For many years vocabulary knowledge was an underestimated area in language learning and teaching. Even though its ignorance has been somehow due to a specialization in language research on grammar and phonology which certainly have caused vocabulary to be considered a less significant element in acquiring a second language, (Gass & Selinker, 2001) Bridal (2003), points out that well educated teachers have not given a proper attention to the significance of teaching vocabulary in second language teaching. Teaching the syntax and also sound system of a language was stressed over vocabulary teaching, and one of the reasons is that acquiring too many word items before syntax had been learned could give rise to making mistakes in sentence structures. Moreover, teaching vocabulary in the classroom context was regarded to be fruitless with the idea that word meaning might only be tangible through experience in the context and devoting so much time to it was considered as a total waste of time.

### *2.7 Young learners' vocabulary learning through games*

One of the issues that make working with young learners challenging is the fact that they are preliterate, meaning that they cannot read or write (Schindler, 2006). Therefore it is difficult and for the language teachers to work with them. As a result the use of TPR is quite essential as children learn very easier by acting. Usually books for young language users offer a great variety of songs and films that provide them with the new vocabulary. Thus teachers can take advantage of them in combination with TPR. Moreover the fact that if we use TPR we make sure that the learners comprehend what they repeat after us or the CD player, they also use gestures which imply enjoyment and create an amusing environment for learning.

Flashcards and pantomime go together quite well. With young language users flashcards can be used for every class especially for those teachers who are not good at drawing at all. When introducing the new vocabulary, when recycling it, when singing songs and saying chants, when playing, the use of flashcards is a must for teachers. More interestingly, when we listen to someone we can try to bring flashcards which students have to arrange in the right order after comprehending the speech. Young learners enjoy it as they have an opportunity to stand up, come in front of the class and communicate with their partners. Therefore, the use of flashcards is recommended with pantomime when we want to recycle vocabulary. In other words, learners in groups draw a card and mime the meaning they have on it in order for their group mates to guess it. Or, as Zalta (2006) says, a variation of this game is the one when after reading a text; language users draw a card with the name of a person. They also write some phrases about that person whom they read to their partners who have to guess it (Zalta, 2006).

In brief, all the activities listed above want to draw attention of teachers to the paramount importance of using TPR, realia, flashcards, pantomime, puppets and drama in English classes as a means of making sure that language learning takes place every lesson. Combining these methods with educational classes will ensure that lessons are effective and that learners have a positive feeling towards acquiring a second language.

### *2.8 A general look to the previous research on young learners' vocabulary learning*

A study was carried out by Al Neyadi (2010) in order to find the effect of using games to practice vocabulary items in the teaching of English to young language learners. The study was carried out with twenty-nine learners in Grade Six in a primary girls' school in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). One of the research questions was whether language games enhance learners' ability to memorize the words or not. The other one was about enhancing learners' motivation through games. Interviews, observations, and a reflective journal were the tools of the study. It was found that games were constructive to both memorizing the words and enhancing learners' motivation.

Griva et al. (2009) in a study tried to find an understanding of young language users' vocabulary learning strategies and their strategies for understanding and using vocabulary items. Questionnaire data showed that most of the learners, especially more proficient ones, were aware of the fact that vocabulary acquisition is a complex phenomenon that usually require different strategies and techniques. They pointed out some difficulties related to recalling and using words, as well as with the pronunciation and spelling of compound words. Comprehending a speech with a lot of unfamiliar words and treating with infrequent words leads in a lot of uncertainty and lack of confidence. Jafari et al. (2013) conducted a study to explore the effect of teaching vocabulary items through instructional games. Considering that the participants in study were successful in instructional games approaches to vocabulary instruction, one could conclude that it is best for the teachers to use these approaches in the classroom contexts.

Rouhani and Pourqarib (2013) conducted an experimental study aimed at finding of effect of games on learning vocabulary items. They used a pretest and also a posttest to measure the effect games on vocabulary knowledge of participants. After analyzing the obtained data, they found that the training program boosted

vocabulary knowledge of the participants significantly, even more than twice. However, no considerable difference was found between use of textbooks and games to enhance the vocabulary gain as both programs made significant progress in the participants.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Participants

Thirty six students from Iran Language Institute in Isfahan were involved in this study. They were all male students aged between 9 to 10. The students were all the same regarding their educational background, age, sex, and culture. All of them were enrolled in classes during the spring semester of 2014, a period of 10 weeks. Their proficiency in English was elementary level (as they had been classified by the authorities of Iran Language Institute). They were all male students of *Step Up 2*. Of course there were some very delicate individual differences among all of them (ex: some of them were left handed) however, the researcher did her best to minimize all the contravening variables as much as possible and focus on the study. Moreover, further research should be done regarding the multiple aspects of the learners and learning environment.

Due to the institutes' class enrollment policies, allowing only for intact classes, the researcher adopted a randomization procedure by arbitrarily assigning one group as the intentional vocabulary learning group, not being informed about the final lexical assessment in advance, and the other group as the intentional group, being informed about the final evaluation in advance. Still both groups received the treatment.

#### 3.2 Research questions

- Does intentional practicing have any effect on vocabulary learning among young EFL Persian speakers?
- Does incidental practicing have any effect on vocabulary learning among young EFL Persian speakers?
- Does learning type (intentional vs. incidental) have any effect on the amount of vocabulary learning?

#### 3.3 Hypotheses

- Intentional practicing has no effect on vocabulary learning among young EFL Persian speakers.
- Incidental practicing has no effect on vocabulary learning among young EFL Persian speakers.
- Learning type (intentional vs. incidental) has no effect on the amount of vocabulary learning.

#### 3.4 Materials and Procedure

Materials for this study included 30 English words selected based on a pre-test. All the target words were taken from *Up and Away* series (Crowther, 2004). Considering the reliability and validity, there was a pilot test with 20 students with the same conditions as the participants of the study; however, they were the weekend students. After piloting the necessary changes were made in the test. There were also some expert judges whose critical revisions had a fundamental effect on the final version of the test. Besides, in statistics, Cronbach's alpha is a coefficient of internal consistency. It is commonly used as an estimate of the reliability of a psychometric test for a sample of examinees. The following table shows that the tests were highly reliable and the result of the tests can be generalized to larger populations.

**Table 1***Cronbach Alpha*

Test	Cronbach alpha	Number of items
Posttest	0.81	60
Delayed posttest	0.86	60
Pilot test	0.61	60

Moreover, the psychological framework of this study highlights the famous stimulus-response learning theory involving the four basic concepts of stimulus, response, feedback, and conditioning. Learners were also provided with 30 flash cards, each flash card presented one of the target words. One side of the flash card had the related picture and the other side of it had the spelling of the target word. Prior to the study the students were checked on their level of language proficiency by Iran Language Institute using an *Up and Away* proficiency test. However to conduct the experimental phase of the study, the researcher developed a set of pretest questions and then the test was first piloted with 10 participants at the beginner level studying at the same institute, with the difference that the pilot test participants were weekend students. After applying the necessary changes and calculations to achieve item characteristics, i.e., item facility, item discrimination, and choice distribution, as well as reliability 60 items were selected for the final version of the test. The first session was allocated to the pretest which was the first session of the spring semester. It lasted forty five minutes.

In order to check the effect of intentional vs. incidental vocabulary learning on the students' performance, an empirical research involving a period of six weeks that included thirteen sessions of the spring semester was conducted. The educational timetable for each session was one hour and thirty minutes which was allocated to each class by the institute. There were two sessions per week with approximately 20 minutes of instruction for each. This time allocations to each session of the treatment were similar between the two groups. Treatment started immediately by the second session and lasted five weeks that included ten sessions. The immediate posttest was administered in the next session. It should be mentioned that the pretest and immediate posttest were similar both in the format and content.

In each session there was a ten minute warm up in which the previous learned target words were constantly reviewed and practiced through games. After this phase three new target words were presented to the learners in ten minutes. This kind of practicing was totally similar between the two intentional and incidental groups. Regarding the treatment, the intentional and incidental vocabulary learning groups were first taught three target words in each session, namely, one noun, one verb, and one adjective. Each target word was presented to the learners using a flash card. One side of the flash card was covered by the picture and the other side provided the learners with the written form of the target word. The relevant flash card was held while the target word was uttered 2 or 3 times loudly and clearly with short pauses.

The learners were asked to repeat the target word several times chorally after the researcher. Some individuals were also asked randomly to repeat the target word after the researcher in order to check the pronunciation. Then the written form of the word was shown to the learners by holding up the relevant face of the flash card. The target word was enunciated 2 or 3 times loudly and clearly. The word was being pointed and the learners were asked to read the word 2 or 3 times after the researcher chorally. Then some individuals were randomly asked to spell out and read the word. It should be mentioned that the intentional and incidental vocabulary learning groups passed totally similar steps both in the practicing and introducing the target words. However, the only difference between the two was that the incidental vocabulary learning group had not been informed at all about the final exam in advance.

There was an interesting vocabulary game suitable to the age and language background of the participants which totally amused them through the treatment period. It required participants' comprehension of the materials. The above mentioned materials were presented through a game to the learners. It was known as the *Find* game.

There was a popular comprehension game famous as “find” game. That is the researcher would utter one of the target words and participants were supposed to find the relevant flash card as soon as possible. The one who found the flash card sooner than the others received others’ applause and got a positive point shown to the class on the board. Then he should show the supposed flash card to the class to give this chance to those who had not found the word to comprehend it. In order to prevent chaos, the researcher chose three students for each section of the game. It was tried to match students with relative swiftness in each group to handle them better and to provide an equal chance for them.

The target words were first presented to the students according to the usual method of the vocabulary teaching of Iran Language Institute which was mentioned in the above paragraphs and then was practiced with them via games. The purpose behind following the usual teaching method of the institute was to minimize students’ confusion. This is due to the following reasons:

- The aim of the study was to differentiate between incidental and intentional learning.
- The participants were used to the steps of Iran Language Institute for vocabulary teaching through 6 successive months, i.e., some expectations regarding the special way of vocabulary teaching of the institute were already formed in their minds through passing three English courses.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

The scoring method for all the tests used in this study was dichotomous; that is each correct answer received one score and an incorrect answer received a zero. Appropriate statistical tests including t-test were used to find the effect of incidental vocabulary learning.

## 4. Result and Discussion

To answer the first research question, the result of the t-test indicates that the participants mean score of intentionally acquired vocabularies was 79.62 ( $M=79.62$ ,  $SD=10.89$ ), which means participants in the intentional group learned the target words very well. To answer the second research question, the mean score of incidentally learned vocabularies was 87.40 ( $M=87.40$ ,  $SD=7.19$ ) which shows that the participants in the incidental group performed significantly well on learning target words. However, regarding the third research question it is evident that the incidental group outperformed the intentional group ( $87.40 > 79.62$ ). It means that the incidental group of the learners learned more vocabularies compared to the intentional group. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and there is a difference between learning type (intentional vs. incidental) among young EFL Persian speakers.

**Table 2**

*Posttest results*

	N	Mean	SD
Intentional group	18	79.62	10.89
Incidental group	18	87.40	7.19

There were eighteen participants in the intentional group. As for the comprehension task, the lowest and highest scores were 66.67, and 100, respectively and the mean score was 79.62 with the standard deviation of 10.89. Therefore, the first null hypothesis is rejected and it can be concluded that intentional type of practicing can help young learners in learning English words. Moreover, the lowest and highest scores of the comprehension task of the incidental group were 80, and 100, respectively and the mean score was 87.40 with the standard deviation of 7.19. It means that the incidental group of the young learners learned the English words very well. Therefore the second null hypothesis is rejected and it is evident that incidental type of practicing has a significant effect on young learners’ vocabulary knowledge. However, in order to clarify the results, the



researcher had to compare the intentional and incidental groups to find out if there was any probable difference.

**Table 3**

*Independent t-test of the intentional/ incidental groups' posttests*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	sig	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean Differences
Mean score	Equal variances assumed	1.331	.257	4.277	34	.000	8.70370
Comprehension	Equal variances assumed	3.349	.076	2.527	34	.016	7.77778

The table compares the mean scores of the posttest of the intentional and incidental groups. It was found that the observed-t (4.27), at the significance level of (.000) does not exceed (0.05). Therefore, the third null hypothesis is rejected and it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the vocabulary gains of the intentional and incidental groups. The mean score of the immediate posttest of the incidental group exceeds the mean score of the intentional group (8.70).

The comprehension task of the posttest showed that the observed-t (2.52), at the significance level of (.016) does not exceed (0.05). This means a significant difference between the intentional and incidental groups in terms of vocabulary gains. The mean score of the immediate posttest of the incidental group exceeds the mean score of the intentional group (7.77).

## 5. Conclusions

The results of the test administered after the experiment revealed that both the intentional and incidental groups acquired the target vocabularies very well. However, the results of the inferential statistics showed that the incidental group acquired the vocabularies significantly greater than the intentional group. Krashen claimed in his Input Hypothesis that acquisition only occurs when learners' attention is focused on meaning. Moreover, incidental learning is more individualized and it is totally student-centered because it is the learners who may choose the materials they wish to read (Huckin & Coady, 1999).

Generally vocabulary learning is a vital process for EFL learners, especially young learners to acquire proficiency and competence in the target language. Word power definitely facilitates fluent speaking and impressive writing (e.g., Boettcher, 1980; Carey, 1982; Clark, 1973; Dale, O' Rourke, & Bamman, 1971; Deighton, 1959; Eichholz & Barbe, 1961; Gentner, 1975). What is observable from the current study is that young EFL learners can achieve a remarkable number of vocabularies much better if they are not being concerned about the final exam and constantly reminded about it. However, it does not mean that young students should not have any pre-determined plan in their minds and organizing their educational activities should be taken for granted.

The result of the present study was in line with the main rubrics of communicative approach in which the learners' primary focus was on meaning and conveying a message to their partners. During and even after the treatment period, some of the learners' parents enthusiastically came to me and talked about their children's attempts to talk in English using the target words of the experiment. It should be mentioned that practicing new vocabularies through games engaged learners' cognitive processes in which they had to select and classify the materials in their minds to carry out the task. The game used in this study as task had the relevant communicative

outcome which refers to the non-linguistic outcomes of a task. It refers to the completion of a task and feeling of satisfaction which is felt a learner. All the young learners in both groups had a feeling of amusement and enjoyment at the end of the game. They even expressed their amusement toward the task during the treatment period for several times and asked sincerely to continue the game in the next sessions of the term.

The findings of this study also indicate that using games intentionally or incidentally is an effective second language learning strategy for young learners. In fact, as shown by the performance of the two groups, the strategy is not cost-effective. It is suggested that total amount of time spent on games should be brought under control. Due to the sheer magnitude of the vocabulary learning and its burden as a formidable task it is quite natural that many L2 teachers and practitioners feel uncertain about how to guide their learners i.e., intentionally or incidentally. It is of paramount importance to consider the quality of information processing when a new vocabulary item is first encountered, the quantity and quality of rehearsal activities needed for a vocabulary item to be permanently available, and the training of automatic access to vocabulary knowledge necessary for fluent and successful language use (Hulstijn, 2001).

The results of the posttest of both groups indicate that proper instructional strategies, suitable to the learners' level and age can significantly promote their vocabulary gains. In both intentional and incidental groups the game was used as the experimental task and students had highly positive reactions toward them. This is in line with the results of previous studies carried out in the EFL learners' vocabulary gains through intentional and incidental types in different countries (Hulstijn, 2001; Hunt & Beglar, 2002; Waring & Nation, 2004; Rahimi & Sahragard, 2008; Yali, 2010; Alemi & Tayebi, 2011; Ahmad, 2012). Due to the fact that the present study was narrowed down in terms of its participants, vocabularies in focus, types of practicing, etc., the authors of the present study suggest that some further research be conducted in this regard.

Considering the fact that the current study was limited to only three parts of speech (nouns, verbs, and adjectives), it is suggested that similar studies be carried out with other parts of speech in focus, such as adverbs. An important issue to be investigated in more detail is the fact that all of the participants of the present study were beginner male students. It needs further investigation regarding female students at the same age and language proficiency. The validity of the results in the current study could be explored for students at higher levels, who might have more difficulty with learning and retention as well.

The implication for material designers is that greater attention and care should be allocated to the area of second language acquisition in future materials, therefore, easing the burden that most of the teachers wish to address for concluding proper tasks which are suitable to the age, level, and gender of the students in creating lessons for their learners.

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