

The Effect of Proficiency Level on the Rate of Receptive and Productive Vocabulary Acquisition

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Key words: Vocabulary, vocabulary acquisition, vocabulary size

ABSTRACT

Teachers and researchers have long been interested in measuring learners' vocabulary size in order to estimate to what extent do learners acquire and use vocabulary items receptively and productively. There are a number of studies on vocabulary acquisition related to receptive and productive vocabulary. For example, some researchers have looked at the receptive or productive vocabulary size while other researchers have looked at whether receptive knowledge is gained before productive knowledge. However, no investigation has looked specifically at the relationship between proficiency level and the rate of receptive and productive vocabulary acquisition, in conjunction with an examination of materials and instruction.

In this paper, I presented the effect of proficiency level on the rate of vocabulary acquisition, taking into account learners' receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge. The purpose of the study is to explore the rate of vocabulary acquisition of the beginner and elementary students in a Turkish EFL context, investigate the role of materials and instruction in the vocabulary acquisition, and examine the relationship between learners' proficiency levels and rate of vocabulary acquisition. In this study, two groups of ESL students with different proficiency levels were given experience tests. The same tests were given twice throughout their foreign language education process to estimate their receptive and productive vocabulary development. The gain scores among groups from the two tests were compared to see their development of receptive and productive vocabulary size taking into account their proficiency levels. The participant teachers were interviewed in order to reveal their handling with vocabulary during their courses. The materials were analyzed in terms of the number of vocabulary activities and activity types in order to find out what vocabulary exposure students had.

It is thought that the result of the study may be of benefit to classroom teachers, in helping them to choose an appropriate vocabulary teaching strategy for helping their students to acquire receptive and productive vocabularies. Teachers may develop their curriculum, materials and strategies to increase students' receptive or productive vocabulary and to help them turn their receptive vocabulary knowledge into productive use in speaking and writing courses