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The Effect of the Diglot Weave Vocabulary Learning Technique on Vocabulary Learning Ability of EFL Intermediate Learners

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Abstract: Finding the best way for learning new words deeply and extensively is one common objective in vocabulary learning research. One of the effective ways for achieving this goal is using L1 as one cognitive source and L2 together as one mixed text to vocabulary learning. The diglot weave technique may reinforce learning vocabulary which was based on code-switching theory .The present study was an attempt to investigate the effect of teaching vocabulary through the diglot weave technique on Iranian EFL Intermediate learners' vocabulary learning. In this study, first a placement test was administered to all the students to homogenize them regarding their language proficiency. Then, sixty students were selected and divided into two groups, control and experimental; each group covering 30 students. Before the treatment, a vocabulary test was administered as a pretest to both groups, which was then used as the immediate post-test and delayed post-test after the treatment. The control group received the traditional method of teaching vocabulary through giving definitions and synonyms and responded the questions covering vocabulary items while the experimental group received the diglot weave technique of teaching vocabulary as an alternative method and they also answered the same questions. The classes were held for 8 sessions of one hour and a half long. The data were analyzed by SPSS software version 21. The results revealed a statistically significant difference in both groups between their pretest and post-tests, which showed that application of the diglot weave technique could enhance the subjects' vocabulary learning in both immediate and delayed post-tests.

*Key words***:** code switching, diglot weave technique, intentional vocabulary, incidental vocabulary.

1. Introduction

Vocabulary is important for language acquisition and central for language learners. Although vocabulary teaching and learning are major problems for EFL teachers and students, there are a number of strategies and techniques to present and learn vocabulary effectively (Hunt & Beglar, 2005). Teachers and researchers try to present effective ways of vocabulary learning to the learners so that they gain vocabulary as much and efficient as they can. There are a great number of studies that have dealt with lexical problems of vocabulary learning (Maftoon, Hamidi, & Najafi, 2012; Takac, 2008; Wu, 2005;

Yali, 2010). Whatever the particular teaching point may be, in planning the lesson, the teacher should consider several ways of making the lesson interesting and stimulating for the learners to acquire vocabulary. They can be audiovisual equipment, pictures, realia, games and some other ways and techniques. One of the techniques is the diglot weave. This way of presenting vocabulary may increase students' vocabulary knowledge that is going to be examined (Nemati &Maleki, 2013).

Some researchers in the field of EFL pedagogy suggest some types of deliberate vocabulary teaching techniques like , using L1 , collocation activities pre-teaching vocabulary, post-reading vocabulary exercises, using word cards and studying word part in order to grasp a better understanding and using the required words to communicate verbally (Hunt, 2005; Nation, 2003).However, another view of vocabulary acquisition claims that learners acquire most words through exposure to language input in l2, particularly l2 reading input, rather than by deliberately committing words to memory or L1 (Laufer, 2001). In addition, EFL learners tend to use their own L1 in classes to understand materials that are read ,in many cases , they may overuse their L1 because using L1 enjoys many advantages in EFL classes (Cook, 2001). Ellis (1985) reported that learners' L1 may be used as a source that learners can use for translation to overcome their limitation while learning. Beltz (2002) defines code switching as the use of more than one language or code in a single stretch of discourse. Thus, learners using their L1 words within English words framed in L1 text structure may help learners to increase their vocabulary knowledge. Thus, this study tried to investigate the effect of diglot weave vocabulary learning technique on vocabulary learning among EFL learners.

The purpose of vocabulary learning technique is to create the facilitative conditions leading to better acquisition of vocabulary. The purpose of using this technique is to give a better opportunity and preparing a way for low level students by using their first language and second language within a text. This study is to show the facilitative features of this technique in increasing vocabulary level of learners. The second purpose is to show how teachers can use this technique to help learners to acquire more words in pre-intermediate level and how they perform while they receive a combination of the two languages.

2. Review of the Related Literature

Vocabulary is central to language and of critical importance to the typical language learner. In fact, effective second and/or foreign language vocabulary acquisition is particularly important for English learners who usually have impoverished lexicon despite years of formal study (Hunt & Beglar, 2005).Teachers often express uncertainty about the use of the learners' first language, this uncertainty arises because of the dominance of monolingual teaching since the beginning of the twentieth century (Hall & Cook, 2012).The use of the first language enables students to better understand grammar by looking into the mother tongue grammar mirror (Deller & Rinvolucri 2002). Also, vocabulary can be defined in a much clearer way, with students learning where a word is the same or different in their mother tongue (Deller & Rinvolucri, 2002). Diglot weave technique is one way of presenting explanation to the learners that employs students' L1 to emphasize important concepts, and re-attracts the students' attention when they become distracted (Cook, 2001).

Beltz (2002) defines code switching as the use of more than one language or code in a single stretch of discourse. Thus, learners using their L1 words within English words framed in L1 text structure may help learners to increase their vocabulary knowledge. Thus, this study tried to investigate the effect of diglot weave vocabulary learning technique on vocabulary learning among EFL learners. Bradley (2003) holds that when story-telling activities, code switching can be useful. He contends that code switching can also involve using the L1 to supply vocabulary items with which the students are unfamiliar, and then gradually remove them as the students progress. The role of translation is to help to establish the presence and relevance of the students' native language, and the importance of translation in real- world bilingual language use' (Cook 2010). New materials would need to be written, new tests designed, and new elements introduced into teacher education (Cook 2010). Atkinson (1987) suggests those beginning learners' benefits from the use of L1 because it provides

them with the ability to truly express what they want to say with their limited language repertoire. Advocates of L1 use believe that a limited use of L1 can bring benefits to the L2 learning process (Macaro 2001). Burling (1983) developed the diglot weave for an experimental group in reading French. He modified the text by adding more French words, but never so many to hinder the comprehensibility of the text and he found they learned many words through this technique.

Skiba (1997) suggests that in the circumstances where code switching is used due to an inability of expression, it serves for continuity in speech instead of presenting interference in language. In this respect, code switching stands to be a supporting element in communication of information and in social interaction; therefore serves for communicative purposes in the way that it is used as a tool for transference of meaning. Eldridge believes that "messages are reinforced, emphasized, or clarified where the message has already been transmitted in one code, but not understood" (1996, p. 306). In this case, the message in target language is repeated by the student in native tongue through which the learner tries to give the meaning by making use of a repetition technique. Atkinson (1987) sees the use of L1 as an important tool for lexical contrasting and time-saving. In fact, the main criteria for vocabulary selection in its ability to illustrate a grammar rule (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Zimmerman, 1997). Widdowson (1978) has asserted that native speakers can better understand ungrammatical utterance with accurate vocabulary than those with an accurate grammar and in accurate vocabulary. Learners acquire new words from context without having intention of doing so, such as when picking up new words with no intention of doing so during free reading (Wesch & Paribakhat, 1999).

One of the most innovative techniques proposed to help EFL learners grasp vocabulary knowledge is the diglot weave technique because of its facilitative features that EFL learners use in their language learning. The study is of use for teachers, second language learners and material developers.

This research tried to bring up the question of what the effect of the diglot weave is through the following research questions:

1) Does Diglot weave technique of vocabulary learning have any effect on Iranian EFL pre-intermediate students' vocabulary learning?

2) Is there any statistically significant difference between Iranian EFL pre-intermediate students who use diglot weave technique of vocabulary learning and those students who do not use this technique in their vocabulary learning in the immediate post-test?

3) Is there any statistically significant difference between Iranian EFL pre-intermediate students who use diglot weave technique of vocabulary learning and those students who do not use this technique in their vocabulary learning in the delayed post-test?

3. Method

Participants

To conduct the study, from among all high school students studying in Sari city, four classes were selected based on convenience sampling. The classes were from the first grade of high school and from one major. In this study, first an Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was administered to all students to homogenize them regarding their language proficiency. Then, sixty students, both male and female, were selected and divided into two groups, control and experimental, each group covering 30 students.

Materials and Instruments

The researcher prepared some authentic materials with some types of questions. The readability of each text was calculated. The researchers, then, made them into the diglot weave format. English words were substituted for Farsi words in which every four or five words were selected to be made diglot weave text form. Then the texts were approved by two pro-

fessional teachers. After homogenizing the students regarding their language proficiency through administering an OPT and before the treatment, a vocabulary test was administered as a pretest to both groups, which was then used as the immediate post-test and delayed post-test after the treatment. This vocabulary test which was made based on the new words that were taught during the research treatment was piloted among the same level students to make the test standard. It was only then that the test was administered as the pretest and post-test, both immediate and delayed, to both groups. Moreover, the reliability of the test was calculated and it turned out to be 0.88.

Procedure

After homogenizing the two classes through OPT (Oxford Placement Test), the researcher gave the experimental class the diglot weave materials that had already been prepared for 8 sessions and they had to answer the required vocabulary and reading comprehension questions. The researcher and students worked on the words to translate them into English. As the teaching went along in the sessions, the teacher used more English words. The control group was given the same vocabulary, the same text and the same questions and received the traditional method of teaching vocabulary through giving definitions and synonyms and responded the questions covering vocabulary items while the experimental group received the diglot weave technique of teaching vocabulary as an alternative method and they also answered the same questions. The classes were held for 8 sessions of one hour and a half long. The data were analyzed by SPSS software. To answer the research questions, since there were two independent groups of interval data, an independent samples T-test was used to determine whether there were any statistically significant difference between the control group and the experimental group regarding their vocabulary learning.

As was mentioned before, a vocabulary test was constructed based on vocabulary items selected randomly from the materials that the researcher had already collected. The researcher selected 25 words in the form of multiple choice items to administer to both the experimental and the control groups. This test showed how many of the words these two groups knew at the beginning of the research .To standardize the test; it was administered to a group of learners of the same characteristics to be piloted. The reliability of the test was calculated by Kurder-Richardson's (KR21) formula and it turned out to be 0.88. The test was also sent to two experienced teachers and they approved of it with some minor changes. The scoring of the materials and vocabulary test was in such a way that one point was given to every correct response.

4. Results

The following presents the results obtained in the present study. Descriptive statistics with the scores of OPT test that was used to homogenize students is given below.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of the OPT

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Experimental G	33	28	36	31.33	2.75	.15	.41	-1.52	.80
Control G	33	28.00	36.00	32.30	2.37	-.31	.41	-.78	.80

As can be seen in this table, the mean scores for the experimental and control groups are 3103 and 32.30, respectively. The mean of the two groups are quite similar. Furthermore, the scores of the two groups were scattered nearly the same. This is revealed by the standard deviations of the experimental (2.75) and control group (2.37). To see if the scores of the

two groups formed a normal distribution, skewness and kurtosis were examined. The statistics for skewness were .15 for the experimental group and -.31 for the control group. The ones for kurtosis were -1.52 and -.78 for the experimental and control group, respectively. None of these statistics were higher than -2 or +2 (Bachman, 2004), which reveals that the two groups had normal distributions. Therefore, the parametric Independent Samples t test can be conducted to compare the means of the groups.

Table 2

Results of the Independent Samples T-Test of the OPT Scores

	Independent Samples Test								
	Levene's Test Equality of Variances		fort-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean ference	Dif-Std. Difference	Error95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
OPT Scores	Equal variances assumed								
	3.78	.06	-1.536	4	.13	-.97	.63	-2.23	.29
	Equal variances not assumed		-1.536	2.72	.13	-.97	.63	-2.23	.29

As can be seen in this table, the Levene's test for the equality of variances was not significant (.06). Therefore, the two groups had equal variances. Furthermore, results of the Independent Samples *t* test were not significant either. This is also revealed by the level of significance (.13) which is higher than 0.05. It can be concluded that the two groups were homogeneous before the treatment started.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of the Pretest Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Experimental	33	5.00	12.00	10.12	1.81	-.92	.41	.56	.80
Control	33	6.00	12.00	10.33	1.55	-.97	.41	.69	.80

As can be seen in this Table, the mean scores for the experimental and control groups are 10.12 and 10.33, respectively. The mean of the two groups are quite similar. Furthermore, the scores of the two groups were scattered nearly the same. This is revealed by the standard deviations of the experimental (1.81) and control group (1.55). To see if the scores of the two groups formed a normal distribution, skewness and kurtosis were examined. The statistics for skewness were .92 for the experimental group and .97 for the control group. The ones for kurtosis were .56 and .69 for the experimental and control group, respectively. None of these statistics were higher than -2 or +2 (Bachman, 2004), which reveals that the two groups had normal distributions. Therefore, the parametric Independent Samples t test can be conducted to compare the

means of the groups.

Table 4

Independent Samples T-Test of the Pretest Scores of the Two Groups

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Pretest Score	Equal variances	.86	.36	-.51	64	.61	-.21	.42	-1.04	.62
	Equal variances not assumed			-.51	62.51	.61	-.21	.42	-1.04	.62

As can be seen in this table, the Levene's test for the equality of variances was not significant (.36). Therefore, the two groups had equal variances. Furthermore, results of the Independent Samples *t* test were also not significant. This is also revealed by the level of significance (.61) which is higher than 0.05. It can be concluded that the two groups were not significantly different from one another before the treatment started.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics of the Immediate Posttest Scores of the Two Groups

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Experimental	33	4.00	12.00	9.06	1.97	-.66	.41	1.02	.80
Control	33	3.00	10.00	8.12	1.81	-.92	.41	.56	.80

As can be seen in this table, the mean scores for the experimental and control groups are 9.06 and 8.12, respectively. The mean of the two groups are quite similar. Furthermore, the scores of the two groups were scattered nearly the same. This is revealed by the standard deviations of the experimental (1.97) and control group (1.81). To see if the scores of the two groups formed a normal distribution, skewness and kurtosis were examined. The statistics for skewness were -.66 for the experimental group and -.92 for the control group. The ones for kurtosis were 1.02 and 056 for the experimental and control group, respectively. None of these statistics were higher than -2 or +2 (Bachman, 2004), which reveals that the two groups had normal distributions. Therefore, the parametric Independent Samples t test can be conducted to compare the means of the groups.

Table 6

Independent Samples T-Test with Immediate Posttest Scores of the Two Groups

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Posttest Scores	Equal variances assumed	.001	.97	2.02	64	.04	.94	.46	.01	1.87
	Equal variances not assumed			2.02	63.59	.04	.94	.46	.01	1.87

As can be seen in this table, the Levene's test for the equality of variances was not significant (.97). Therefore, the two groups had equal variances. Results reveal that the two groups were significantly different from one another, t (64) =2.02, P < 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no difference between the two groups after the treatment can be rejected.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics with the Delayed Posttest Scores of the Two Groups

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Experimental	33	5.00	12.00	9.30	1.81	-.62	.41	.20	.80
Control	33	2.00	10.00	7.06	1.96	-.66	.41	1.01	.80

As can be seen in this table, the mean scores for the experimental and control groups are 9.30 and 7.06, respectively. The mean of the two groups are quite similar. Furthermore, the scores of the two groups were scattered nearly the same. This is revealed by the standard deviations of the experimental (1.81) and control group (1.96). To see if the scores of the two groups formed a normal distribution, skewness and kurtosis were examined. The statistics for skewness were -.62 for the experimental group and -.66 for the control group. The ones for kurtosis were .56 and .69 for the experimental and control group, respectively. None of these statistics were higher than -2 or +2 (Bachman, 2004), which reveals that the two groups had normal distributions. Therefore, the parametric Independent Samples t test can be conducted to compare the means of the groups.

Table 8.

Independent Samples T-Test with the Delayed Posttest Scores of the Two Groups

			Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
			F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Delayedposttest scores	Equal variances assumed		.02	.88	4.82	64	.00	2.24	.46	1.31	3.17
	Equal variances not assumed				4.82	63.56	.00	2.24	.46	1.31	3.17

As can be seen in this table, the Levene's test for the equality of variances was not significant (.88). Therefore, the two groups had equal variances. Results reveal that the two groups were significantly different from one another in the delayed posttest, $t (64) = 4.82$, $P \leq 0.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no difference between the two groups can also be rejected in the delayed posttest.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

In the present study, it was argued that vocabulary is an important ingredient of language, and vocabulary learning is an essential part of second or foreign language learning. Language learners need a wide array of target language words to be able to tackle successfully both comprehension and production activities in the second or foreign language. One way to help learners to enhance their knowledge of L2 vocabulary is through equipping learners with a variety of learning strategies. Different taxonomies have thus been proposed, some of which were discussed in the present study.

The findings of the present study clearly indicate the students' strong performance in a specific medium of instruction, i.e. English/ Persian code switching. The results show that students' performances in the two posttests have been consistently supported through all the data. When comparing the students' language performance in using one language (either Persian or English) in teaching, the findings indicate a strong preference in using code switching as a medium of instruction which is in line with Beltz (2002) and Bradley (2003). Although some of the teachers agreed that using one language is beneficial to them, they found it more desirable to use code switching. It is of importance to note here that although students appreciate monolingual teaching to strengthen their linguistic competence in English, they perceive code switching as a means of strengthening their comprehension in learning vocabulary as indicated in one of the student's comments: when the teacher teaches in English and explains in Persian, I can understand very easily and this improves my language.

This study attempts to describe and justify the use of the diglot weave technique, which is believed to assist language teachers in teaching target language vocabulary in EFL classes. Diglot weave involves the use of an L2 word in an L1 utterance; this exclusive technique smoothly weaves the new language into the student's own. A gradual immersion into the target language and the sense of involvement builds comprehension and increases confidence and enthusiasm among the

learners; it is related to code alternation, variations of which can be found in code switching and code mixing. The effective benefit of using the diglot method would likely increase the students' confidence, motivation, success and longevity in the study of the language. With this kind of positive motivation, students may be more likely to increase time spent on studying and reading in the language; thereby vocabulary acquisition would increase.

Students responded very positively to the use of Persian in teaching EFL as they rely on their mother tongue language in learning English. The weaker the students are in English, the more positive performance they have toward using Persian in EFL classroom. All the mentioned points imply that the diglot weave technique is beneficial in language learning while traditional techniques like providing synonyms and definitions are not as effective because they lack some features of the diglot weave technique. Some of them are mentioned below. One way to add new words to one's vocabulary is by locating words in the dictionaries and learning what they mean. However, this is a slow process to increase word power. Another way is through context as we listen and read; we often meet new words in contexts. Sometimes we read words in a written context. Thus, the paragraph may tell us what the new word means, or enough clues may be provided in the sentence which contains the word; or even one or two nearby words may clarify the meaning of a new word we find in the text when reading. Traditional classroom activities mostly emphasize grammar rule (forms). Teachers in these classes imagine that learning the grammar is equated with learning the language while students are not pleased with grammar. However, in communicative approach like the diglot weave technique, the emphasis is on learning L2 in the context of L1. Most of the traditional classroom activities consist of many drills, which emphasize accuracy and consume a lot of time whereas communicative activities develop communication skills, which stress fluency.

Finally, in classes conducted mainly through traditional beliefs in learning, the teacher is the sole knowledgeable person who decides what and how activities should be done in class, ignoring students' capabilities, interests, needs, etc. but in communicative-based classes, teachers just monitor the class while ensuring students do not spoil the class. According to communicative based classes, the teacher needs to bear in mind that in foreign language classrooms, the target language input by the teacher is considered as an important factor in language learning, but at the same time, the level of the students and their need for comprehensible input should be taken into consideration. However, in most language classes, children's needs for communication, which are appropriate to their level of development, are neglected. So the diglot weave technique is seen as a way to take this need for appropriate input into account. Teachers involve students in class, caring their needs, interests, etc. and students are comfortably drawn to the learning.

The diglot weave can be regarded as a communicative technique to teach vocabulary because it facilitates the comprehension of the learners. In addition, as variation of code switching and code mixing is a natural phenomenon in bilingual situations, it can be regarded to facilitate communication between interlocutors. All these points imply that the diglot weave technique is superior to the traditional methods of teaching. This study supports the Cook's (2010), Macaro's (2001), and Tong's (2002) findings contending that limited and judicious use of the mother tongue in the English classroom doesn't reduce the students' exposure to English, but rather can assist in the teaching and learning process. This study also confirms Nemati and Maleki's (2013) findings that diglot weave technique of presenting vocabulary increases the students' vocabulary knowledge. The EFL teacher needs to bear in mind that, in foreign language classroom, the target language input by the teacher is considered as an important factor in language learning, but at the same time the level of students and their need for comprehensible input should be taken into consideration. However, in most language classes, children's needs for communication, which are appropriate to their level of development, are neglected. This technique is seen as a way to take this need for appropriate input into account. Using this technique, the teacher can use L2 as a meaning-making tool for communicating ideas rather than an end in itself. It also reduces anxiety and enhances the effective environment for learning.

This study reveals that total prohibition of Persian in an English classroom will certainly deprive the students of cer-

tain opportunities to learn more and better. Thus, the use of the mother tongue plays only a supportive and facilitating role. This study revealed that the use of the Persian in the classroom is an unavoidable phenomenon. The students' use of Persian appears to be systematic, though there are a few cases in which they did not make the best use of it. The use of L2 should be maximized whenever possible. The L1's primary role is to supply scaffolding to lower learners' affective filter by making the L2 and the classroom environment comprehensible. The L1 plays a secondary role by helping students to anchor L2 concepts to the L1 through use of the loan word, translation activities, and code switching within story telling activities. Using L1 as a major cognitive source has been a challenge in EFL classes, however this study allows a better and more elaborative use of L1 and L2 in the classes in order to help EFL Learners to use their mother tongue as effectively as possible in the class increase their level of EFL vocabulary having a great importance in learning a language. This research may be of use in that it works best for pre-intermediate students in using L1 in their class.

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