

The Impact of Language Exposure on Vocabulary Acquisition

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Abstract

Individuals show different levels of language proficiency that appears mostly in their lexical ability. A key factor of this variance is language exposure, however the quality and quantity are main determiners. For this purpose, this research examines the impact of diverse sources of the target language exposure on facilitating vocabulary acquisition in a non-native speaking community. The current study has been designed using the qualitative method approach to collect data from eight EFL learners enrolled in English department, Faculty of Art, Misrata University through semi-structured interviews. Further, the data have been analysed using thematic analysis. The research findings have revealed that communicative activities such as watching TV, listening to music, radio and podcast, reading, social media, video games, interaction with other speakers e.t. as informal sources of language exposure, can utterly improve vocabulary knowledge. Since, they provide a convenient environment and flexible amount of input. By contrast, classrooms instructive nature contradicts with the incidental mechanism of vocabulary acquisition and results in a good knowledge of grammatical structures in most cases. According to the participants, vocabulary development is tied to comprehensible input exposure beyond the formal setting. Based on the results, the incidental nature of vocabulary development requires informal exposure to the target language input. Recommendations of the study are: language teaching materials should be linked to informal language contact out of classroom, and further researches may include theories concerning vocabulary acquisition in relation to the practical side of the classroom.

استلمت الورقة

بتاريخ 2018/08/5

وقبلت بتاريخ

2019/1/10

ونشرت بتاريخ

2020/10/12

Keywords:

Acquisition

Exposure Input

Vocabulary

Introduction

Nowadays, learning a foreign language (FL) is considered an essential skill associated with the globalised world and modernisation. Yet, it remains controversial what feature is the most presumed when an individual attempts to learn a foreign language as some learners seem to achieve a higher level of proficiency than others. This determination of success and failure in learning a language is mostly tied to vocabulary knowledge, since it is the only tool to express thoughts and convey meaningful messages. Therefore, speakers with a large size of vocabulary are more likely to be understood by others even if weakness occurs in further areas of language.

Krashen (1989) says, "Second language acquirers know this; they carry dictionaries with them, not grammar books" (p.440).

As an implication, in communities like Libya where social, political and cultural factors can impact FL learning to high extent, some language learners believe that the mastery of the target language requires interaction in its context. Even though, there are proficient FL speakers who have never been abroad and could achieve success in acquiring the language out of its context. This poses a big question of the distinction between those who could master the language and those who find it almost an impossible task under the same circumstances. Moreover, when it comes to learning a foreign language, personal differences appear to have less of an impact than target language exposure. Actually, the massive impact of the developing technology can provide learners with an access to the language and its context which significantly eases the learning process.

Other people believe that the classroom is the optimal source for acquiring language. Not far from that, formal settings are still limited as the period of time learners are exposed to language would not satisfy their needs. Moreover, the type of input students receive does not often match the characteristics of comprehensible input. The intensity and pressure can have a negative effect on some learners' motivation to gain new aspects of knowledge.

From another perspective, informal setting tends to have a remarkable influence on learners' behaviour during the process of learning where an individual can interact with the language and other speakers through different authentic sources.

According to what is mentioned above, the main purpose of the present study is to investigate the activities of English as a foreign language (EFL) learners out of the classroom and how they tend to develop their lexical knowledge through different types of language sources. Moreover, it sheds light on the relationship between vocabulary acquisition and language exposure, in order to understand the nature of input that provides the ideal opportunity to develop language proficiency in non-native speaking community.

Research Questions

1. What types of input sources can be utilised by EFL learners to enlarge their vocabulary size?
2. To what extent can quality and quantity of language input in diverse settings affect vocabulary acquisition?
3. Does informal type of exposure promote incidental vocabulary acquisition over formal language exposure?

Review of Related Literature

Vocabulary Acquisition

By the end of the last century, most researchers diverted their focus from grammar to vocabulary, since it has the most dramatic effect on the language (Tang, 2020. p.89). Without vocabulary humans cannot express their thoughts or communicate their

ideas. Therefore, vocabulary is the key feature that makes an individual understood and understands others. Approvingly, Wilkins (as cited in Fazeli, 2012) asserts that “without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed” (p.178). Thus, vocabulary makes the basis for how well learners of a language speak, listen, read and write. According to Asyiah (2017), vocabulary is the fundamental component of language proficiency that is defined as the aspect that connects the four language skills of a target language. That is what allows individuals to communicate successfully.

Clarity and fluency of spoken and written language is based on larger vocabulary knowledge (Fazeli, 2012). As Read (as cited in Fazeli, 2012) declares “Words are the basic building block of language, the units of meaning from which larger structures such as sentences, paragraphs and whole text are formed” (p.178). Therefore, the appearance of second language acquisition (SLA) theories has been accompanied with a dramatic enhancement in the field of vocabulary acquisition and language skills (Tang, 2020). Researchers in English vocabulary acquisition assure that learners should be engaged in an appropriate task involving imagery and semantic elements in order to expand their lexicon size. Moreover, the hypothesis of vocabulary acquisition confirms that words are learned unconsciously as a result of frequent exposure to the language input (Baharuddin, 2017).

Sok and Han (2020) assert that acquiring vocabulary occurs in one of two main ways, either incidentally or intentionally. On the one hand, intentional vocabulary acquisition can be defined as the process of learning words with the deliberate intention, usually with an explicit focus to transmit them to memory. To put to more simply, the activity where learning vocabulary is the purpose of a task. On the other hand, incidental vocabulary acquisition is the process of learning vocabulary as an outcome of an activity with the purpose of explicit lexical learning. They further, assure that the fruitful style of acquiring vocabulary in context is by picking up words incidentally. Furthermore, Loewen (as cited in Brooks and Sundin, 2020), acknowledges that larger amounts of input which enable learners to acquire vocabulary, are available outside the classroom. Similarly, Teng (2016) highlights higher language exposure as the most vital aspect of acquiring words features (e.g. spelling, word class, meanings).

Nevertheless, the mechanism of acquiring new words is influenced by psychological, biological, and social aspects that specify the degree and nature of acquisition. Mental and behavior characteristics can determine the individual’s emotional and psychological status in a modality that affects communicative interaction. Biologically, aspects as critical period can limit the brain ability to develop language after a particular age. Further, as language acquisition is described as a social phenomenon then social interaction forms a main concern (Baharuddin, 2017). Innatism believes that children are born with a linguistic tool, therefore; acquisition of vocabulary is completely natural when individuals are exposed to language in diverse contexts (Baharuddin, 2017).

According to Fazeli (2012), there are some gaps among the current studies of teaching and learning vocabulary. For instance, the barriers result from the nature of

vocabulary acquisition, such as: the fact that there are not two words share identical meaning therefore, learning words based on their semantic characteristics (e.g. synonyms) is not an ideal option. Not so far, the techniques used by teachers in teaching vocabulary inside the classroom vary in levels of range and form of language from one class to another. Finally, learning styles can be utilised among intermediate and advanced learners, are diverse. To indicate, poor language learners are not aware of where, when and how to apply certain techniques. Most importantly, word frequency is one of the challenges learners faced beside the nature of the context in which it occurs. To clarify, vocabulary presented in a rich and clear context is more likely to be learned.

English Language Exposure

Language exposure is a key factor that can determine language proficiency level among learners depending on quality and quantity of input which plays an important role in language acquisition specifically word frequency (Carbajal and Peperkamp, 2019). Basically, the majority of difficulties in learning English language along with speaking fluency are traced to the lack of target language exposure beyond school walls (Al-zoubi, 2018). Insufficient authentic or semi-authentic exposure to the language impacts linguistic competence negatively. To clarify, language exposure differs in much aspect as contexts in which speakers interact, and their characteristics, such as: language choice and linguistic proficiency (Kozhevnikova, 2019).

As a matter of fact, no one could introduce what exposure is explicitly; in some cases, both expressions 'exposure' and 'input' are used alternatively, while in others they are used differently. At most, exposure refers to the absolute period of time that an individual has formal or informal communication with the target language actively or passively, in verbal or nonverbal forms (Domingo, 2020). On top of that, Al-zoubi (2018) argues, that teachers are supposed to deliver input, admittedly real language exposure should take place outside the classroom, stating that exposure is learners informal reach to the target language. On the other side, Carroll (2015) highlights input as the pile of the language that a speaker needs to solve a certain learning issue. For instance, if a learner requires a particular verb or subject then the input which has been exposed to earlier will overcome the problem.

Fundamentally, language exposure is classified into two types. First, intensive language exposure which happens in formal settings (e.g. schools, faculties) and it is instructed by an educator. Second, extensive language exposure that occurs in informal settings according to several components: context, instructions, quantity, degree of authenticity, and purpose of learning (Wilde, Bysbeart, and Eyckman, 2020). It has been argued that receiving input informally is preferable, because it has a dramatic impact on language acquisition particularly incidental vocabulary acquisition (Majuelos, 2017; Omar, 2019).

Formal Sources of Input

According to Kresten (2020), nature and quality of input in classroom are attached to utilising sensory content that promotes brain's information processing. As a fact, receiving linguistic knowledge through senses by engagement into tasks comprises

interaction and technological models such as audio-visual material, can significantly increase students' likability to be motivated to acquire more knowledge. Kresten (2020), highlights that "Input characteristics do not always result from a conscious goal or decision of the teacher" (p.2).

Still, some language classes lack the suitable conditions for receiving more comprehensible input; as they have not altered the old-fashioned traditional strategies which mostly do not offer the chance for EFL students to interact inside the classroom. Surmanov and Azimova (2020) state that "The use of language leads to an increase in knowledge of vocabulary" (p.146). In addition, there is no agreement on methods of language learning in different classes, because most of the strategies adopted for the purpose of examination while examinations have different purposes which affect the outcomes of vocabulary learning techniques (Fazeli, 2012). In spite of the approach applied in classroom, a teacher plays different roles; as a controller, a facilitator, a manager, director, and a resource of knowledge. Suvakovic (as cited in Topalov and Bojanić, 2019) learners are not able to increase lexical knowledge merely by being exposed to an input. Likewise, Krashen (1981 as cited in Topalov and Bojanić, 2019) states that "teachers are the main source of the foreign language" (p.72).

Typically, a positive classroom atmosphere creates a positive development among students which is mainly dependent upon interaction and classroom management. Furthermore, the social structure at any educational institution is likely to shape the relationship between individuals and their communicative skills. Vygotsky (as cited in Doğan, 2017) reckons "language development is social, and knowledge is constructed by interaction of individuals within the society" (p.2). Therefore, students are found to be more comfortable and active in classes with democratic relationships. As a result, they involve in more active work and accomplish better outcomes (Mithans, 2020).

Informal Sources of Input

Learners are mostly exposed to language inside the classroom which is very limited compared to the individual need to acquire language. Therefore, the amount of daily interaction with the foreign language informally is considered as a necessity, for the reason that it allows access to more information. To illustrate, various activities can expand learning scope and promote target language (TL) exposure such as: using electronic devices for internet or gaming, watching TV, listening to music and podcasts, and reading books or magazines.

One of the great shifts aroused with advanced technology nowadays is the revolutionary learning practices and communication schemes. Since technological devices such as computers, mobile phones and tablets that are provided with programmes, and networked applications become more available; learners have had the chance to be more engaged and stimulated in an active language learning process. Most importantly, technological activities are managed in English language, which enable them to have contact with the target language (Egan, 2019; Trinder, 2017).

Technological devices permit access to internet, games and social media where learners can use their skills such as speaking and listening. For instance, online games allow players all over the world to involve in linguistic and cultural environment utilising the language and developing identities (Peters, 2018). Moreover, some people are highly motivated to get exposed to an input through online gaming and usually have little or no interest in learning language following traditional strategies as in classroom (Ordoñez, 2020).

It is believed that informal sources of exposure are more enjoyable, on the top of them: TV viewing which can be a great provider of second language (L2) input. Furthermore, it is likely to serve individual demand of daily authentic exposure in a foreign language community. An appealing to advantage is that TV can take an individual to live the experience and can introduce language in a context that supplies viewers with semantic support and comprehensible input consequently (Suwaed, 2019; Jobra, 2019; Peters and Webb, 2018). In addition, Tang (2020) claims that TV shows and programmes can prompt vocabulary knowledge significantly due to the enhancement of meaning recalling.

In theory, one of the most beneficial sources of target language input is the authentic videos, as they have a significant effect on SL and FL learners. The combination of sound, image, and subtitle enables individuals to process information with higher efficacy. Additionally, captioned videos can work on the motivational and emotional level, besides presenting the language in various contexts. Thus, verbal and nonverbal communication that subtitles provide, impresses the viewers of the quantity of the language they can understand, and encourages them to crave more (Sinyashina, 2020).

Listening is another entertaining practice which enables learners to receive input out of school environment. For instance, podcasts is an influential provider of authentic listening material everyone can benefit from. Audio content of a podcast is an extract from real-life speaking which can boost listening and speaking comprehension as well as linguistic competence. They are typically designed to be downloaded on portable devices which ease their usage and availability (Abdulrahman, Basamala and Widodo, 2018). Moreover, English songs can be a greatly useful source of interesting and comprehensible input for a foreign language learner due to a number of advantages. By listening to songs, an individual is able to obtain new vocabulary and learn how to form meaningful sentences besides improving listening skills and pronunciation. In addition, it is an activity the majority of people enjoy anytime and everywhere (Purwaningsih, 2019).

Furthermore, reading is considered the most dynamic source for enriching lexical knowledge based in several studies (Hatami, 2017; Peters, 2018). Actually, learning a language requires a contextualised input that Patro (2018) reckons reading is the optimal provider. A context shows properties and characteristics of words that hint the reader with clues to guess their meanings and forms. Consequently, vocabulary acquisition is enhanced; hence, segments of language are repeated. Generally, there are two types of reading: extensive reading which is done for pleasure and intensive reading which is related with assessment and examination, despite learner's interest.

The former includes a wide range of various materials that trigger general comprehension, inspiration, and observation, while the latter concerned with limited material that occurs only in the classroom (Neisi, Hajjalili, and Namaziandost, 2019). Thus, extensive reading is supposed to be more beneficial in the sense it happens in an environment that is free from negative feelings promoting learning unconsciously (Majuelos, 2017).

Related Studies

A series of recent studies has emphasised the impact of extensive exposure to the target language input among EFL students on language acquisition generally, and vocabulary particularly. For instance, a study has been conducted in 2019 by Suwaed entitled "Beyond English Language Classroom: An Investigation into Libyan Undergraduate Petroleum Engineering Students Improving of Language Skills" has examined the function of out-of-class activities on improving language skills among Libyan students in Sabratha University. Data collection has been done using a mixed method approach through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

It has revealed that the majority of the students in EFL context, who have had a more developed level, have been mostly exposed to foreign language input outside of the classroom. Similarly, the current research highlights the role of exposure to the target language input in EFL context among Libyan undergraduate students. Further, it depends on qualitative method approach using semi-structured interviews. At the same time, this study focuses on how students can acquire vocabulary incidentally and consequently have a higher level of language proficiency.

A more comprehensive description can be found in the research entitled "The Impact of Instructions and Out-of-Class Exposure to Foreign Language Input on Learners' Vocabulary Knowledge in Two Languages". Peters, Noreillie, Heylen, Bulte, and Desmet (2019) shed light on the role of instruction, out-of-class exposure to foreign language input, and gender on vocabulary knowledge in two foreign languages: English and French. The study has explained how English vocabulary knowledge were considerably larger than French regardless of students' fewer years of English instructions.

The study has represented that large amounts of exposure beyond classroom particularly online activities have had a positive impact on vocabulary knowledge. Likewise, this research hypothesises that EFL students' wider vocabulary knowledge is an advantage of greater amounts of input in informal settings in which psychological barriers decrease and more opportunities for entertaining and comprehension occurs.

A further comparison has been made in this field under the title "Role of Faculty Instructions Methods in EFL Libyan Learners Speaking Difficulties" by Diaab (2016). This research has indicated that EFL Libyan learners still face barriers in speaking despite spending years learning English. It has examined the teaching methods used in the classroom and the reasons students have had communicative problems, although they have built linguistic knowledge. Data have been collected

from questionnaires and interviews which have been analysed using SPSS and content analysis.

The results of the study have illustrated that lacking exposure to the target language and using Arabic in and out of the classroom have been the fundamental factors of difficulties EFL learners have experienced in oral communication. Not far from that, the current study suggests that insufficient exposure to the target language is the main factor contributing to most difficulties learners encounter in receiving and producing the language, due to the fact that lack of vocabulary has a real dramatic effect on communication skills which could be improved by interaction with the language out of the classroom.

A remarkable research in the same field entitled “Learning English through out of-School Exposure. Which Level of Language Proficiency Attained and Which Types of Input are Important” conducted by Wilde, Bysbeart, and Eyckman (2020). It has aimed at inspecting the types of exposure that enrich learners' linguistic competence and what language proficiency level they can achieve. 780 Dutch students have been tested on their English receptive vocabulary knowledge, speaking, reading, and writing.

The study has presented that the most beneficial types of input have been gaming, social media use, and speaking because of their interactive nature. Moreover, high language gains have been found for the majority of students through the tests of the same proficiency component. The study has been applied on young EFL learners aged (10-12) using a mixed method approach to collect data from both students and their parents. Meanwhile, the current research uses a qualitative method to collect data from adult EFL learners to investigate the impact of different types of language sources on vocabulary acquisition.

While, these previous studies have concentrated on the impact of out-of-classroom activities in maintaining foreign language, which can be considered as a first step towards a more profound understanding of vocabulary acquisition. This study aims to introduce the role of informal exposure to the language in as sources of vocabulary knowledge in EFL context.

Method

Research Design

The current study has used the qualitative method to identify the nature of language exposure among EFL learners in formal and informal settings, in relation to its impact on subconscious vocabulary acquisition. The qualitative data provide a better understanding and detailed answers of a complex phenomenon. (Dörnyei, 2007).

Participants and Setting

The participants have been (8) students enrolled in English Department in the spring of the academic year 2020. The samples interviewed have been EFL learners sharing similar linguistic backgrounds; their first language is Arabic and they are learning English as a foreign language in the same context.

Research Instrument

To investigate the impact of English language exposure to different inputs on vocabulary acquisition among specialised EFL learners, the researchers have adopted one to one semi-structured interviews with pre-prepared guiding questions. This type of interviews comprises inclusive questions about the topic to go to the depth of the respondents' experience and provide an explicit overview of the issue. The participants have been asked 13 open-ended questions about their opportunities in classroom and out of-class to acquire new words to elaborate the interview in an exploratory manner to have detailed answers.

Procedure

Data Collection

The qualitative data have been collected utilising a semi-structured interview. The guiding questions of the interview have been revised and checked for reliability and accuracy by piloting. Then, they have been modified for clarity based on some feedback from the participants. Finally, they have been verified by the supervisor of this project. The qualitative data have been collected from eight participants interviewed and asked individually for an average of 15 minutes after planning an appointment for each.

Ethical Considerations

As it has been mentioned in the consent form and informed orally before the interview, the identities and personal information of the participants will be kept confidential throughout the study; therefore, fake names have been used for each sample. They have been told that they have the right to withdraw at any time they feel uncomfortable. Further, the researchers will use only the information relevant to the topic without any kind of assessment. The language used along the interview has been English without any sort of translation.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data that introduce students' points of view towards the impact of the formal and informal sources of input on acquiring vocabulary, have been transcribed, then classified into themes based on their frequent occurrence.

Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the findings collected from the semi-structured interviews which are interpreted and presented into themes.

Interview Analysis

This research has used interviews as an instrument to collect qualitative data from (8) participants who are students in English Department, Faculty of Arts. The interview has mainly covered 13 questions to extract thoroughly precise detailed answers that extend to the depth of the participants' experience.

Language Exposure Frequency

Based on the analysis of the collected data the first key part of the personal interview deals with language exposure. It has revealed that all of the participants have been inevitably receiving the target language for four years at least. Apparently, they have been exposed to the target language out of the classroom on daily bases, as Ansam has mentioned, "you don't enter class every day to listen to the language... you forget all the things you learned unless you listen to them out of the classroom". The participants have admittedly stated that they utilise informal sources which are: watching TV movies and shows, using social media and chatting with friends online, listening to music and podcasts, reading, debating and conversations. It can be illustrated, that classroom exposure is not enough for an EFL learner. As it is highlighted by Al-zoubi (2018), language exposure is an informal reach to the language beyond the classroom environment.

Classroom as a Source of Input

The second considerable part of the interview questions has typically included the classroom environment and the teacher as a credible source of comprehensible input. It has turned out that students are not completely satisfied with the input they receive in classroom, as they have complained about the methods followed in teaching and the old-fashioned styles. Ali has reported, "I don't see that much active classes... we listened to the teacher talking". Moreover, Hatem has announced that, "We never consider the teacher as the source of knowledge at any subject... we depend solely on ourselves... There are some perfect examples of teachers as instructors... In the classroom you're doing things in the purpose of passing". To add more, Anwar has objected, "In the classroom you just watching the teacher explaining". Likewise, Mariam has commented, "It's like the teacher explaining and students paying attention to him". Sara has added, "Some teachers just sticking to the traditional way, that the teacher is only knowledge giver... The teacher is not always a reliable source... The time is not enough to develop anything in the class". This highly proves what Fazeli (2012) states about the strategies followed in the classroom, as they are designed for the ultimate purpose of examination rather than the possible development. In addition, engaged students are more likely to benefit in active classrooms with democratic relationships.

On the other hand, two participants have had a neutral attitude towards the classroom. Both have reckoned that the benefits from the classroom depend on the teacher and the methods used. Ansam has stated "it depends on the method teacher use and the teacher knowledge. Similarly, Laila has agreed that "It depends on the teacher some teachers are qualified others are not".

Furthermore, some participants have presented classroom environment as boring and stressful due to the lack of variation of teaching techniques and the curriculum itself. As Hatem has illustrated "learning is done under lots of stress and it's boring... You learn from teachers who are willing to teach beyond the limits of the curriculum". Approvingly, Mariam has said that "classroom might be boring". Thus, it can be said that students are not interested in learning a language in a traditional classroom (Ordnez, 2020). To add more, Ansam has believed that "subjects are always limited

in the classroom.”. Meanwhile, Salem has bleakly acknowledged that “we can simply describe classroom as miserable”. As a fact, language acquisition and especially vocabulary requires a comprehensible input, which Krashen and Mason (2020) refer to as entertaining and rich.

Classroom Functions

During the time that classroom atmosphere has been being criticised, two of the interviewed students have claimed that both formal and informal sources are required to acquire the target language in general and vocabulary in particular. According to Anwar “Informal and formal sources completing each other”. Objectively, each of the interviewees has insisted that the received language from the formal sources cannot be enough to build up their vocabulary. Nevertheless, interviewees have underlined the most significant advantages of the classroom as learning grammatical knowledge and to be sufficiently instructed. The following statements have been concluded: Anwar has claimed that “the teachers depend on grammar”. Mariam has declared that “Teachers were really good especially at grammar”. Sara has stated that “Teachers provide explanations for the grammar parts... the teacher is gonna guide you”. Salem has asserted that “You learn from classroom structure and grammar not really vocabulary”. Students’ answers have showed that the classroom is essentially required for learning grammatical structures than acquiring vocabulary which is highly dependent on extensive exposure due to the incidental nature of vocabulary acquisition.

Informal Sources as a Facilitator of Vocabulary Acquisition

The participants have been asked about the informal sources of input regarding if they can promote and facilitate vocabulary acquisition. It has been agreed that out-of-classroom sources provide larger amounts of language input and ease the process of acquisition, due to the flexibility of access and entertaining which is a major factor of comprehensible input. To illustrate, Ali has explained “It’s easy way to get vocabulary because you enjoy it and acquire the language at the same time. When watching you live the moment you see the action you don't have to translate it”. And as Hatem has clarified: “They are recreational activities: something you do when you have fun, you relate fun to acquisition...informal sources work better than a serious environment... you’re enjoying... not stressed... the brain filters the information in accordance to a psychological state... thus to observe more information”.

Furthermore, the participants have asserted that authenticity besides frequency is another condition for development to happen. Hatem has reported that, “It’s a matter of quality and quantity... you can read something below your level but don’t expect improvement”. Anwar has added “it make it easy to memorise a lot of vocabulary easier, because of technology around us”. Agreeably, Mariam has declared “vocabulary from outside the classroom immediately stays in my mind... activities like speaking and debating are interesting”. In fact, several advantages have been highlighted by the students the same of what Sara has indicated “you’re free to listen, to look up for things you like. You have the time in your hands and you can look for what is reliable... and you are not forced like formal education”. As it can be

observed, the interviewees have been aware of the principle of quality and quantity of language input in order to expand vocabulary size.

Informal Sources:

Reading

In addition, each of the eight respondents has spotted light on certain informal sources, as they could have sensed significance in terms of preference, advantages or both. Substantially, extensive reading has been superior among other informal types and it has been regarded as the most effective practice to gain new words. After Hatem has stated that:

“when you read you have an opportunity to come across the word over and over to see it in a context to translate it to see other examples for it... It’s easier for it to stick than just hearing it... I enjoy reading literature the language of literature is of the highest level”.

Likewise, Anwar has admitted that “people who read a lot they can right easily; they are more academic”. While, Mariam has highlighted that “for vocabulary reading is the best one because the more you read the more you write”. The participant has related reading to writing as both demand vocabulary knowledge. Laila has added, “Reading is a beautiful way to increase vocabulary when you read you can have a new word more than one time and when you finish you will know the meaning and the usage of the word”.

Nonetheless, Ansam has claimed that “reading needs quietness and a lot of attention, I guess and a lot of time. It’s a bit inconvenient but it's very very beneficial”. Alike, Salem has concluded, “Reading is not good for beginners and you will spend a lot of time translating and they use a very formal language”. Sara has ranked reading as the last source to promote the vocabulary knowledge “reading comes last... if I was reading something and kept coming across words I didn’t get and looking it up in a dictionary frustrates me”. Generally, it has been agreed by 7 participants that reading is the most advantageous source of acquiring vocabulary. Still, some people find it as a complicated task, because it is demanding for time and effort.

Listening

Another source that has been described by most of the interviewees is listening to music and podcasts, because of the fact that it is the most convenient and available tool. As an illustration, Anwar has mentioned that “I prefer music because I can listen everyday anytime any place... listening to music and podcasts and radio develop your standard English and vocabulary”. Likewise, Sara has commented “listening to a song and spot a new word, I would get the meaning from the context”. Most importantly, podcasts have been classified as a significant category of listening that triggers vocabulary acquisition. For instance, Salem has stated that “formal podcasts help learning vocabulary... they are easy, available all time”. From this prescriptive, listening allows the individual to have frequent and useful exposure to the target language in an interesting manner, as well as working on the auditory memory. Thus, it is considered a reliable source for obtaining new words.

Watching TV

Uniquely, it can be seen that large part of the population watch TV programmes, movies, series or use another technological device to apply the same practice. In detail, the participants have exemplified watching in general as an activity they would like to perform at least once or twice a week. Ali has explained that “In my country people either watch TV shows or movies... It’s fun and I enjoy it. It’s easy way to get vocabulary because you enjoy it and acquire the language... you don’t have to translate... you see the action so; you get the word meaning”. As an appealing to advantage TV can be a great provider of authentic input that can trigger vocabulary acquisition. Most importantly, TV presents the language in various contexts which offers a semantic support for viewer to recall meaning (Tang 2020). Moreover, Anwar has added “watching movies with translation helped learning vocabulary step by step I can watch it without translation”, demonstrating that it can prompt lexical knowledge.

Interaction with Other Speakers

Additionally, interaction with others has been emphasised by the interviewees as a valuable source for obtaining vocabulary. According to Hatem: “Interaction with native speakers comes first... so you are talking with a native speaker who is using his own words and his own pronunciation, which is the most perfect. Listening to word plays a major role in maintaining that word it gets attached to your brain”. He has concluded his own theory of interaction with other native speakers as he has presented it as the best source for acquiring vocabulary, emphasising the analysis that the brain employs in the situation. Doğan (2017) reports what Vygotsky hypothesises that language is an outcome of a social act and individual's interaction

Social Media and Networks

Social media and networks have further been considered as an advantageous option to gain new words. To demonstrate, Ali has started “I have friends online, we chat in English”. Meanwhile, another different utilisation of social media has been referred to, by Ansam “YouTube is the most beneficial source for me. There are tons of teachers and professionals, the natives and you can find any topic you want to listen to”. Laila and Anwar have agreed on the same statement that watching YouTube videos, beside following English pages and accounts has been such a fruitful experience of learning new aspects of formal and informal vocabulary.

Gaming

Not far from what is mentioned earlier, gaming has been a significant tool of interaction with the language in an informal setting. As Hatem has clarified the start of his journey to learn English “was mainly from games... It was done unconsciously through video games”. Some participants have introduced gaming as the finest tool, for example: Sara has pointed out “video games are the best because there’s an interaction between me the language and the game. And the game was a platform where I interact with the language”. As Peters (2018), assures that online games provide linguistic and cultural environments for players all over the world which

enhance their vocabulary knowledge. On the top of that, Anwar has admitted that some of her friends develop their English vocabulary through playing video games.

The Importance of Vocabulary Acquisition

Overall, students are clearly dependent upon informal sources of language exposure to enhance their lexical knowledge. Finally, they have been asked about the importance of that knowledge specifically concerning their proficiency level. Ali has stated, "language depend on vocabulary. No vocabulary no language. You don't have to learn grammar to get the whole sentence. You use it: you acquire it". Similarly, Hatem has argued that "when you're gonna speak language, you gonna speak words and that what vocabulary is. Without vocabulary you cannot speak". In addition, Salem has conveyed that "language is simply a pile of words that we combine to make sense to others". Alongside, the participants have highlighted the importance of expanding vocabulary knowledge in relation to their language fluency. This leads us to what Wilkins (1972 as cited in Fazeli, 2012) says about the importance of vocabulary "without grammar little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed" (p.178).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The broad implication of the present project detects the influence of language received input in formal and informal settings on vocabulary acquisition. The quantity and quality of language exposure are observed among EFL students with regard to the proper conditions in which facilitation and development are more likely to occur. Collectively, the findings indicate that entertaining and accommodating environment that provides the ability to operate describes the adequate setting for learners to expand their lexical knowledge.

As it has been argued, informal sources such as: reading, viewing TV shows and movies, listening to various material, using social media, gaming and interaction with other speakers provide larger amounts of rich and comprehensible input. Since, they are enjoyable, flexible, and suitable for various students' demands. Thus, a large sector of learners practice different activities out of the classroom daily, in order to obtain new words and keep what they have learnt. As an appealing to advantage of informal exposure, the context and frequency of input as features can promote acquiring vocabulary subconsciously. Therefore, informal sources can be a great help to create a fruitful environment. Similarly, the impact of sufficient authentic and semi-authentic input in informal setting on language proficiency is linked to the language exposure out of the classroom (Al-zoubi, 2018).

On the other side, the participants of this study have introduced the classroom as a limited setting that would not be sufficient for improvement and requires to be followed by other sources. The significant claim of the participants about classroom advantages concerning vocabulary has been negated and replaced by another assertion that the main focus of the formal setting is grammatical rules and structures. According to Fazeli (2012), there is no agreement on the methods applied in teaching, even so the most of them are adopted for the purpose of examinations. Moreover, classroom environment has been presented as a tedious and tense

environment that does not facilitate the process of vocabulary acquisition in an EFL context.

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