Effectiveness of Scripted Curriculum versus Interactive Instruction for Teaching Vocabulary Acquisition Skills to English Language Learners

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Abstract

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) transformed the system of accountability for schools in the United States by implementing high stakes consequences for poor performance on standardized tests. Scripted curriculum has become the standard practice as a means to prepare students to achieve the academic standards measured by standardized tests. The following study will explore the effectiveness of scripted curriculum, specifically in regards to vocabulary acquisition skills among English language learners. Studies will be presented that suggest more effective models of interactive teaching for teaching vocabulary skills to English learners.

Vocabulary Acquisition Skills and the Effectiveness of Interactive Learning versus Scripted

Curriculum

**Introduction**

**General Statement of the Problem**

Scripted curriculum instructional materials are commercially packaged materials that require the teacher to read from a script when delivering a lesson to students. These materials focus on providing systematic skills for teacher instruction. The discourse says that the scripted curriculum method will improve standardized test scores and therefore narrow the achievement gap that the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 intends to close. In regards to the present study, vocabulary acquisition is a skill that is fundamental to the development of English language among English language learners. Furthermore, this study intends to explore whether scripted curriculum is meeting the needs of English language learners considering that it is the preferred method of instruction when teaching vocabulary acquisition skills. English language learners are part of a significant student population. Therefore, if the focus remains on scripted curriculum as the means to teaching vocabulary skills, this may be detrimental to the success of English learners considering that there are other existing methods of instruction. The study will further explore alternatives to scripted curriculum by means of interactive teaching models that have proven to be effective.

**Review of Related Literature**

There were several articles both quantitative and qualitative in nature researched for this project. The article topics ranged from mathematics instruction to early childhood learning and direct versus indirect instructional strategies.

Kan, P., & Kohnert, K. (2008). Fast mapping by bilingual preschool children*.* *J. Child Language,* 35, 495-514. This study is a quantitative research report. The general purpose of the study is to examine the results of semantic mapping to increase vocabulary acquisition among pre-school second language learners and if there is a correlation between age and ability to utilize fast mapping. This current research is relevant as it studies fast mapping (also referred to as semantic mapping) ability in both languages. This is important to understand how children utilize background information in different languages. Previous studies have examined the ability and success of fast mapping in a second language to ascertain effectiveness. The present study builds on the previous studies that have supported the effectiveness of fast mapping and now it is questioned how children use their background language in their primary language and connect similarities to build vocabulary understanding.The participants are 26 pre-school students of the average age of 5 to 6 years of age. Their primary language is Hmong and second language is English. They are all of typical development ability. The sequence of the study is as follows:

Students were tested individually.

Students were given vocabulary measure as an index for existing language.

Students were given vocabulary measure in fast mapping.

The collected data consisted of observation and response scores given by the researcher. A score was given when the student gave each correct response. The data analysis used was statistical with the means being a *t*-test to demonstrate the differentials between each of the scores. The scoring was completed by a research assistant and then reexamined by another research assistant and an agreement score was administered. The results demonstrated that there is no relation in age in fast mapping abilities. Additionally, there was no significant difference between receptive and expressive skills in both languages concerning fast mapping and vocabulary acquisition. The author concludes that age does not make a difference in fast mapping skills. Younger children are able to utilize this skill as well as older children. In considering vocabulary acquisition utilizing fast mapping, children performed better in their primary language, as would be expected. However, it was not statistically different than their second language. The author raises the issues of outside variables, such as unperceived exposure to vocabulary clues and context clues. Additionally, the author questions if vocabulary measures are the best way to measure fast mapping. It was interesting that there was not a notable statistical difference in the utilization of fast mapping. This strategy has been used in classrooms and is helpful. The use of receptive and expressive measures was an interesting method to test acquisition.

Beck, I., McKeown, M., & Kucan, L. (2002). *Bringing words to life: Robust vocabulary*

*instruction.* New York, London: The Guilford Press. The investigators are Isabel Beck, Margaret McKeown and Linda Kucan. They are a group of researchers and professors focused on examining differing methods of teaching vocabulary. It is not specifically stated in the text; however, the authors approach vocabulary instructional methods in a critical theorist manner. The vocabulary strategies described question and analyze meaning. Additionally, the authors utilize cultural and social constructs to increase vocabulary instruction in second language learners. The purpose of the study is practical and designed to examine and observe multiple indirect teaching strategies for vocabulary acquisition, primarily for second language learners. There are not any focus questions as this study evaluates multiple strategies rather than a direct hypothesis.

The study takes place in a fourth grade classroom of twenty students. The researchers observe a teacher and her class. A large portion of the student’s primary language is Spanish and English is their second language. The school is located in an urban area. The teacher has set goals for the students to learn to read and vocabulary enlarged. The indirect vocabulary teaching strategies that the researchers are going to introduce are meant to assist the teacher in reaching her goal for her students.

The field notes were analyzed to review the results of the strategies.

Field notes were taken by researchers of students

Throughout the story differing vocab strategies were utilized.

Literature was chosen as the source for vocabulary words.

The data was collected through field notes and observations made by the researchers and teacher. The authors’ role was that of an observer. They observed the teacher facilitating the indirect vocabulary strategies and observed students’ interaction, engagement and ability to use vocabulary words in various contexts, which demonstrates acquisition. The procedures utilized for data analysis were the examination of themes that emerged out of the field notes and observation of students. The researchers reviewed the data to determine if the strategies were effective and if certain strategies were more successful than others. The results were students’ vocabulary acquisition improved in context use and in their writing. The field notes and observations demonstrated that students utilized the targeted vocabulary words in the various methods of indirect instruction and were able to transfer this knowledge in their writing and reading. The positive component of this study is that there are more than one researcher conducting the study and an objective viewpoint from the teacher in charge. The researchers cross checked observations and field notes then invited the teacher to participate in the data analysis to ensure validity. The strategies suggested by the researchers are interesting and fit well into current ELL strategies. The conflict is the scripted curriculum that is in place in many low performing schools, which asserts the use of direct instruction for all subjects. The vocabulary strategies suggested and examined in the book are contrary to scripted curriculum but support learners and the myriad ways they construct meaning from words.

In the qualitative study “From Scripted Instruction to Teacher Empowerment: Supporting Literacy Teachers to Make Pedagogical Transitions”, authors Fang, Fu, and Lamme provide a critique of the current trend of scripted curriculum. The purpose of this research project was to support educators in their desire to make pedagogical transitions from total reliance on scripted material to making informed decisions about curriculum and pedagogy autonomously. This project was coordinated by the North East Florida Educational Consortium (NEFEC), an educational agency concerned about the prepackaged commercial curriculum that is dominating many classrooms in Florida. Their concern was for the unintended consequences for both teachers and students. The project lasted four years and the students, their parents and the teachers were surveyed with questionnaires to determine its impact. This research was a high quality research project that was created by university literacy professors who headed up the NEFEC. They selected studies that would address the concerns of how prepackaged curriculum would impact both teachers and students. A theoretical framework was factored into the design and development of new course books that considered teacher’s needs and interests. This is important to note because a teacher will be more committed to using tools that reflect their preferences. The model used was a professional development model. The data that is provided came from questionnaires from teachers, students, and their parents. The following quote is an example of data collected: “I’m glad my mom put me in PDC (professional development classroom) because I’ve read over three hundred books in this program and I love to read… Reading helps me in all my subjects. Reading helps me with everything in life” (student). The authors of this project recognize that the data that comes from PDC classrooms is not the same as regular classrooms, but that scores are indicative of increased learning and understanding on the part of the students. The authors used mega-analysis to get from the individualized studies to arrive at a level of general assertions concerning this research. The authors of this research project chose to summarize at the conclusion of the article briefly. The authors conclude that a teaching model that allows educators to develop and use their knowledge, skills, and wisdom to impact their students is more advantageous then following scripted, pre-packaged curriculum. The conclusion that has been drawn from this research has practical utility. Educators can be empowered knowing that they can rely on their own instincts and knowledge and not have to totally rely on scripted material. This research project was done very well and its results are highly credible. This report was well written in regards to clarity and it was organized so that the information could be easily understood.

Ajayi L. conducted an analysis of a reading/language arts course book for a second grade classes. It is known that course books are the main teaching tool of the language arts instruction in elementary schools across California State. However, these course books have not been evaluated for their appropriateness to meet the needs of the teachers to assist them in different language teaching contexts. There is very little research on the topic of how teachers react to the implementation of these structured course books, therefore this type of research is critical. It must be researched to determine whether these mass produced course books are reflecting the diverse needs and interests of educators thereby enabling them to actually on reality give teachers the necessary tools they need for teaching. To advance this study, 100 elementary school students were randomly selected. The participating teachers consisted of 81 females and 19 males.

The study took place in various elementary classrooms in Los Angeles Unified School District LAUSD. The 100 school teachers used a prescribed language arts course book called “Open Court Reading” to teach language arts. Each response to questions on a questionnaire were considered datum. These responses were treated as an “entry” and the entries were used to rank the teachers’ response to the different aspects of the course book. Each response was analyzed to identify activity purpose, teaching activities, teaching style, classroom structure, and classroom participatory structure that had been preselected for the teachers’ use. The results indicates that the preselected teaching activities may not sufficiently meet the varied needs and preferences of the teachers and that the heavily scripted nature of the course book denies the teachers the needed flexibility and creativity to meet the varied needs of the students in her classroom. It was concluded that the greater benefit for course books is to support and facilitate teaching rather than dominate it. The author does not relate any cautions that he has about this research. Since the results of this study were credible, these findings can be applied to teaching with course books. The course books can be used as a resource.

There were two articles researched discussing mathematics instruction. Teacher Professionalism – An Innovative Program for Teaching Mathematics to Foundation Level Learners with Limited Language Proficiency. H. Naude´, E. Pretorius, and S. Vandeyar. Early Child Development and Care, 2003, Vol. 173 (2-3), pp.293-315. This is a quantitative study. The study reported on research of language proficiency of disadvantaged preschool aged children in a province of South Africa. The questions which directed the research were:

1. How does limited language proficiency impact on learners’ readiness for mathematics instruction?
2. What is the link between language proficiency and mathematics instruction?
3. How can mathematics instruction be planned for foundation level learners with limited language proficiency? (p.295)

By answering the questions in this study, the researchers were able to use the findings to help develop a program to assist learners with limited language proficiency. It also helped to determine the minimum age a child would need to have reached before having the ability to complete academic tasks on grade level. The study researched pre-school age children within a Griqua community near Christiana in South Africa. The population in this province is approximately 150 families. The native language of the children in this province is a dialect of Afrikanns; however, they also speak Xhosa and Xhii-San which are two indigenous African languages. In the homes of these children; non-standard English is also spoken. For the purpose of this research; there was no long term study administered. The researchers utilized the lottery method to obtain a sample of 30 preschoolers from the 150 families. The children were between ages 5 to 7 with a mean age of 6years 4 months. Each of the students were administered the Verbal Scale of the Junior South African Individual Scale (JSAIS) to measure their proficient language (African or English). The data collected was from the JSAIS and was summarized using various statistical descriptors. Statistical data was used for this study. The overall results showed that all three age groups were very low functioning. The data also revealed limited language proficiency with regards to vocabulary, ready knowledge, story memory, and word association skills. Due to the limited proficiency of the students verbally, it was suggested that there would be “an inadequate mastery of mathematical vocabulary.”(p298) The authors did not raise any concerns in the article but did compose a framework for limited language learners in the area of basic mathematics computations. It is doubted that this study is necessary. There is enough research on limited language learners and their inability to comprehend. It would have better to see what the results of the basic math computations were given there are no word problems in basic math.

The qualitative study was conducted and written by O. Douglas, Dr. K. Smith Burton, and Dr. N. Reese- Durham,. All three are from Fayetteville State University in Fayetteville, NC. This study did not give any identity to the type of qualitative research perspective from which the authors were working. The purpose of the study is to prove the hypothesis that students taught in a multiple intelligence setting will score higher on math tests than those who do not. This is the question the research will answer. Students in the study were taught either from the Multiple Intelligence approach or Direct Instruction approach. The study takes place in a middle school in North Carolina. The participants are eighth grade students both male and female from African American, Anglo, Hispanic and American Indian Ethnic groups. The control group was made up of 29 students and the control group 28. For the purpose of this study there was a pre-test and a post test. The tests were based on content within the guidelines of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and the North Carolina Task Analysis for Middle Grades Mathematics. In addition to the pre and post-test, students in both groups were given surveys, journals and observation data type assessments to assess the effectiveness of the instructional strategies they were receiving. Pre-tests given to each group consisted of a lesson’s materials in either Direct Instruction or Multiple Intelligence. Post-tests were the same and these tests were given in addition to the surveys, journals and observations. The author did not conduct the study but collected and analyzed the data. There was a comparison in the data to determine the validity of the hypothesis. The hypothesis that students who are taught in a Multiple Intelligence environment achieve higher than those who do not was supported. The means of the two groups differed significantly with the Multiple Intelligence group’s Mean at 79.07 versus the Direct Instruction group’s Mean at 71.24. The researched was made valid through the statistics of the data. The study confirmed that Multiple Intelligence classroom environments in their true form are not seen as much in academic classes as they are in Career Technical Education class settings. If more project-based, problem based and thematic type learning was infused in academic settings along with more professional development given to teachers young and mature; our students might achieve at the standards academicians believe they should.

In the next study, there are two researchers*.* The first researcher is Amanda Mattiesen. She is a Caucasian second- grade teacher. The second researcher is Ralph Cordova. He is Latino, native Mexican- Indian and Spanish cultural heritage. Ralph is a researcher with over 14 years experience teaching. He and Amanda are implementing a research project she developed with a colleague. This study is an interpretive qualitative research. The purpose was to show that the narrowing of curriculum (scripted teaching) and of educational options has potential serious consequences for teaching and limits opportunities for learning. Amanda was supposed to teach her class about Native Americans. However, she felt that her students would not be able to fully understand the Native Americans story through the scripted curriculum she was required to teach. A community mapmaking project would allow her students to understand the notion of community represented in the Native American story by exploring their own understandings of community and culture. The purpose was both practical and personal. There are two focusing questions: How can teachers, at the classroom level, examine and think about ways to construct a space in which inner-city students’ lived experiences and knowledge count as ways to support literacy learning within and across their urban classroom landscapes. How can a professional learning community that crosses diverse geographic regions and setting affect teachers’ professional learning and the ways in which they examine and think about the teaching of literacy (ies) in their classrooms? The study takes place at a second grade classroom in a large urban school. The main district was taken over by the state in 2007. The area the school is located in has high unemployment and crime rates. All but one of the second grade students was African American; the other student was of Libyan cultural heritage. The students all participated in the federal free/ reduced lunch program. In the 2009-2010 academic years, Amanda began teaching her second grade students about maps. Mapmaking began in November and ended in February. In early November, the subject was introduced by showing the students to a variety of maps and asking about their experience with maps. The class was read a picture book (Sarah Fadelli’s (1995) My Map Book) the book consisted of a series of maps that was easy for children to understand, for example a map of a playground. Students compared and contrasted different maps and made a collaborative list exploring these attributes. Late November, the students were given an activity to construct neighborhood maps. An example map was made together in class before the students began working on their own individual maps. This activity continued through December and January. In February, the students were given the assignment of creating a detailed map of their classroom to send to another second grade classroom in California. Each student wrote about a particular space within the classroom and illustrated it. The illustrations were combined to make a large map. The students’ written descriptions became the key to the map. The annotated classroom map was digitalized and students made voice recordings of themselves reading about their particular area on the classroom map. The data was collected through video footage, student and teacher work samples and field notes. Both authors participated in teaching, reviewing tapes, and collecting data. They used Web DIVER; an internet based video analysis software. This software enables uploading, archiving, viewing and analyzing of video clips. The researchers were able to load video, and leave comments and questions to review later. When reviewing the tapes, it was found that teachers used language that would be used if they were teaching how to write a story. There were two consistent discourse patterns: first was the use of literate and process writing words, i.e. *brainstorming*, *main* *idea*, and *details*. Second, teachers used referential language in which teachers provided a rationale for creating neighborhood map. There was one particular student who had not been enrolled in the second grade until November. His writing skills were limited but by the end of the lesson had shown remarkable progress. The students were excited about their project and the two teachers were able to build a bridge between the mandated curriculum and lived experiences. The research method used to enhance the credibility of the study was that the authors were Cultural landscapes Collaborator members. The Collaboratory is a professional learning community founded in 2004. The members are made up of teachers from different project sites. Members develop research partnerships with each other across geographical areas using their classrooms as a culture. Members use video conferring and analysis technology to stay connected, to plan, and to examine data. It was noticed that a lesson plan in one subject could assist learning in another area. In the article it was mentioned that the lesson plan not only prepped the students to understand the Native American story, but the skills they picked up while doing mapmaking was generalized to other areas of learning, specifically language arts. They found that talking aloud helped students prepare for how they would later write a paper. Students were listening to each other and asking questions that facilitated learning.

Tsybina, T., Girolametto, L.E., Weitzman, E., and Greenberg, J. examined recasts used with preschoolers learning English as their second language. This is a Quantitative research experiment. There were two purposes in this study. The first purpose was to compare the linguistic input provided by early childhood educators to children who speak English as their first language (EL1) to children who spoke English as a second language (EL2). The second purpose was to examine the children’s responses to the educators’ feedback to determine their language learning styles. This study raises questions as to the implications for improving the linguistic environment of English language learners to optimize language acquisition. The study focuses on one responsive output from educators; the use of recasts, or expansions. The first question of this study was if EL1 and EL2 children would receive different amounts of recasts from their educators. It was hypothesized that EL1 children would receive a greater number of recasts since their language was more developed but that EL1 children would respond to recasts more often than EL2 children. Previous research suggests that educators’ responses to EL2 children accelerate their language development and thus the same is assumed for EL1 children. However, there is little research focused on educators’ linguistic responses to EL1 children so there is little evidence to support this assumption. The study took place at a licensed day care center in Toronto. There were 16 adult early childhood educators, all female between the ages of 24-48. All had a two-year post secondary degree (in ECE) and at least two years experience. Eight educators worked in toddler classrooms (ages 18-30 months) and eight educators worked in preschool (aged 31-60 months). Each educator selected four children who displayed typical development. Parents filled out case history forms. The average age of the children was 32 months and most attended at a full- time basis. The home language of EL2 children included Italian, Russian, and Spanish, Tagalog, Punjabi, Bengali, Urdu, Russian, Hebrew, Chinese, Polish and several dialects of Arabic and African languages. The children had attended the day care center for an average of 18 months and spoke their native language for an average of 37 hours per week. Each educator had a group of four children: three EL1 children and one EL2 child**.**  They were videotaped for 30 minutes: 15 minutes of a book reading activity and another 15 minutes of a play dough activity. The books used during the book reading exercise were: *The Mixed- Up Chameleon* (Carle, 1998), *Spot Bakes a Cake* (Hill, 1994)*,* and *Barney and Bop Go to the Grocery Store* (Cooner, 1997). During the play dough activity, the children sat at a child-sized table with 5 chairs. The materials were: three colors of play-dough, six wooden blocks, four spoons, four knives, four plates, four cans, and four sesame street finger puppets. The participants were filmed during two activities. After the activities, the educators were given an informal questionnaire. The questionnaire rated their impressions of the representations of play interactions with regards to small talk, rate of speech, amount of playtime, and comfort level as compared to unobserved play. All the educators judged the interactions to be typical across all levels. The educators rated the children on expressive and receptive language development. Four Mann- Whitney *U* tests were conducted to compare the educators rating across the EL1 and EL2 children.

The Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts (SALT) was used to transcribe 10 minutes of each activity, which yielded 20 minutes of transcription. The transcripts were verified across two research assistants. Agreement reliability was 96% for words, 97% for addressees, and 96% for utterance boundaries. The transcripts listed the children’s mean length of utterances in morphemes and total number of utterances spoken. Two coders were trained to code transcript. The coding system for the educators responses fell into two categories; corrective response (responses that corrected the child’s speech by adding or replacing elements) and no corrective recasts (expanded on child’s statements responses. No corrective responses were further divided into two categories, simple and complex, depending on whether one or more elements had been added to the child’s statement. Children’s responses were assigned to three codes, an uptake, general replies, and no response. For the educators responses, reliability was 89% and for the children’s responses reliability way 92%. No significant difference was found between the number of utterances between the EL1 children and EL2 children. No significant difference was found in the frequencies of recasts provided by the educators between the two groups of children.

When the children did respond to recasts, their utterances tended to be general replies that did not incorporate the educators’ replies. There was no significant difference between the two groups of children in their responses to the educator’s recasts. It was found that educators perceived the EL2 children to have poorer language skills than the EL1 children. Also, the EL2 children rated as having lower expressive ability produced significantly lower uptakes than the EL2 children who were rated as having higher expressive ability. Their findings were consistent with previous research: educators used few recasts in their responses to children’s utterances. Both groups of children did not respond differentially to their educators’ recasts and the overall rate of uptakes was low for both groups. The findings suggest that children may need to have basic English skills before they can respond to recasts. It was also suggested that the recasts from some educators may have been too complex for the children. It was concluded that educators should (a) consciously provide recasts for EL2 children and (b) produce shorter recasts of expressive language.

Since the children were recruited after they had been in daycare for an average of 18 months, there is a chance that some of the EL2 children may have already advanced to the conversational level of their EL1 peers. Educators experience varied; some children may have received more recasts because their educator had more skill. Some educators may have been more engaged than others. Finally, there needs to be a better assessment for language measurement in order to better identify the skill level of EL2 children. Standardized tests are inappropriate for EL2 children so language development measurement had to be obtained from the educator; which is subjective. This study is suggesting that educators shorten their recasts to a more age- language appropriate level. For example, if a 24 month old child pointed to a ball and said “Ball”, the educator would say “You want the blue ball?” The findings of this research suggest that the more appropriate recast would be “Want ball”. Many educators use recasts everyday to help improve their students’ language and comprehension. More research is needed in the area of language development.

Cobb, Spada, and Zahar (2001) provided relevant information for understanding the skills necessary in the acquisition of vocabulary. This empirical study used an experimental model to investigate the research questions at hand. The purpose of the study was to gain insight into some basic questions regarding the acquisition of vocabulary. The first concern was the number of times a word must be encountered in order to be learned. The second concern was whether the acquisition of reading lexicon is done through reading. Lastly, the third concern was regarding the types of contexts that are conducive to learning.

The researchers discussed previous studies carried out by Schouten-van Parreren (1989) that support the conclusion that rich and informative context are most conducive to acquisition. The study also exposes the results of previous studies by Mondria & Wit-De Boer (1991) that demonstrate that rich contexts divert attention from the lexical level and produce little acquisition. Furthermore, the study discusses previous studies by Saragi, Nation, and Meister (1978) that found that words needed to be repeated more than six times as opposed to previous studies by Nation (1982) that suggested that number to be 16. There are no previous definitive studies that provide answers to the questions of this study. In fact the previous studies seem to contradict each other.

This study did subject a previous studies’ test to replication. It is important to note the use of replication because the results will build on the previous studies and provide answers that may lead to generalization. Participants (N= 144) were male grade 7 ESL students. The students attended a private Montreal French-language school and received a total of 75 hours of ESL instruction during the academic year. They ranged in levels from beginner to bilingual. They had completed three semesters of class time prior to the commencement of the experiment. Their general academic instruction was in French, and all had received previous ESL instruction prior to entering school.

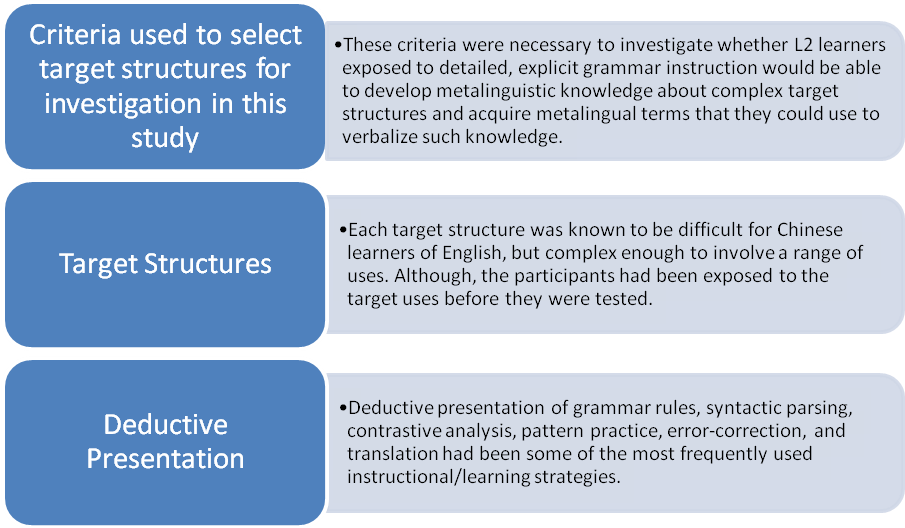
The following is the sequential order and major steps in the study carried out by researchers Cobb, Spada, & Zahar.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Verify suitability of the vocabulary of text used for pre-post test | 🡪 | Entire test run through lexical profile program | 🡪 | Pre-test given | 🡪 | 13 days later, treatment began. |
| Treatment: students heard story on cassette | 🡪 | 2 days later, post test given. | 🡪 | Positive changes in groups’ means | 🡪 | Support finding of previous research showing modest but replicable learning gains |

Pre and Post test were administered to record data to use for analysis. These tests measured vocabulary knowledge, with a treatment given in between. The treatment consisted of listening to and reading a story. Test scores were used to determine differences in scores after treatment. Statistical analysis was used to interpret the test results (average, variance, correlations). Also, inter-rater reliability was used. The results showed that in general, learned words tend to be those that appear most frequently. The average frequency of most learned words is seven. The second observation was that if the text is typical, then the problem of what sorts of contexts do and do not support vocabulary learning could be a non-issue. Therefore, the effect of contextual support appears to be subordinate to frequency. The authors conclude that contextual richness does not make a difference in productive acquisition of vocabulary.

In regards to frequency of occurrence, the authors conclude that weaker learners depend more on frequency for acquisition of vocabulary, as opposed to stronger learners. Therefore, looking at frequency in terms of learner level will be useful to solving the “frequency mystery”, as the authors refer to it. In addition, the authors state that their findings favor the idea of building a reading lexicon through reading. The authors note that it can be argued that vocabulary acquisition does not occur only through reading. Also, the authors warn readers of the study “who work in schools with different arrangements from those in Quebec should work out their own extrapolations from the number of words their students read and the number of hours of ESL instruction they receive”. These are important reservations to take into account, because the variable of how much ESL instruction is received can make a difference in the results. It was interesting to see the use of the pre-post test experiment, because my group will be using the same method for our study. Also, I learned that the questions posed can be used as a framework throughout the study as well as reference points. Therefore, it is important to pose very specific and measurable questions in order to arrive to meaningful results.

Hu (2011) conducted a study to gage L2 learners metalinguistic knowledge, meta-language and the relationship. Emphasis was placed in the quantitative region. The study was designed to investigate the acquisition of metalinguistic knowledge by L2 learners exposed to large doses of explicit grammar instruction, their facility with meta-language, and the relationship between metalinguistic and meta-lingual knowledge. The focus of the research stems from the pedagogical approach of communicative competence, versus that of the predominant linguistic method, which dominates L2 teaching/learning styles across the board. The total number of participants was: 76; 55 males & 21 females. They came from thirteen provinces in China, and their ages ranged from 18 to 21 years. Based on their scores on the Secondary Level English Proficiency Test (Educational Testing Service, 1991), they were upper-intermediate learners. All the participants had had at least six years of secondary English (about 930 contact hours).



The data recorded and used for analysis were from questionnaire responses and test scores. The type of analysis utilized was statistical analysis. The results of the study were: The 76 participants produced 2621 acceptable rules describing the target uses. There were 873 irrelevant or wrong rules of explanations and 230 cases where no rule verbalization was produced. This means that in more than 70% of the cases, the participants explicitly knew the rules underlying the target uses of the English structures in question. The most and the least successful participants were able to produce 41 and 27 correct rules. The group mean was 34.49 out of a maximum of 49, and the standard deviation was 3.08, indicating reasonable homogeneity among the participants. The author concluded the relationship between metalingual and metalinguistic knowledge is concerned, the results reported in the previous section indicate that the participants in general had a fairly large repertoire of metalingual terms and were able to use them correctly in most of the cases to express their metalinguistic knowledge e a result that would compare favorably with the performance of practicing and prospective English teachers studied by Andrews (1999). Overall, L2 classrooms conducted in the traditional style, with the teacher at the front of class, has produced rather meager results in developing L2 learners’ ability to use their target language, in this case: English. It would be rather inappropriate to apply these results to other target languages. There is a need for further research that explores how metalinguistic and metalingual knowledge can be effectively integrated into more L2 instructions with other target languages. The texts sheds some light on “the participants in this study, who had been exposed to detailed and repeated metalinguistic information in their secondary school English classes, acquired much explicit knowledge of the target structures investigated.” These findings add to the growing evidence that metalinguistic awareness has an important role to play in L2 learning and use.

Vera Regan (2010) of the University College Dublin, focuses on variant research within Second Language Acquisition (SLA), which is defined by her as “the intersection between sociolinguistics and SLA and especially the concepts, tools and methods of sociolinguistic variation theory in SLA research.” The research took place in Ireland, France and Cambodia. The author takes an interpretivist approach, in which the author focused on the meaning found within this study. The author is apparently searching for the phenomenology of the human identity and whether multilingual speakers share their identity the way they do in the native language, and whether or not they feel understood by others of their second or third language. The purpose of the study emphasized the personal experience. According to the text, “the three studies are: (1) a study of Vietnamese and Cambodian speakers of English L2, in which male identity is the central focus; (2) a study of Irish English speakers of French L2, in which the identity of “Young French” is central; and finally (3) a study of Irish immersion speakers of Irish L2 and French L3, where Young East Coast Irish speaking identity is being developed.” The major elements were how the learner acquires native speaker variation patterns. The second research thread investigated not the acquisition of what the author termed “categorical in native speech,” but “the acquisition of the variable.” This includes how the L2 speaker acquires the variation speech patterns which characterize all L1 speech (that Bayley and Regan, 2004 refer to as ‘inherent variability’) and which variations see as part of the grammar of the language.

Data was collected primarily through conducting interviews with transcription and field notes. The field would be Sociology and the author was acting like an Anthropologist, who observes, yet does not intervene. The text shows how “Bachman’s model of communicative language ability” was used; it was actually adapted from Adamson, 2009. The constant comparison was ‘identity’ and whether or not multilingual speakers express themselves the same way in each language, beginning with their native language. The theme overall would be sociolinguistics and identity construction. A source called “Varbrul,” was used, which refers to a collection of statistical programs which are designed for natural speech data (Sank off and Rousseau, 1974). According to the text, “a Varbrul analysis models variation in the data, taking into account the simultaneous effect of multiple factors, both linguistic and social (c.f. Sankoff and Labov, 1979; Guy, 1993).” The results indicate how multilingual speakers fine-tune their knowledge of variation patterns, so that they have access to very subtle aspects of language use to construct identities. This can range from a simple acceptance of an already ‘packaged’ identity that the individual chose through personal observation, which would essentially be considered more of a structure than a proxy. The first phase was a classic variation study, which revealed unexpected results. The next phase in this progression was exemplified by the “Year Abroad” study, in which their immersion school provided a certain level of security in numbers. This secure aspect slightly detracts from the scholarly process, in which, their examined are capable of finding consolation with one another’s familiar presence. These situations are highly unlikely in a real world setting. Therefore, one can conclude that the creative process on behalf of the L2 speakers was slightly mitigated. The study appears well researched. It offered great insights into the realities and limits of language acquisitioning and the effects it has on character and identity development, which was noteworthy.

**Assumptions of Present Study**

The present study assumes that methods of instruction are instrumental in the learning that occurs for students. Also, the assumption is made that effectiveness of different methods of instruction can be measured.

**Research Question, Hypothesis or Foreshadowed Problems**

Our research question is: which instruction, scripted curriculum or interactive instruction, is most effective for vocabulary acquisition for second language learners?

Using a quantitative research design, we will compare studies and determine whether the results of the quantitative statistical description fit the effectiveness of the intervention compared to the control group. Although the research favors the interactive approach, the quantitative portion of our research shall examine the scores of the pre and posttest and a likert scaled writing assessment that will be utilized for the sake of statistical validity—the numbers shall speak for themselves. However, since the differences of the two instructions will be examined from a statistical viewpoint, one of the greater issues with regard to this type of research is the limited amount of time that is allotted to conduct this research.

Time is not the only foreshadowed issue, another point that will lack validation is the quality of the students overall experience. There is no follow up with any individual student or group and it is possible for one to reach a personal conclusion at a later date, which stands in favor of the interactive approach over the scripted—and vice versa. These and other qualitative issues will simply go unexamined, unless further investigation is pursued.

**Definitions of Terms**

**Course books**- a book used by students when they do a particular course of study

**Scripted**- [something](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/american/direct/?q=something) [said](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/american/direct/?q=said) [or](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/american/direct/?q=or) [done](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/american/direct/?q=done) [that](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/american/direct/?q=that) [is](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/american/direct/?q=is) [scripted](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/american/direct/?q=scripted) [was](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/american/direct/?q=was) [planned](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/american/direct/?q=planned) [before](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/american/direct/?q=before), [and](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/american/direct/?q=and) [sometimes](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/american/direct/?q=sometimes) [does](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/american/direct/?q=does) [not](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/american/direct/?q=not) [seem](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/american/direct/?q=seem) [natural](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/american/direct/?q=natural) [for](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/american/direct/?q=for) [that](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/american/direct/?q=that) [reason](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/american/direct/?q=reason)

**Interactive**- involving people communicating with each other and reacting to each other

**Professional development classroom (PDC's)** -classrooms where teachers grow as professionals who design and implement research-based, effective literacy instruction that produces a positive impact on student learning achievement.  
**Contextual Richness**- the ability to identify words accurately and automatically has a direct effect on comprehension; at the same time comprehension affects word identification.

**Metalinguistics**- a branch of linguistics that deals with the relation between language and other cultural factors in a society

**Significance of the Proposed Study**

This study examines two forms of curriculum that run contrary to one another: scripted and interactive. The conductors of this study esteem the interactive approach, however the results of the study will prove which curriculum design contains more positive facets, if any. For the most part, teachers are more capable of facilitating their classrooms wherein they have enough autonomy to exert the personal teaching style. However, this assumes that the one teaching possesses enough personal competence to exert their selves in a manner that attracts students’ attention and promotes educational malleability.   
 Students are in the process of identifying their "self".  They need to have the ability to remain flexible in order to communicate effectively—especially when one is learning to dialogue and identify themselves in new language—that is utilized by a culture which differs from their own.  It is necessary for students to have a certain level of comfort in their school environment—especially with regard to their cultural identity--in order to communicate effectively with their teachers and their peers. Students in the elementary school are at level where they are learning to see and process social norms. With a more diversified learning environment, it is necessary for students to adapt to these unwritten cultural norms—which are best understood empirically.

**Design and Methodology**

**Research Subjects and Sample**

The two groups that samples were taken from were from a class that received the intervention interactive methods of vocabulary instruction and a control group that received instruction from scripted curriculum. The two groups are both first grade classes that are primarily ELL students. There are 21 students in each class and both classes contain similar ability levels. The class that received the intervention interactive methods of vocabulary instruction were involved in activities that included total physical response, draw from background knowledge, peer sharing and interactive games that included the vocabulary words and utilizing them in sentences. The control group received explicit instruction from a scripted curriculum, which possess strength in its clear and precise instructional deliverance but does not allow for inclusion of background knowledge or sharing with peers. The two methods of instruction were conducted over a 4 week time period with vocabulary lessons occurring 4 days of each week.

The pre and post samples collected from the students were a writing sample and a multiple choice test that was given before the instruction of a set of vocabulary words and at the conclusion of a one week lesson of the vocabulary words. In relation to the pretest, the students were given a multiple choice test that included the vocabulary word and they were to select the correct definition. Additionally, each teacher presented the group of selected vocabulary words and instructed students to use them in a sentence. It was emphasized that spelling or sentence length was not the focus of the writing sample. The students were to demonstrate their knowledge of the vocabulary words in the context of a sentence. The post test was conducted similar and a likert score assigned to each writing sample. The purpose of the multiple choice test and two writing samples were to examine growth from the beginning of instruction to the conclusion and compare the two methods of vocabulary instruction.

# Results and Conclusions

Our research data collection began with the research questions: which instruction, scripted curriculum or interactive instruction, is most effective for vocabulary acquisition for second language learners? This question led us to use a quantitative research design utilizing comparison studies. The results of the quantitative gave a statistical description as to the effectiveness of the intervention compared to the control group. The quantitative portion of our research examined the scores of the pre and posttest and a likert scaled writing assessment. The quantitative results are reflected in a frequency table chart, histograms, paired t-test and means table. We utilized multiple quantitative measures to ensure valid statistical definitions of our study. In this section we will discuss the student population and the necessity of this research. Following is the quantitative results portion, which examines the differences of the two instructions from a statistical viewpoint.

**Quantitative Results**

The quantitative results in the pre and posttest are derived from two data sources. The first is a paired t-test and the second is means and standard deviation test. We utilized these two data sources to ensure that the results of my research were valid and supported. In table 4 a paired t-test is used to show the differences in means between the two groups. Table 4 demonstrates little difference in the paired t-test between the two groups in pre test and posttest scores. For the control group the (M=–2.952, p=<.0001) and the intervention group is ( M=-3.619, p=<.0001). There is little significance in growth of the control group and the intervention group and how they performed with the two different instructions.

Table 4: Vocabulary results T-Test

Paired t-test

Split By: group

Hypothesized Difference = 0



The following tables are the means and standard deviation results of vocabulary pre test and posttest scores. This is included to further ascertain if there were indeed little to no growth between the two groups in the pre test and posttest of vocabulary words.

Table 5: Vocabulary result standard deviation

Group Info for pre test

Grouping Variable: group



Table 6: Vocabulary result post-test standard deviation

Group Info for posttest

Grouping Variable: group



The difference in results for the pre and posttest seen in table 5 and 6 were nominal for the control and intervention groups. The lack of growth between the two results can be attributed to several factors. The first being that the students performed well on the pre-test so there was little growth to be made on the posttest. The test format was multiple choice, which provided students a greater opportunity to pick the correct answer. Additionally the correct multiple choice answers were written exactly as written in the text so that the students could memorize the words used in the text and match them to how it was written in the text. The test format supports ELL students by providing them similar question context but it also allows simple copying from the textbook. This problem could be alleviated by stating the incorrect answers in the same manner but these answers were written using different formatted sentences than the in the textbook. Lastly, students can memorize the vocabulary word and definition and not actually internalize the word meaning to be used in different context, it for this reason we additionally collected writing samples using the vocabulary word in a different context than was originally acquired to test for acquisition.

A likert chart was used to evaluate the writing test data, a score of 1 being the lowest score to a 3 being the highest. The likert chart was then graphed using a histogram to provide a visual of the results. The figures below detail the results of the posttest results for the writing samples. Figure 1 is the control groups test data. There is a significant difference between the control and intervention group figures. The control group scored a 55% in likert scale 1, 25% for scale 2 and 20% in scale 3. The percentages are considerably different in figure 2 that represents the scores for the intervention group. The score for likert scale 1 is 25%, scale 2 is 15% and 63% for scale 3. The difference between the control and intervention group in likert scale 3 is 43%. The disparity in percentage demonstrates that the intervention group gained from the supplemented methods.

The writing posttest is significant to the study in that it evaluates if students possess the ability to use the vocabulary word in a context that is different from the context from which the words are taught. Additionally, the writing posttest evaluates if the vocabulary words are acquired or memorized.

Figure 1: Control writing results Histogram

Histogram

Split By: group

Cell: ctrl



Figure 2: Histogram intervention writing results

Histogram

Split By: group

Cell: intrv



**Design Limitations**

The research design contained limitations in that the research time frame did not allow for thorough collection of samples and the multiple choice test formats which may have possibly skewed the results. The short amount of time between sample collections did not provide opportunity to evaluate if over a length of consistent instruction with one method would have made a difference in the student’s vocabulary acquisition. Also as stated previously, the multiple choice questions could have been memorized and therefore the results of the test would have been skewed as they did not actually internalize the meaning of word but memorized the word. These two limitations could have altered the results. In further studies it is suggested by our group to conduct the research for a longer time period than 4 weeks to collect a sizeable sample. Additionally, alter the multiple choice questions to include formats that are not easily recognizable to students so that they are required to think about the vocabulary word and meaning.

**Conclusion**

Our research has concluded that scripted material is not the most effective way to acquire vocabulary acquisition skills among English language learners. As for stated, scripted curriculum instructional materials are commercially packaged materials that require the teacher to read from a script when delivering a lesson to students. While these scripts can provide some instruction they do not always meet the needs of the individual students. These materials focus on providing systematic skills for vocabulary acquisition but the missing components are the varied levels and abilities of the students and the individual dynamics of the classroom. It is the educator’s position to determine the most effective way to teach vocabulary acquisition skills to English Language Learners as well as to all of their students. This research supports educators in their desire to make pedagogical transitions from total reliance on scripted material to making informed decisions about curriculum and pedagogy autonomously.

**Implications for Further Research**

In further studies it is suggested by our group to conduct the research for a longer time period than 4 weeks to collect a sizeable sample. Additionally, alter the multiple choice questions to include formats that are not easily recognizable to students so that they are required to think about the vocabulary word and meaning.

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