Materials Development for Adult Learners in Teaching Vocabulary

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Considering the special needs and the learning styles of their learners, foreign language teachers should use the most effective methods or approaches which are appropriate for their teaching strategies. Redundant or a diverse range of teaching techniques are not meant to use in the process of their learners’ acquiring new vocabulary items; instead, the most effective and to the point teaching techniques in terms of each language skill should be employed. Efficiency of language learners in terms of their command of the vocabulary can be assessed through their understanding any reading or listening context and managing to be productive in speaking or writing procedures in language acquisition process. Phonological, morpho-syntactic, or socio-pragmatic positions of new lexical items as well as the learners’ learning styles and multiple intelligences should all be taken into consideration by language teachers so that their learners could really reach an efficient level of vocabulary power. This efficiency has been identified as having a language passport in terms of the proficiency level of the learners within the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) for Languages by all EU countries in recent years. Foreign language teachers should try very hard to supply their learners with the required qualifications in every language skill so that they can have a linguistic identity both in their own societies and inter-cultural or multi-cultural contexts. Within this framework, foreign language teachers will hopefully make use of any suggested approach presented in this study so as to widen their learners’ horizons in language acquisition process.

Keywords: learning styles, teaching strategies, lexical item, CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference), language acquisition

Introduction

Vocabulary learning and teaching process constitutes the crux of learning a foreign language considering the most important steps in acquiring four language skills. It means that in every stage of language acquisition process, especially in every real or real-like target language environment, the L2 (second language) learner will feel an inevitable necessity to use the language by means of the appropriate lexical items that convey the message. Therefore, different kinds of instructional activities suitable for vocabulary teaching techniques and materials which are relevant to the soul of the class will be either used or developed by the teacher.

Language teachers, then, are expected to be such qualified educators that may have studied any important detail of that language in depth to satisfy their students with accurate information and fluent interaction in the classroom. Apart from using the language so aptly, they have a very important role and responsibility to
provide the students with this remarkable qualification to dominate the language just like them. Although vocabulary teaching process has taken the major part in L2 acquisition process, language teachers unwittingly ignore this phase and become the cause of unconscious learners or users’ case of that language. The third video from the following link touches upon this troublesome case and directs every language teacher to take precautions for this: http://coerll.utexas.edu/methods/modules/vocabulary/01/.

Taking precautions to solve the vocabulary teaching problem can be managed by the teacher through their scholarly knowledge in the profession, their meticulous pursuit of every novelty in the area of vocabulary teaching activities as well as profound information about the students’ learning styles to make them enjoy vocabulary learning activities. Lado (1955, pp. 23-41) stated that while dealing with vocabulary, one should take into account three important aspects of words—their form, their meaning, and their distribution—and one should consider various kinds of classes of words in the function of the language. Pavicic (2002) determined the role of vocabulary teaching and how a teacher could help their learners. He said that the teacher should create activities and tasks to help students build their vocabulary and develop strategies to learn the vocabulary on their own. Thus, teachers should be able to find or produce enjoyable and amusing as well as pragmatic activities, because recent research shows that having students look up words or write their definitions is the least effective way to increase their vocabulary.

Purpose of the Study

The importance of listening and reading procedures in trying to find out the most proper techniques and materials for the teaching of vocabulary will be studied throughout this research. Considering the level of the students in the Faculties of Engineering, Law, and Economics and Administrative Sciences at Turgut Özal University and the general approach or system of the course book, some complementary materials have been made use of. The complementary materials prepared have reflected the same kind of teaching methods the course book largely presents so as to teach the students coherently.

Research Questions

This research aims to signify the importance of vocabulary teaching procedure through the most suitable teaching techniques and most relevant teaching materials. Therefore, the students at different faculties of Turgut Özal University have been kindly asked to contribute to the analysis of the following research questions by giving answers to the questions in the survey about vocabulary teaching.

1. What is the general satisfaction level of the students in terms of the vocabulary they have been presented and they have been able to internalise through the listening and reading activities in the course book?;
2. What is the general attitude of the students about the pre-, while, and post-reading or listening activities in terms of vocabulary learning?; and
3. Is there a significant difference among students of the abovementioned faculties regarding the vocabulary teaching of the book in terms of gender?.

The Significance of the Study

This research is mainly based on the fundamental realities and applications around the teaching of vocabulary, because vocabulary knowledge and skills are very important for successful communication and interaction in acquiring an L2. One of the most important steps to be followed in the teaching of vocabulary is knowing what learning style the students have and determining the best teaching style in conjunction with the attentively chosen techniques. Listening and reading activities that underlie very important steps in respect of learning and recognizing the necessary vocabulary about the subject are the receptive skills that no language
teacher ignores at any means. Apart from the body of the vocabulary discussed, the orthographic and phonetic forms of them are equally, even more, important in the process of vocabulary development. The most influential ways to teach how to spell and pronounce the new vocabulary will be the abundant use of the said receptive skills as reading and listening. Therefore, this research will include a detailed knowledge about how to apply them in class.

The Limitations of the Study

The limitations confronted during the application process of this research might, on a small scale, have hindered much better results that were aimed to reach. The probability of getting more satisfactory results will be higher when the future research in the same area is applied on the language teaching, philology or linguistics departments of universities as the other limitations can automatically disappear, or can be solved out then.

(1) A Likert scale (see the Appendix) has been prepared and applied in the Faculties of Engineering, Law, and Economics and Administrative Sciences at Turgut Özal University; (2) This scale consisted of 17 questions to get feedbacks from students about the level of their satisfaction with the listening and reading activities presented in the “Speakout” Elementary Course Book; (3) Only the first year students of the faculties have been preferred for this research; (4) The vocabulary teaching strategies of the mentioned course book will particularly be in the focus rather than the reading or listening activities; and (5) Apart from the Likert scale, an interview was also planned to carry out, but it could not be conducted because of the time lag.

Review of Literature

Learning vocabulary is the necessary ingredient for learners of the language to use in all communication. They encounter vocabulary on a daily basis, and must be able to acquire and retain it. As a language teacher, one of your main tasks is to help students develop a rich and useful vocabulary inventory.

Vocabulary Knowing Means Much

Just like native speakers, learners of L2 are in the position of having the codes of both actively used productive vocabulary and passively stored receptive vocabulary in their minds. The only thing to be done is the correct use of that vocabulary which requires the users of the language to acquire most of the information about it. Knowledge of a word implies the acquisition of information of various types, which seem to be language universals (Taylor, 1990). These different kinds of knowledge can be seen as in the following:

1. Knowledge of the frequency of occurrence of the word in a language. Thus, some lexical items are more likely to appear in speech than in writing.
2. Knowledge of style, register, and dialect. Style refers to the level of formality like slang, informal, formal, etc. Registers are the differences of the language defined by the topic and context of use. And dialect refers to differences in geographical variations like American English, British English, etc.
3. Knowledge of collocation which means knowing the syntactic behaviour associated with the word.
4. Knowledge of morphology which means the underlying form of a word and its possible derivations.
5. Knowledge of semantics which means knowing what the word means or denotes.
6. Knowledge of polysemy. Knowing the different meanings associated with a word.
7. Knowledge of the equivalent of the word in the mother tongue, that is to say, its translation. (Campillo, 1995, pp. 37-38)

All forms of the mentioned knowledge related to any vocabulary of a language, as can be seen obviously, require the user of that language to have a good command of vocabulary of that language. Students should be
made aware of this reality and guided in a way to make them independent from the teacher so that they acquire the target language much better.

**CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference)-Based Vocabulary Learning**

According to the CEFR for Languages, at an A1 level, learners should have a basic repertoire of words and phrases related to concrete situations. By A2, they should have sufficient vocabulary to conduct routine, everyday transactions and express basic needs. At B1, learners should be able to express themselves on most topics pertinent to everyday life (for example, family, hobbies, work, travel, and current affairs); while, at B2, learners should have a good range of vocabulary for all matters connected to their field and most general topics.

Learners who reach C1 should have a good command of a broad lexical repertoire including idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. Finally, at C2, they should be able to exploit “a very wide range of language to formulate thoughts precisely, give emphasis, differentiate and eliminate ambiguity” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. xi).

A booklet called “English Profile” (2001) has been created by the Council of Europe aiming at curriculum planners, materials writers, and teachers. It helps make decisions about which English language points are suitable for learning, teaching or assessing at each level of the CEFR. The main thrust of the English Profile Program’s research on vocabulary has resulted in the *English Vocabulary Profile* (henceforth EVP) (Capel, 2011), an interactive online resource which describes the vocabulary that learners of English are supposed to know at each level of the CEFR. It provides a large searchable database of detailed information on the words and phrases that are appropriate for learners at each level of the CEFR and is already being used to inform teaching, publishing, and assessment activities.

The EVP shows, in both British and American English, which words and phrases learners around the world know at each level—A1 to C2—of the CEFR (see Figure 1). Rather than providing a syllabus of the vocabulary that learners *should* know, the EVP project verifies what they *do* know at each level. CEFR levels are assigned not just to the words themselves, but to each individual meaning of these words. So, for instance, the word *degree* is assigned level A2 for the sense TEMPERATURE, B1 for QUALIFICATION, B2 for AMOUNT, and C2 for the phrase *a/some degree of (sth)*. The capitalized guidewords help the user to navigate longer entries, and phrases are listed separately within an entry.

![Figure 1. English Profile.](image)

Whether you are a teacher, an exam writer, a materials developer, or a researcher, if you work with learners of English studying at any level from beginner to advanced (A1-C2), you will find the EVP helpful in a
variety of ways: (1) to check the level of each meaning of a word or a phrase. Words with multiple meanings are very common in English. For example, get is in the top 500 words most frequently used in English, and different meanings and uses of this verb are learned at each level; (2) to identify the words or phrases a learner can be expected to know at each level; (3) Advanced Search in EVP allows you to search by topic—for example, Animals, Body and Health, Clothes—and shows you the relevant words and phrases at each CEFR level. This is ideal for writing materials or lesson planning, and will help you to prioritize vocabulary items for learners; and (4) to look at real learner examples. To search for aspects of language such as grammar, usage, and word formation. Advanced Search will help you to identify the grammatical constraints relevant to a certain level—to determine, for example, which uncountable nouns learners can be expected to know at A1, or which verbs are frequently used in the passive form at B2.

The core objective of the English vocabulary project has been to establish which words and phrases are commonly known by learners around the world. Take for example the word know. The entry for this word stretches from A1 to C2 level, with figurative and idiomatic uses coming in at the higher CEFR levels, suggesting that there are additional meanings and phrases containing know that are not acquired until the C levels, see the core results for know in British English (see Figure 2).

![Figure 2. Words and phrases in English vocabulary project.](image)

The EVP also includes extensive information about phrases based on state-of-the-art research on phrasal expressions, for example make your way (see Figure 3), which has a B2 sense of literally get to a place versus the C2 figurative sense of make your way in a career.
Vocabulary Learning or Teaching Strategies

The role of a teacher in respect of guiding his/her students to develop strategies to learn new vocabulary can be within unbelievable limits when the equipment and materials the teacher has, and his/her capacity to produce activities or tasks relevant to the teaching point are put into consideration. Nation (2001) emphasized that learning vocabulary is a cumulative process, and that it must be deliberately taught, learned, and recycled. This is critical for several reasons: (1) Learners need to encounter the words in a variety of rich contexts, often requiring up to 16 encounters; (2) Learners remember words when they have manipulated them in different ways, so variety is essential for vocabulary teaching; and (3) Learners forget words within the first 24 hours after class, so it is important to follow up a vocabulary lesson with homework that recycles the words.

There is a lot to learn about vocabulary in terms of its range, the sheer number of words and phrases to learn, and the depth of knowledge students need to know about each vocabulary item. Materials can help students in two broad areas: First, they need to present and practice in natural contexts the vocabulary that is frequent, current, and appropriate to learners’ needs. Second, materials should help students become better learners of vocabulary by teaching different techniques and strategies they can use to continue learning outside the classroom. There is a vast amount of research into how learners learn best and how teachers might best teach. The next section presents some key principles that we can follow to help students learn vocabulary more effectively.

It is noteworthy to mention here that vocabulary items are imparted mostly by translation: either a list of words with their translation at the beginning of the lesson or the translation of the content having new words or glossaries at the very end. This is an erroneous practice as it leads to a state of confusion for the learners. On the teaching skills of vocabulary items, Frisby (1957) commented that:

While the teacher is not, himself, concerned with the actual selection of vocabulary for text book purposes since practically all the books we use are based on limited vocabularies, it is important that he/she (the teacher) should know the principles, which underlie vocabulary selection. (p. 98)

Thus, it signifies that a language teacher should be innovative and proficient in the application of methodologies pertaining to teaching vocabulary items in a classroom situation.
Pavicic (2002) laid emphasis on self-initiated independent learning with strategies, in which formal practices, functional practices, and memorizing could be included. He said that the teacher should create activities and tasks to help students to build their vocabulary and develop strategies to learn the vocabulary on their own. Thus, an efficient language teacher is supposed to use any of the current vocabulary activities or should be able to integrate these activities at any point of the lesson. Besides the skill and intellect of the teacher to employ the activities, students’ level of understanding and their interests also play an important role in the process of vocabulary acquisition.

The good news for teachers from research in vocabulary development is that vocabulary instruction does improve reading comprehension (Stahl, 1999). However, not all approaches to teaching word meanings improve comprehension. There exist some conventional teaching strategies on vocabulary that deserve to be left in the “instructional dustbin”: (1) look them up: The act of looking up a word and copying a definition is not likely to result in vocabulary learning; (2) use them in a sentence: Writing sentences before the study of word meaning is of little value; (3) use context. It cannot be claimed that using context is a very reliable way of learning word meanings; and (4) memorize definitions. Rote learning of word meanings can result only in parroting back what is not clearly understood.

The common shortcoming in all of these less effective approaches is the lack of active student involvement in connecting the new concept/meaning to their existing knowledge base. Vocabulary learning, like most of the other learning types, must be based on the learner’s active engagement in constructing understanding, not simply on passive re-presenting of information from a text or lecture1. Lexicographical research suggests language consists of multi-word chunks, rather than isolated, individual words, and that the distinction between grammar and vocabulary is blurred. In the words of Lewis (1993) who pioneered the “Lexical Approach”, “the grammar/vocabulary dichotomy is invalid” (p. 7). Fully “knowing” a word, involves a myriad of factors (see Figure 4).

Consequently, it is vital for learners to see, hear, and use words in authentic contexts, thereby acquiring information about issues like collocation (words that commonly occur together).

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1 Retrieved from http://www.phschool.com/eteach/language_arts/2002_03/essay.html.
Research indicates that learners assimilate new words more effectively and retain them for longer if they have a high level of involvement in learning tasks, e.g., De la Feuente (2002) found that learners’ receptive and productive vocabulary acquisition was greater when they had to negotiate and produce target vocabulary. Joe (1998) also found that tasks requiring a high level of learner-generated original context were superior for vocabulary acquisition.

Finally, research suggests that forming associations helps learners recall vocabulary (Ellis, 1994) and that contextualising lexical items helps to clarify meaning and use, as well as making the lexical items more memorable.

**Use your brain.** Our brain consists of two parts of which cooperation is essential in language learning process. The left part of the brain is responsible for conceptual thinking, understanding, and logical systematic patterns. The right part, on the other hand, is responsible for creative and imaginative thinking. Some language skills involve analytical, sequential, and left-brain processing. Others involve right-brain skills such as guessing, associating, and getting the main idea. Obviously, those with bilateral dominance have some advantages. There are, however, good language learners with both left-brain or right-brain dominance who achieve a high degree of fluency and accuracy. They learn to use both left-brain and right-brain skills depending on what works best for the activity at hand. Here are some general guidelines to follow when you use your brain dominance for language learning:

Use your left-brain analytical skills to determine the purpose of a learning activity or to set up the activity. Once you are involved in the activity, put most of your attention on the content of the message and let your right-brain go to work. According to James Asher, author of the Total Physical Response method, direct association methods for building listening comprehension rely more on right-brain processing than on left brain processing. Do not consciously try to figure out every detail when using these methods. Let your subconscious do the work. (LinguaLinks Library, n.d.)

In order to learn and master a language other than the mother tongue, it can be really helpful to know something about how the brain works. The same can be said for any type of learning. Our brains learn and retain information in certain ways and the best thing we can do to help our learning is to use these patterns to our advantage. Here are some hints and tips about it:

(1) Find out what kind of learner you actually are: Clearly everybody’s brain has things in common so there are some things we can say hold true for all learners. There are, however, certainly things that differ in terms of our preferred learning style. Some people find they learn best through visual means. For these people, flash cards with a pictorial depiction of the thing they are trying to learn may be helpful, if you are the kind of person who likes graphs and diagrams, you may be a visual learner. Others are what are defined as audio learners. A dictaphone with the information you are trying to learn described aloud may be the thing for you. Knowing this information is a big help, though it needs saying that variety is also important so the learner should not try to stick to his-her preferred style exclusively.

(2) Flash cards are great but always make them yourself: Most of you have probably been told about using flash cards as a way of securing your learning. These involve writing a vocabulary word on the front of a card in your target language and then its definition in English (if that is your mother tongue) on the back. These really work but there is something further to take into consideration. There is no doubt that using your motor skills is a way of creating memory pathways. Instead of buying a set of flash cards or printing them from the net, use your motor skills (this term refers to the movement of parts of your body such as your arms,
hands, and fingers) to prepare them yourself. Because of the way the brain works this will embed the information more securely in your memory.

(3) Discussion stimulates the brain: When you sit and discuss things with other people, especially if it can be done in your target language, you force your brain to actually use the information you have been stacking it with. As Yeats (n.d.) said: “Education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire”. Without lighting the fire, nobody can get any progress.

**Mind mapping.** Mind mapping is particularly useful for identifying and extending new subject-specific vocabulary. New words are linked with words already known. The vocabulary becomes more and more specific. By arranging and structuring the vocabulary in sub-groups, new synonyms can also be learnt.

Mind Mapping is an excellent way to brainstorm vocabulary in the language classroom. One thought leads to another, and soon there is a whole page of words to learn or revise (see Figure 5)!

![Figure 5. Language mind map brainstorming.](image)

In Figure 5, the person has started with the color red. He thought of four things that are red and started adding words that he associates with these four things, fire, pepper, Coca Cola, and Ferrari. Each of the words that are added to the mind map then generate their own ideas. From fire, he thought of wood, because it burns. He could then add, forest, wildfire, logs, lumberjack, Canada, etc.. As a classroom or personal exercise, it could be good to choose a word, then set a time limit to write down as many associated words possible. Of course, only the words known in the target language can be written down.

As a result, it can simply be said that vocabulary mind maps can be adopted in different teaching stages. For example, teachers can use the mind maps to introduce the new vocabulary items under a theme. Pictures of the target vocabulary under each sub-category in the mind maps can be shown first and let the students brainstorm those target vocabulary items. This can make the presentation stage of the lesson become more interesting and interactive.

Besides, the mind maps can be used as a quick revision quiz by inviting students to come out and type in the target words under appropriate categories.

**Clustering.** This method was developed by Rico (2000) in order to develop new ideas, and was then adapted as a method of learning vocabulary by associating new words with familiar ones.
Clustering is a powerful tool, because it taps into the right brain, which drives creativity. Our right brain is where fresh ideas and original insights are generated. The left brain, in contrast, is more logical and orderly. Both are essential to good writing, but if your left brain is too dominant when you start a piece, it inhibits the free flow of thought. Clustering mutes the left brain for a time so the right brain can play freely (see Figure 6).

As clustering is based on an unsystematic collection of words, it is particularly useful for the introduction of new words and topics. With both methods, words are learnt and used in a meaningful context. At a later stage more words can be added, new words can be linked to existing ones, links between words can be made, and a hierarchical structure can be set up. This collection of vocabulary will help the learners to discuss a complex topic with fluency and in a logical context.

Would you please listen! The learners are invited to make a hypothesis about the content of the listening text after an initial listening. Furthermore, they are asked to identify key words, internationalisms, and facts given through figures. When using video recordings, the pictures also help them to understand the meaning. There is a purpose in listening, which will help the learners to look at the context of the vocabulary. This will then help them: (1) to understand unknown words from the context; and (2) to use passive vocabulary actively.

A variety of techniques related to L2 listening instruction have withstood the test of time and are largely recognized as essential, for example, prelistening, making predictions, listening for the gist or the main idea, listening intensively, and making inferences. These teaching strategies can be useful in a broad range of teaching contexts and can meet diverse learning needs (Hinkel, 2005a). For instance, prelistening activities can be employed in teaching learners to notice the cultural schema and to raise their awareness of the effect of
culture on discourse organization, information structuring, and pragmatics (M. Rost, 2005). In addition, learning to listen to conversations provides a fruitful venue for focusing on morphosyntax, lexical parsing, and phonological variables, thus adding new dimensions to the teaching of grammar and vocabulary. From this point of view, the listening phase in terms of vocabulary acquisition constitutes a very important step in L2 learning. As it is known very well, the teaching of pronunciation skills, as one of the inseparable parts of vocabulary teaching procedure, is integrated with both speaking and listening instruction.

The linguistic and schema-driven staples of teaching listening have found applications in current integrated approaches, such as task-based or content-based instruction (Snow, 2005). The design of listening practice can incorporate a number of features that make the development of L2 listening abilities relevant and realistic. Listen-and-do tasks, for instance, represent a flexible source of listening input for beginning or intermediate learners. According to Ellis (2003), the content of tasks can be easily controlled in regard to their linguistic and schematic variables, such as frequent occurrences of target syntactic and lexical structures in the context of a meaning-focused task (also referred to as enriched input), such as grammar constructions, words and phrases, or conversational expressions.

Researchers have also been interested in the metacognitive and cognitive strategies of successful L2 listeners (M. Rost & S. Ross, 1991). The findings of these investigations have led L2 listening experts to advocate the teaching of metacognitive and cognitive strategies specifically for L2 listening comprehension. The most important difference between skills and strategies is that strategies are under learners’ conscious control, and listeners can be taught to compensate for incomplete understanding, missed linguistic or schematic input, or misidentified clues (M. Rost, 2005).

Thus, current L2 listening pedagogy includes the modeling of metacognitive strategies and strategy training in tandem with teaching L2 listening. A consistent use of metacognitive strategies is more effective in improving learners’ L2 listening comprehension than work on listening skills alone (Vandergrift, 2004). Learners at beginning and intermediate levels of proficiency may benefit from instruction that concentrates on bottom-up and top-down listening processes, together with selective strategy training. For more advanced learners, an addition of cognitive strategies, such as discourse organization, inferencing, elaboration, and summation, also represent an effective approach to teaching listening (M. Rost, 2005).

**Learning by reading.** When reading the texts in a case study or when analyzing models for global simulation activities, the learner will encounter new words in a context and not isolated. It is useful to train the learner to analyze the meaning of new vocabulary from the context as content-related and structural signs might help to understand the exact meaning. In order to check whether the hypothesis about the meaning is correct the learner may replace them by synonyms, words taken from other languages or internationalisms (Explics, 2006, p. 41). Furthermore, it is useful to train the learners to use text semantics in order to identify key areas of the text, the author’s personal meaning, positive, or negative connotations, etc. This can be done by asking the learners to: (1) identify the text type; (2) present a hypothesis about the content of the text after a first look at the text; (3) identify key parts (e.g., by identifying key words and their synonyms); (4) identify parts of the texts in which the author presents his/her personal view; (5) identify the information provided by figures, tables, charts, and photos; and (6) look at internationalism and names.

This has the advantage that the students have to make hypotheses about the content of the text, which is more helpful in learning. This will also facilitate a class conversation about the text.
Similar to L2 listening, L2 reading entails both bottom-up and top-down cognitive processing, and in the 1980s, the prevalent approach to teaching sought to activate learners’ L1 reading schemata and prior knowledge to foster the development of L2 reading skills. Over time, however, it has become evident that, despite many years of schooling and exposure to L2 reading and text, not all learners succeed in becoming proficient L2 readers. In his important overview of reading research, Eskey (1988) examined what he called “a strongly top-down bias” (p. 95) in L2 reading pedagogy and neglect of learners’ weak linguistic processing skills. Eskey’s (1988) analysis explains that L2 readers are fundamentally distinct from those who read in their L1s and that essential “knowledge of the language of the text” (p. 96) is required before learners can successfully process the L2 reading schema.

The bottom-up processing of reading involves a broad array of distinct cognitive subskills, such as word recognition, spelling and phonological processing, morphosyntactic parsing, and lexical recognition and access (Eskey, 2005). The reader needs to gather visual information from the written text (e.g., letters and words), identify the meanings of words, and then move forward to the processing of the structure and the meaning of larger syntactic units, such as phrases or sentences. Enormous amounts of research carried out in the past two decades have been devoted to the role of vocabulary in L2 reading as well as to vocabulary learning and acquisition. Although in the 1970s and 1980s, the teaching and learning of vocabulary were considered to be largely secondary to the teaching of other L2 skills, at present a great deal more is known about the connections between L2 reading and vocabulary knowledge (Nation, 2001).

The techniques for teaching vocabulary have also been thoroughly examined. Nation’s (2001, 2005) work highlights significant trends in productive and efficient vocabulary teaching. In the past two decades, a vast body of research has established that explicit teaching represents the most effective and efficient means of vocabulary teaching. According to Nation (2005) and Hulstijn (2001), research has not supported the contention that meaning-focused use and encounters with new words in context are the best way to learn vocabulary. These authors underscore that the converse approach is probably true, that is, deliberate attention to decontextualized words is far more likely to lead to learning, although new vocabulary can certainly be reinforced in the context of other L2 skills. In general terms, to result in learning, activities with new words, such as reading or listening, have to meet the following conditions: “Interest, repetition, deliberate attention, and generative use (the use of a word in a new context)” (Nation, 2005, pp. 581-596).

Use the new vocabulary in your writing and speaking. The learners will use key words from the texts, subject-specific vocabulary, and related vocabulary; they will also use the new words they encountered in the receptive phase of the activity during the reading and listening activities. Using new vocabulary immediately in a specific context helps to embed it in the learners’ active vocabulary. In speaking, it is important that the learners learn how to fill gaps in the target language, e.g., when thinking about the next item on their list, as every speaker hesitates, breaks, restarts, and self-corrects. They should also be made aware that pronunciation and melody are more important in understanding than correct grammar. Training their pronunciation and giving feedback are therefore extremely important.

Learners have to learn that it is normal to make errors. The teacher should therefore act as a moderator, discuss problematic areas and give feedback. He/she should motivate the learners to produce language, and to try out new words and phrases. The most important aspect, however, is the nature of the communication: The learners should take a fairly authentic role of a kind they might fill in real life in an authentic situation. This will stimulate them to take an interest in the case in question, and the vocabulary linked to it, in more detail.
If You Need, You Read; Unless You Use, You Lose

Vocabulary learning process keeps the language user or learner up-to-date all the time and forces him/her to be ready for learning new vocabulary especially in a reading text including the novelties of the modern world or the archaic reflections that have been sunk into oblivion. Unlike the learning of grammar, which is in fact based on the rules of the language, vocabulary knowledge is largely a matter of accumulating individual items. The general rule seems to be a question of memory. And during the process of teaching and learning vocabulary an important problem occurs: How does memory work? Researchers into the workings of memory distinguish between the following systems (Thornbury, 2002): (1) short-term store; (2) working memory; and (3) long-term memory.

Long-term memory can be seen as kind of filing system. It has an enormous capacity and its contents are durable over time. However, to ensure moving new materials into permanent long-term memory, requires number of principles to be followed, described by Thornbury (2002):

- **Repetition** of encounters with a word is very important, useful and effective. If the word is met several times over space interval during reading activities, students have a very good chance to remember it for a long time.
- **Retrieval** is another kind of repetition. Activities, which require retrieval, such as using the new items in written tasks, help students to be able to recall it again in the future.
- **Spacing** needs to split memory work over a period of time rather than to mass it together in a single block.
- **Pacing** means showing respect to different kinds of learning styles and pace; thus, students should be given the opportunity to do memory work individually.
- **Use** means putting newly-learnt or already-learnt words to use, preferably in an interesting way and it is the best way of ensuring they are added to long-term memory. This is so called “Use it or lose it” principle.
- **Cognitive depth**—the more decisions students make about the word and the more cognitively demanding these decisions are, the better the word is remembered.
- **Personal organising**—personalisation significantly increased the probability that students will remember new items. It is achieved mainly through conversation and role-playing activities.
- **Imaging**—easily visualised words are better memorable than those that do not evoke with any pictures. Even abstract words can be associated with some mental image.
- **Mnemonics**—tricks to help retrieve items or rules that are stored in memory. The best kinds of mnemonics are visuals and keyword techniques.
- **Motivation**—strong motivation itself does not ensure that words will be remembered. Even unmotivated students remember words if they have to face appropriate tasks.
- **Attention**—it is not possible to improve vocabulary without a certain degree of conscious attention. (p. 25)

Methodology

In this research, an experimental study has been carried out and a Likert test (see the Appendix) measuring the approaches of the students in the Faculties of Engineering, Law, and Economics and Administrative Sciences of Turgut Özal University about the importance of the reading and listening activities in learning new vocabulary to improve their efficiency in the profession has been applied. According to the results of the test, the tendency of the students about the said situation will have been very well understood.

Setting and Participants

The Likert test has been applied in the Faculties of Engineering, Law, and Economics and Administrative Sciences of Turgut Özal University. This Likert scale consisted of 15 items to get feedbacks from the students of the said faculties about the benefits of reading activities in all its parts in vocabulary learning process.
The participant group of the research includes totally 40 students from the said faculties, 20 of them are females and 20 are males.

Data Collection

The feedbacks of the students in the mentioned faculties have been accumulated to make use of as the basis of this research analysis. The items in the Likert test have been prepared considering the teaching procedures followed in the listening and reading sections of the “Speakout Elementary” coursebook. Apart from the activities presented in the book, other kinds of extra activities provided to involve students in reading or listening sections have also been reminded in the items of the scale so that results can include all details of the teaching.

Data Analysis

In the light of the research questions aforementioned, the data obtained through the research tools were analyzed with use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 17.0 for Windows). The program was employed to measure frequency rates, means, standard deviations, reliability and significance values of the data collected. Following the calculation of the mean values and standard deviations related to the test items, an Independent Sample t-test was employed to compare the perceptions of male and female participants in order to determine whether gender differences had any significant impact on their opinions about the book under scrutiny.

In the interpretation process of the mean values, boundaries of each response categories in the 5-point Likert scales from 1 to 5 were determined by dividing the serial width 4 by the number of responses 5 and found to be 0.8. Grounding on this calculation, the accepted boundaries for each response categories are suggested as follows:

1  = 1 + 0.8 = 1.8
2  = 1.8 + 0.8 = 2.6
3  = 2.6 + 0.8 = 3.4
4  = 3.4 + 0.8 = 4.2
5  = 4.2 + 0.8 = 5

Research Question 1: What is the general satisfaction level of the students in respect of the vocabulary presented around the listening and reading activities in the course book?

A score between 3.4 and above on the scale was regarded as the indicator of moderate (average) L2 reading and listening motivation level whereas 4.2 and above a high one. Any score below 3.4 was considered to reveal a low L2 reading and listening motivation level.

Results and Discussion

In this part of the study, the mean values of the 17 items which focus on teaching vocabulary in the reading and listening sections of the course book Speak Out (2011) will be explained in the light of the related literature. Moreover, participants’ opinions about vocabulary teaching in the reading and listening sections of the book will be compared across their gender in order to shed light on the impact of this particular variable on their notions.

When a detailed analysis was done to reveal the highest and lowest means obtained from the scale, it was seen that students’ opinions related to the course book concerned indicated a moderate level of contentedness (see Table 1).
Research Question 2: What is the general attitude of the students about the pre-, while, and post-reading or listening activities in terms of vocabulary learning?

The overall mean value of the 17 items (M = 3.41) and the mean value of item 1 (M = 3.38) showed that students had a moderate level of satisfaction with the presentation of vocabulary items in the course book. A close analysis of the items, particularly the mean values of items 3, 5, and 6, reveals that students have difficulties with understanding the vocabulary presented in the listening and reading sections of the book (Mean = 2.60; Mean = 2.82; Mean = 2.57 respectively), indicating a low level of satisfaction with the book. Students’ responses to item 8 further reinforces their opinions related to this particular finding since students reported a need for the instructor’s assistance in order to better learn the target vocabulary in the reading and listening sections of the book. In other words, students find it difficult to handle the vocabulary items presented on their own, and therefore feel the need for the instructors’ help and/or guidance. It is also notable that although students reported a moderate level of satisfaction with vocabulary exercises presented before the reading texts (Mean = 3.90), they find it beneficial before going through the actual reading process. Regarding the reading texts from a perspective of interest (refer to item 10), students appeared to have high-moderate level of contentedness (M = 3.95). However, when the fact that none of the mean values of the items above is over 4.2 (the boundary which is the indicator of a high level) is considered, it can be inferred that students do not feel satisfied with the course book used for learning English.

In the scope of the present study, gender differences were considered to a significant variable that might have effect of students opinions related to book Speak Out. In order to detect the impact of gender on students’ opinions, an Independent Sample t-test was carried out (see Table 2).
Table 2

| Test | N   | Mean  | SD   | SE   | t     | df   | Sig.   |
|------|-----|-------|------|------|-------|------|--------|
| Female | 20  | 3.7618| 0.63426 | 0.14182 | 2.823 | 38   | 0.008  |
| Male   | 20  | 3.0588| 0.91548 | 0.20471 |       |      |        |

Notes. \( p = 0.008; p < 0.05. \)

**Research Question 3:** Is there a significant difference among students of the abovementioned faculties regarding the vocabulary teaching of the book in terms of gender?

According to the Independent Samples \( t \)-test results presented in Table 2, the difference between the mean scores of female and male students’ opinions related to the presentation of vocabulary items in the reading and listening sections of the book *Speak Out* is statistically significant \((p = 0.008, p < 0.05)\). A comparison of the mean scores revealed that while female students had a moderate level of contentedness with the book \((M = 3.7618 \text{ with a standard deviation of } 0.63426)\), the male students reported a low level of satisfaction with the presentation of vocabulary items in the listening and reading activities \((M = 3.0588 \text{ with a standard deviation of } 0.91548)\). As a general interpretation of the results presented in Table 2, it can be inferred that gender differences have a significant impact on students’ evaluation of the presentation of vocabulary items in the course book *Speak Out*.

**Conclusions and Pedagogical Suggestions**

The most important question which, in fact, constituted the whole research up to now has found its answer within the data analysis section very well. The research has clarified the indispensable necessity of the abundant numbers of the teacher-oriented extra materials for the benefit of the students other than the course book. Such a study will expose them to the necessary vocabulary determined according to the CEFR in a more satisfactory level both in listening and reading activities and make them more motivated in acquiring the vocabulary of the target language they learn. Students are supposed to learn vocabulary by being aware of their lexicological and phonological structures.

Positively speaking, the course book has different kind of vocabulary teaching activities and they all conform to the language teaching methodology in general. The reading and listening sections guide students to use the presented vocabulary in suitable contexts in the pre- or post-reading listening activities. When students enjoy the subject in which the vocabulary is introduced, the process of using them can be in the expected level.

When students do not find the subject in the area of their interest, there happens to be a big problem especially in the procedures of vocabulary teaching section as well as the reading or listening sections. Of course, the teacher will prepare and allocate the extra teaching materials to the students not only in problematic situations but also in any case the teacher thinks necessary. The most important thing the teacher should consider is that these materials should be prepared according to the learning styles of the students (Gezmiş & Sançoban, 2006).

Determining the learning styles of all the students can be a really challenging job for a teacher apart from organizing the materials according to the learning styles of these students. Sometimes the reading or listening passages in the course books can show incongruity with the culture of the community and such cases take the attention and participation of the students away. Teachers should find some critical solutions for such
unexpected situations as well. And they should also try to draw deliberate attention on decontextualized words to lead the students to learn more vocabulary as Nation (2005) and Hulstijn (2001) declared.

Another important point to mention is that the female students in the faculties are more sensitive about acquiring the vocabulary of the L2 they are exposed to and this shows their language awareness is higher than males. The reason of it can be both their innate tendency to language learning and their being aware of the fact that if they are accented language learners, it will give harm to their profession, or they will see themselves as handicapped. The teacher, as an important problem solver profile in the class, should produce as many different kinds of teaching materials as possible to address each of the learning styles and genders of the students.

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### Appendix: Likert Scale

| No. | Items | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|-----|-------|-------------------|----------|---------------------------|-------|---------------|
| 1   | The Speakout Course Book is very-well designed for vocabulary learning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2   | I find the vocabulary exercises before a reading passage very useful. |  |  |  |  | |
| 3   | I find the vocabulary exercises during the listening activities very difficult. |  |  |  |  | |
| 4   | I learnt a lot of new vocabulary in different areas by means of our coursebook. |  |  |  |  | |
| 5   | I had difficulties in understanding some words because of their pronunciation. |  |  |  |  | |
| 6   | I misunderstand some vocabulary because English words have different meanings in different reading passages. |  |  |  |  | |
| 7   | The vocabulary teaching of the coursebook is equal in reading and listening parts. |  |  |  |  | |
| 8   | When the teacher explains most of the new vocabulary by giving the pronunciation, I can learn better. |  |  |  |  | |
| 9   | When I listen to the new vocabulary from the English-English dictionary, I understand the listening parts more easily. |  |  |  |  | |
| 10  | I think most of the reading passages in the coursebook are very interesting. |  |  |  |  | |
| 11  | I think most comprehension questions after the reading texts are very difficult and boring. |  |  |  |  | |
| 12  | When the teacher brings extra vocabulary materials after reading or listening, I can do them very easily. |  |  |  |  | |
| 13  | The busy traffic of instructions after some reading or listening texts makes me very tired. |  |  |  |  | |
| 14  | I read stories after school and when I see a word that we learnt in the class I can easily remember it. |  |  |  |  | |
| 15  | When I read the previous reading passages I have no difficulty in reading the vocabulary and pronouncing them correctly. |  |  |  |  | |
| 16  | I can understand native speakers more easily now but it is still difficult for me to speak to them fluently. |  |  |  |  | |
| 17  | The vocabulary I learned in the reading and listening parts of the coursebook made me more confident. |  |  |  |  | |