THE EFFECTS OF TECHNIQUES OF VOCABULARY PORTFOLIO ON L2 VOCABULARY LEARNING

By

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ABSTRACT

To investigate the effects of different techniques of vocabulary portfolio including word map, word wizard, concept wheel, visual thesaurus, and word rose on L2 vocabulary comprehension and production, a sample of 75 female EFL learners of Kish Day language Institute in Karaj, Iran were selected. They were in five groups and each group received vocabulary portfolio in one of the aforementioned techniques. Multiple-choice and Fill-in-the-blanks vocabulary tests were used to measure the participants' comprehension and production of the target words. The obtained data were analyzed using two separate one-way ANOVA procedures. Results indicated that in vocabulary production, the differences among the groups were statistically insignificant, suggesting that despite the observed differences among the means, the performances of these groups were more or less similar. However, there was a significant difference between the means of visual thesaurus and the concept wheel groups in vocabulary comprehension.

Keywords: Vocabulary Portfolio, Vocabulary Learning, Word Map, Word Wizard, Concept Wheel, Visual Thesaurus, Word Rose.

INTRODUCTION

There is little doubt that, vocabulary is one of the most important components of language. Different strategies and techniques have been employed to teach vocabulary because previous research seems to suggest that vocabulary learning strategies and vocabulary size are related to each other (Gani Hamzah, Kafipour, & Abdullah, 2009). This means that vocabulary-learning strategies contribute to vocabulary size of the learners.

Today teaching strategies are shifting from the traditional way of unilaterally transferring knowledge to uninformed learners to more learner-centered strategies. According to Caner (2010), the emphasis of current language teaching strategies include thinking critically, learning to solve problems, and working and communicating with others. In the last decade, and in the field of educational theory and practice, numerous innovations have come into existence. There has been a great paradigm shift in education, where it has moved from being a traditional teacher-centered process to one that is student-centered. Today, there are different methods in the field of training and education that we can easily choose from; portfolio-based learning is one

of educationists' most popular options. In fact, portfolios are effective and useful learning tools (Elango, Jutti & Lee, 2005).

Student portfolio is a representation of a student's best work, and it functions similar to an artist's, a model's, or a photographer's portfolio. Student portfolios are the examination of students' needs which are related to curriculum objectives and demonstrate growth and learning over a semester or school year (Pierce & O'Malley, 1992). The management of portfolios is a means of accumulating student assignments in an organized manner (Liu, 2007).

There are different techniques of portfolio keeping. The purpose of the present study is to investigate the effect of five selected techniques of vocabulary portfolio keeping on L2 vocabulary comprehension and production. More specifically, it aims to answer the following research questions:

1. Are there any significant differences among the effects of different techniques of vocabulary portfolio including word map, word wizard, concept wheel, visual thesaurus, and word rose on L2 vocabulary

comprehension?

2. Are there any significant differences among the effects of different techniques of vocabulary portfolio including word map, word wizard, concept wheel, visual thesaurus, and word rose on L2 vocabulary production?

Review of Literature

A portfolio is a purposeful collection of students' works in order to show their efforts, progresses and achievements in given areas. Students' portfolios have been inspired by professionals such as photographers and architects as a means of keeping a record of their accomplishments to show to others. What makes portfolios more valuable is the assessment of students' achievements. They provide continuous records of students' language development and progress that can be shared with others and because of this; they are considered as useful tools. One of the assessment tools, which can increase students' participation, and ownership of their own learning is portfolio (Sharifi & Hassaskhah, 2011). According to Birgin and Baki (2007), portfolio is considered as a tool of assessment that assesses students' performance in different domains. Rao (2006) states that, portfolio is a category and collection of students' assignments which is selected by the students themselves and with the guidance of their teachers and with the purpose of using them as the illustration of students' learning. What portfolio does is engaging students in selecting and gathering examples of their language use and putting them in a suitable place like a folder to show them to their parents, peers and other people. Every collection of materials, which is stuffed into a folder, is not called portfolio; each piece of portfolio must be organized in a special way to illustrate certain competencies of different students.

There are different types of portfolios. Cain, May, Henry and Rampersad (2005) describe three types of portfolios as follows: Working portfolios are learners' works which are formed as a collection. This type of portfolio has a special purpose. Learners usually collect their works according to the goals and guidelines, which teachers determine. All portfolios are initially considered as a working collection form, which the final choice of the learners' work is derived

to be presented to others. Some of the important advantages of working portfolios are that learners can review their works; they can also think about their future work development. These advantages show that, working portfolio is not the same as the traditional practice in which first drafts were considered as an end product.

Developmental or assessment portfolios represent learners' development in proficiency or setting goals about a topic, theme, and the course of work; they also show what a learner achieves during a particular time. Developmental portfolios represent integration among three important parts of education: instruction, learning, and assessment.

Showcase or Display portfolios are a representation of learners' good works or performances. The aim of using this type of portfolio is the support, categorization and organization of what is accomplished in different exercises or in different subject areas. What is required for this is the learners' ability to choose from their different works those, which are based on special measures. Usually teachers, learners with the consultation of their teachers, and an external body who is responsible for examination, determine and specify these measures.

Vocabulary Portfolio

According to Nichols and Rupley (2004), different techniques of vocabulary learning may affect learners' vocabulary improvement. They assert that those vocabulary-teaching strategies, never provide opportunity for learners to learn new words by themselves, like copying words' definition from flashcards or a dictionary, supply no creative and meaningful learning. Vocabulary learning becomes effective and meaningful when learners make connection between the existing vocabulary and their background knowledge. Portfolio is one of the different types of teaching strategies, which can facilitate and improve self-knowledge among students.

According to Genesee and Upsher (1996), portfolios can be shaped in the form of a conventional file folder, cardboard box, a part, or section of a file drawer, or some other forms. It is necessary for students to keep their portfolios in accessible places so they can easily review or update them, or show them to others without teachers' help.

Different techniques of vocabulary portfolio have been proposed in the relevant literature. Here is a brief review of those selected for the purpose of the present study:

Word Map

Ruddell and Shearer (2002) assert that word map is an important tool for learners' vocabulary development, and it is considered as a visual organizer. This graphic organizer makes learners think about words in multiple ways. According to Baleghizadeh and Yousefpoori Naeim (2011), word map has benefits as well as shortcomings. One of the main flaws with semantic mapping is that, it might bind students' mental ability in clustering different related words. Another disadvantage is that, illustrating a fixed or predetermined map and task might reduce learners' creativity.

Word Wizard

This technique focuses on words in context and requires creative writing. Talebzadeh and Bagheri (2012) hold that in comparison with only matching words to context, writing creates more explanation and such an explanation generates retention. Three types of effective writing assignment are sentence making, cloze test and composition writing.

According to Barcroft (2004), it should be helpful for learners to take part in activities that are semantically elaborative, for example attaching new words to individual experiences, concentrating on usage contexts, speaking about words' different meanings, contrasting and comparing new words and writing unfamiliar words in sentences.

Concept Wheel

Stankevicius (2003) holds that concept wheel is a type of graphic organizer that allows learners to construct meaning for them. The philosophy of using this technique goes along with the constructive theory that believes learners can learn better when they construct different word meanings on their own.

Visual Thesaurus

According to H. Lapp, E. Lapp, R. Lapp, and Reis (2009), visual thesaurus is a tool by which learners can discover the connection between various words in a visual display. Visual thesaurus also provides an opportunity for learners to search for different words and figure out related concepts. Learners can understand the relationship between different words and concepts in a visual manner. This practice has been planned for different learners to investigate all related meanings of a word. This map also allows learners to understand the relationship between synonyms.

Zaini, Mokhtar and Nawawi (2010) states that, graphic organizers are tools for showing, representing and modeling knowledge in a visual model to attain a meaningful learning. When difficult materials and concepts are shown graphically, learners can create another representation or structure for comprehending difficult concepts. Visual representation of knowledge illustrates a competent support for the thinking process.

Word Rose

According to Lewis and Hill (1985), learners can learn better, when they anticipate vocabulary themselves. This may be accomplished by applying word-roses and word-ladders. In the word rose technique, learners fill petals of the rose. After they have filled the rose, other learners ask learners about the words they have used. If learners do not know the answer, they are motivated to ask each other. This allows learners to ask questions about unknown words from each other. This kind of vocabulary learning is effective because learners bring to mind the words that are useful. The word rose technique provides an effective way for previewing words, and creates overall training for text study.

Previous research suggests that the use of portfolios can facilitate learning. Davis and Ponnamperuma (2005), for example, hold that portfolios, as a method of learning and assessment, can enhance critical thinking, learner responsibility, interaction between tutor and student, reflection and self-assessment, creativity, as well as professional and personal improvements. They are also the tools for monitoring and assessing students' progress over time, and help integrate assessment and learning. In addition, though they are not appropriate for all learning styles, they can accommodate various learning styles and offer situations for recognizing struggling performers.

When it comes to the differences among the various portfolio techniques, however, there seems to be a paucity

of research. Particularly, in the area of vocabulary learning, there is still a wide gap in our understanding of how each of the above-mentioned techniques influences vocabulary comprehension and production. In an attempt to fill part of this gap, the present study investigates the effects of selected vocabulary portfolio techniques including word map, word wizard, concept wheel, visual thesaurus and word rose on L2 vocabulary comprehension and production.

Method

Participants

The participants of this study were 75 Iranian EFL learners, who were in pre-intermediate level of language proficiency and studied English at Kish Day Language Institute in Karaj. They were female and ranged from 11 to 30 in terms of age. They were in five groups to receive different vocabulary portfolio techniques.

Instruments

The materials utilized in the study include the following:

1. The teaching materials was 'TOUCHSTONE' Students' Book 3 written by McCarthy, McCarten and Sandiford (2006), the main course book at both pre-intermediate and intermediate levels which was introduced by the institute. It includes 12 units and every 4 units are for one level. It is used for learners who are in KW9, KW10, and KW11 levels of language proficiency. The participants of this study were at KW9 level of language proficiency.

2. A total number of 90 target words were chosen from the above-mentioned source. In, every session, according to the appointed techniques, 10 words were presented to the learners. The time duration for performing each technique was 9 sessions.

3. A40-item KET test in multiple-choice format was used as a pre-test to homogenize the participants.

4. A word knowledge pre-test including 178 vocabulary items selected from the first four units of 'TOCHSTONE' Students Book 3 (KW9 level) and contextualized in 150 sentences was also used. These sentences were taken from TOUCHSTONE Students' Book 3, Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary and Oxford Elementary Dictionary. The purpose of this test was to ensure that the

participants had no prior knowledge of the target words. In each sentence, the target words were bolded and participants were required to write the meanings of the words in Persian.

5. Two post-tests were also used. A vocabulary comprehension post-test in multiple-choice format was administered to see the effects of different vocabulary portfolio techniques on vocabulary comprehension of learners. It included 30 items. A 30-item vocabulary production post-test in fill-in-the-blanks format was also given to measure the effects of different vocabulary portfolio techniques on vocabulary production of the learners.

Procedure

To investigate the effects of different vocabulary portfolio techniques on vocabulary comprehension and production, 112 pre-intermediate level learners with the afore-mentioned characteristics were selected. Before beginning the treatment, however, a standard 40-item multiple-choice pre-test was administered to determine the learners' proficiency level and to ensure their homogeneity. The allocated time for this pre-test was 25 minutes. The mean and standard deviation of the scores were computed. Those participants whose score was more than one standard deviation away from the mean were excluded from all subsequent analyses. As a result, 75 participants who were more or less at the same level of language proficiency and had the same level of vocabulary knowledge were selected.

Then, the word knowledge pre-test was used. The purpose of this test was to make sure that the participants' had no prior knowledge of the target words. For this purpose, the participants were asked to write the meaning of each target word that was bolded. The results of word knowledge pre-test showed that 88 words were familiar for some participants. So, they were excluded from the post-tests. The remaining 90 words were selected as target words of this study. Having determined the type of treatment to be given to each of the different groups, the treatment was given, which lasted for 9 sessions. Every session, according to the appointed techniques, 10 of the 90 vocabulary items were presented to the learners. The participants took

part in their English class three times a week. Each session lasted about one and a half hour. Participant of different groups were asked to complete their vocabulary portfolios at home and bring them back to the class for correction. A Teachers corrected every session participants' works (10 words of treatment words) by putting check √ or X marks and also assigning grades from 1 to 10. Each group of learners received a different treatment. The treatment consisted of five different techniques of vocabulary portfolio including word map, word wizard, concept wheel, visual thesaurus and word rose. Each group of participants received the full explanation of the vocabulary portfolio technique they were supposed to use.

During this study, each individual learner of the five groups was asked to keep their works (Vocabulary papers which they did according to the given techniques) in a folder or box.

The description of the five vocabulary portfolio techniques is as follows:

Group 1 received Word Map technique. This technique can be used for learners at different levels and in all ages. In this technique, learners' job was to fill out Word Map worksheet for every word that they did not know; they were asked to fill out a Word Map with the words that were determined for them.

According to H. Lapp, E. Lapp, R. Lapp, and Reis (2009), the procedures for completing word map technique and word map worksheets are as follows:

- Students set the word into a chart in the predetermined place (Group 1 learners received a sample of this chart).

- The students' job is to find synonyms for the word (they can use dictionaries, or ask a friend).

- In the next part, the student needs to write antonyms of the word (they can use dictionary or ask a friend).

- If there are other forms of the word, the student will need to write them in a predetermined part in Word Map.

- When the target word is used in a sentence, the students' job is to write the sentence from the text in which the word is used.

- In a predetermined place in Word Map, students should write their own sentence.

- The student should fill a sketch or association part in a word map by providing visual representations of different words' meaning.

Group 2 received Word Wizard technique. Word Wizard consists of a chart with 3 columns including My Word, My sentence and Level. Following the recommendations of H. Lapp, E. Lapp, R. Lapp, and Reis (2009), in this technique, the target words were written on small pieces of paper. The small papers were folded in half and located in something like a hat, or they were splashed on the desk and a student was asked to select the words. A student read the words loudly to the class. The other students' job was to go home and write their own sentences. They could use different sources such as TV, radio, newspaper, conversation, etc. Students were required to complete their charts and bring them to the class. When a word was unknown for students, they were allowed to use a dictionary.

The third column of Word Wizard technique chart was about *Level*. Each individual learner could obtain one of three Wizarding levels including *Word Watcher, Word Warrior,* and *Word Wizard*. Each of these levels was used according to different learners' ability. Those learners who were capable to find the words but were unable to describe them were word watchers. A learner who could provide a created example of the target words in addition to finding different words was a word warrior and word wizard learners were able to provide appropriate examples in addition to giving explanation to others about the meaning of words and the procedures that they used for different words.

Group 3 received Concept Wheel technique. As what H. Lapp, E. Lapp, R. Lapp, and Reis (2009) state, the main goal of this technique is to help learners to create deeper knowledge of word meaning. Concept Wheel is a circle that is divided into four equal parts and includes four sections. As a first step, the target words are determined. This group received the same vocabulary instruction as the other groups. Each student of this group received a Concept Wheel chart. In the first section of the circle, students wrote the selected word or words. In section 2,

students were asked to suggest a list of words that they thought of when they heard the word in the first box. In section 3, students wrote a proper definition of the word (they could use a dictionary). In section 4, students wrote their own definition and drew a related and corresponding picture.

Group 4 received Visual Thesaurus technique. This was a satellite chart with the main and target words in the middle and some satellite stems connected to them. Students of this group received a list of target words. After receiving a list of target words, students tried to figure out the different meanings of words by applying a variety of sources such as a dictionary, thesaurus, or other sources. A satellite chart was given to the students. The target word had to be written in the center of the chart. Each stem of the satellite chart had to be filled with synonyms of the target word. The students completed the chart and brought it back to the class for the correction process.

Group 5 received Word Rose technique. In this technique, the target word was written in the center of the rose. Students then filled the other petals of the rose. In the rose technique, each word had to be connected to the central words (Lewis & Hill, 1985). In this technique, students were asked to give synonyms for the target words.

At the end of the experimental period, two post-tests were administered. A vocabulary comprehension post-test in multiple-choice format was administered to see the effects of vocabulary portfolio techniques on vocabulary comprehension. The allocated time for this post-test was 30 minutes. A vocabulary production post-test in fill-in-the-blanks format was also used to investigate the effects of different vocabulary portfolio techniques on vocabulary production. The allocated time for this post-test was 40 minutes. To help learners to use the target words, the first letter of each word was written in the blank spaces.

To answer the research questions, two separate one-way ANOVA procedures were used; one to investigate the effects of different techniques of vocabulary portfolio on vocabulary comprehension, and the other one to study the effects of different techniques of vocabulary portfolio on vocabulary production.

Results

Investigation of the first research question

The first research question sought to investigate the effects of different techniques of vocabulary portfolio on L2 vocabulary comprehension. To this end, a one-way ANOVA procedure was used. The results are presented in Table 1.

As it is presented in Table 1, the visual thesaurus group (mean=18.12) has the highest mean followed by the word wizard group (mean=17.50) and the word rose group (mean=16.40). The concept wheel group (mean=14.78) has the lowest mean. Table 1 also indicates that the F-value is statistically significant (F= 3.57, p < .05). Accordingly, we can claim that there are significant differences among the groups. At the same time, the strength of association index (η^2 = .41) shows that 41% of the variance in vocabulary comprehension is accounted for by the independent variable, techniques of vocabulary portfolio. The graphic representation of the results (Figure 1) shows the differences among the groups more conspicuously.

To locate the differences among the groups, the Post-Hoc Tukey test procedure was used, yielding the following results:

Based on Table 2, mean difference between the concept wheel group and the visual thesaurus group is statistically

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
visual thesaurus	16	18.12	1.89
word wizard	16	17.50	3.07
word rose	15	16.40	3.43
concept wheel	14	14.78	3.46
word map	14	15.21	2.51
F = 3.577	Sig. = .010	η^2= .41	

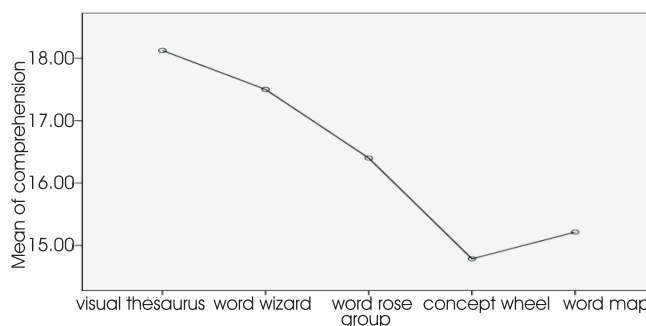Table 1. Descriptive and Test Statistics for the ANOVA on Vocabulary Comprehension

Figure 1. Performance of the Participants on the Vocabulary Comprehension Test

(I) group	(J) group	Mean Difference (IJ)	Std. Error	Sig.
visual thesaurus	word wizard	.62	1.03	.974
	word rose	1.72	1.05	.478
	concept wheel	3.33*	1.07	.022
	word map	2.91	1.07	.062
word wizard	word rose	1.10	1.05	.833
	concept wheel	2.71	1.07	.095
	word map	2.28	1.07	.218
word rose	concept wheel	1.61	1.08	.576
	word map	1.18	1.08	.811
concept wheel	word map	-.42	1.10	.995

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 2. Post-Hoc Multiple Comparisons of Means for the Learners' Vocabulary Comprehension

significant, indicating that there is a significant difference between these groups in favor of the visual thesaurus group in vocabulary comprehension. The mean of the visual thesaurus group is also better than that of the word map group. However, although there is a trend towards a meaningful difference, the difference is not statistically significant. The differences between the means of all other groups are statistically insignificant, suggesting that despite the observed differences among the means, the performances of these groups on the vocabulary comprehension test are more or less similar.

Investigation of the Second Research Question

The second research question attempted to investigate the effects of different techniques of vocabulary portfolio on L2 vocabulary production. To this end, another one-way ANOVA procedure was used, the results of which are given in the following table:

As it can be seen in Table 3, the word wizard group participants have the highest mean (mean=14.62), followed by the word rose group (mean=14.26), the concept wheel group (mean=13.71) and the visual thesaurus group (mean=13.25). The participants of the

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
visual thesaurus	16	13.25	2.40
word wizard	16	14.62	1.89
word rose	15	14.26	3.53
concept wheel	14	13.71	2.26
word map	14	13.21	2.83
F = .857	Sig. = .494		$\eta^2 = .44$

Table 3. Descriptive and Test Statistics for the ANOVA on Vocabulary Production

word map group (mean= 13.21) have the lowest mean. However, the F-value is statistically insignificant (F= .85, p > .05). In addition, the strength of association index ($\eta^2 = .44$) shows that 44% of the total variance in vocabulary production is explained by the independent variable, techniques of vocabulary portfolio. In the graphic representation of the results (Figure 2), the differences among the groups can be seen more clearly.

Discussion

The findings of the present study shows that, although there are differences between the means of the groups, these differences are statistically insignificant, indicating that despite the observed differences among the means, the performance of these groups on vocabulary comprehension test are more or less similar except for the difference between the visual thesaurus and the concept wheel groups, which is statistically significant indicating that the visual thesaurus technique makes a statistically significant contribution to vocabulary comprehension compared with the concept wheel technique. Also the findings of this study shows that there are no significant differences among the five groups in vocabulary production test.

The findings of the present study are in contrast to those of Baleghizadeh and Yousefpoori Naeim (2011), who found that learners can remember words and their definition better when they use word map. The findings of the present study show that keeping a word map portfolio has no significant effect on vocabulary learning in comparison with other techniques.
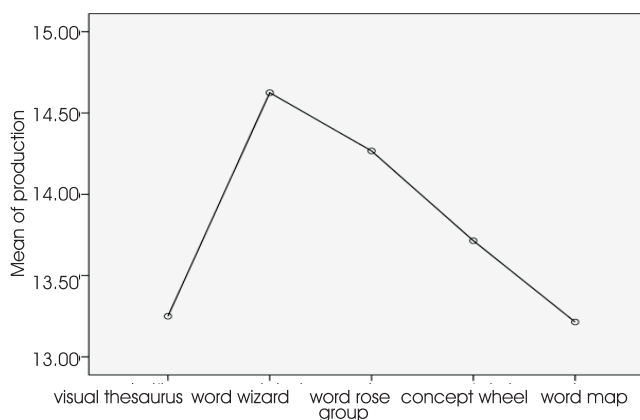

Figure 2. Performance of the Participants on the Vocabulary Production Test

The findings of this study are also different from those of Ruddell and Shearer (2002) that word map is an important tool for learners' vocabulary development and it is considered as a visual organizer. The vocabulary comprehension test shows that the visual thesaurus group, the word wizard group and the word rose group performed better than this group in vocabulary comprehension, although the differences were not statistical.

The findings of this study are somehow in line with Zaini, Mokhtar and Nawawi (2010), who state that the organization of information in the visual form illustrates an effective support for the processes of learning and thinking. The findings of the present study show that although the differences between the means of the groups are insignificant, the visual thesaurus group has the highest mean in vocabulary comprehension test.

Barcroft (2004) believes that in comparison with no sentence writing condition and word-picture reappearance, writing unfamiliar words in different sentences (word wizard technique) unconstructively affects presentation on a productively oriented assessment of second language acquisition. Talebzadeh and Bagheri (2012) also believe that sentence making and writing can help students to learn new words. The findings of this study show that despite statistically insignificant differences among the means of the groups in both vocabulary comprehension and production, the word wizard group has the second highest mean after the visual thesaurus group in vocabulary comprehension test and the highest mean among all groups in the vocabulary production test.

Lewis and Hill (1985) reported that learners could learn better when they anticipate vocabulary themselves, and this may be accomplished by applying word-roses and word-ladders. The findings of the present study are in contrast with Lewis and Hill (1985) because although the word rose group has a high mean among the groups, the mean difference is insignificant indicating that the performance of this group is more or less similar to that of the other groups.

Based on the findings of this study, the concept wheel group has the lowest mean among all groups in vocabulary comprehension; it also has a low mean in vocabulary production. These findings are in contrast with those of Stankevicius (2003), indicating that concept wheel can help learners to improve their vocabulary knowledge.

A number of factors could possibly account for such differences. One of the reasons may be the Iranian socio-cultural and educational setting in which students prefer more teacher-centered than learner-centered instruction.

Another possible reason for such differences could be the participants' level of proficiency. The participants of the present study were at pre-intermediate proficiency level. Therefore, they were dependent on the teacher. Different techniques of vocabulary portfolio such as word map, word rose, word wizard, visual thesaurus and concept wheel are more learner-centered techniques, hence probably not applicable to pre-intermediate learners.

Still another possible reason for such findings may be attributable to gender differences. In the present study, gender differences were not taken into account. This study was performed on female learners. The findings could also be related to the age of learners. The age of learners in this study was between 11 and 30. Furthermore, the time factor could be one of the important issues for such differences. Performing vocabulary portfolio procedure would require a great investment of time.

Conclusion

The present study attempted to investigate the effects of different techniques of vocabulary portfolio including word map, word wizard, concept wheel, visual thesaurus and word rose on L2 vocabulary comprehension and production. The findings showed that, in vocabulary production, there were no significant differences among the groups. All the five vocabulary portfolio techniques, which were used in this study almost, had the same effect on learners' vocabulary production.

According to several researchers (Birgin & Baki, 2007; Ozturk & Çeçen, 2007), using portfolio is a beneficial tool for teaching and learning writing, but the findings of the present study showed that despite the differences between the means of all groups, portfolio and different vocabulary portfolio keeping techniques had more or less similar effects on L2 vocabulary comprehension and production. It needs to be noted, however, that the present

study had no control group. So, the effect of each technique was only compared with the effect of another portfolio technique.

The findings of the present study may have some implications for teachers and learners. Vocabulary portfolio is an effective tool for learners' vocabulary development. The present study can help teachers and learners get familiar with these different vocabulary learning and teaching techniques. Applying new and different techniques in vocabulary teaching and learning can arouse learners' motivation and interest. The vocabulary portfolio techniques, which are used in this study, are more learner-centered activities, so they create motivation for different learners. One of the important characteristics of each portfolio is reflection. Teachers and learners may supply an occasion for such a reflection by applying portfolios into their programs. Moreover, portfolios are effective tools that provide reliable information about different learners' progress. By applying these tools, teachers can check their learners' progress.

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