Students' Views on Contextual Vocabulary Teaching: A Constructivist View

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Abstract

The current study is a quantitative research that aims to throw light on the place of students' views on contextual vocabulary teaching in conformity with Constructivism (CVTC) in the field of foreign language teaching. Hence, the study investigates whether any significant correlation exists between the fourth year university students' attitudes concerning CVTC in terms of their individual differences and their achievement scores. In this sense, a case-specific attitude scale was also developed for the purpose of the study. The results juxtaposed with the previous findings in the literature indicate that CVTC would serve new benefits for the interests of foreign language teaching.

Keywords: Contextual vocabulary teaching, Constructivism, language teaching, student attitude, scale development.

1. Introduction

Over the last few decades, constructivism has shaped our teaching strategies far beyond our expectations in a way to broaden our horizons in teaching. Instead of a so-called best recipe for all, constructivism has urged the borders of our pedagogies towards a new phenomenon that knowledge cannot be secured exclusively from one channel (Canestrary & Marlowe, 2010). Other than one channel, it has manifested that knowledge is constructed in view of the past experiences of the individuals who actively take part in the process of learning (Steffe, 1995). More precisely, resting on the interaction of the individuals within their social environment, learners are seen as active participants of the learning process rather than passive receivers (Fosnot, 2005). Accordingly, the booming effect of constructivism on education derives from its simple aspect of "learning how to learn" (Hausfather, 2001). Consistent with this standpoint, Richardson (1997) contends that no textbook may serve as a unique source for knowledge. The idea behind this proposition is that the knowledge constructed by the interaction of each participant would exceed the limits of any book that can be considered. Likewise, no teacher could be the unique source of knowledge on the grounds that the learners paradoxically redefine both the process of learning and the subject to be learnt (Eley,

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2006). Hence, it is the students who should be the activists of the classroom instead of teachers when learning is aimed to be more permanent and contemporary (Nikitina, 2009).

There is a prominent body of literature comprising written articles on constructivism that seek to project and re-determine the true nature of constructivism via new theories, methods, et cetera. At this juncture, Karagiorgi and Symeou (2005) advocate that there are many types of constructivism such as social, radical, evolutionary, postmodern, information processing, etc., in proportion to the quantity of researchers and scientific fields. Constructivism, correspondingly, has long been on stage also for language teaching classrooms as well as other scientific branches (Jones & Araje, 2002). Providing teachers with high order thinking skills, it responds to the demands of both discrete learning situations and the students with different learning strategies also in the field of language teaching (Kesal & Aksu, 2005). With its promising stance for language teaching environments, Constructivism binds language and knowledge simultaneously, which to a great extent works even for idiosyncratic language teaching environments such as teacher education programs (Oguz, 2008). More specifically, this epistemology could be utilized during any kind of language teaching activity regardless of the skill aimed to be improved whether it is reading, writing, listening or speaking.

Accordingly, the current study resting on Constructivist Epistemology seeks to empirically determine the role of contextual vocabulary teaching in language teaching pedagogy. The study comprises five main parts: review of literature, methodology, results, discussion, and limitations and conclusion. The first part reviews literature regarding importance of vocabulary building and skill development in language teaching and its close relation with context while the second part monitors research methodology. The third part submits the results of the study while the fourth part specifically debates these results in terms of literature. Finally, the fifth part conveys the study to a conclusion within its limitations providing implications for further studies in the area of foreign language teaching.

1.1. Literature review

Vocabulary building has a substantial place in language development (Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006). Irrespective of the language skill with which it is associated, it has direct effect on the development of each language skill (Nilsen & Nilsen, 2003). Thus, vocabulary teaching is equally necessary for reading, writing, listening or speaking. Baumann, Edwards, Boland, Olejnik & Kame'enui (2003) report strong correlation between vocabulary size and skill development. In addition, Morris & Cobb (2003) report vocabulary profile may serve as a sound artifact to be utilized for measuring skill development. All the same, size alone cannot entirely account for active use of vocabulary. Correspondingly, Zuhong (2011) posits size merely is not a sufficient criterion to assess vocabulary development. Depth, at this point, is another essential part of vocabulary development unanimously acknowledged in the literature (Shen, 2008) although quite little progression exists in defining it as a criterion (Read, 2007). Vocabulary depth for which written and oral contexts are necessary (Padak, Newton, Rasinski, & Newton, 2008) provide thematic relevance and integration of a conceptual network (Bravo & Cervetti, 2008). It is, whence, necessary that teachers give as much space as possible to vocabulary depth enhancing activities to endorse pupils' depth of word knowledge (Blachowicz, Fisher, Ogle, & Watts-Taffe, 2006).

Vocabulary knowledge may also be evaluated as receptive or productive in terms of the ability of the individual using it. To be more precise, receptive vocabulary enables the individual to recognize the written or spoken vocabulary whereas productive vocabulary represents the vocabulary written or spoken by the individual (Webb, 2008). As for the teaching of vocabulary, both similar to grammar teaching and quite diverse from it, the procedure could be executed through "implicit acquisition" vs.

"explicit direct learning" (Rieder, 2003, p.24). Depending on the course to be taught vocabulary building would take place explicitly or implicitly but always in a context. In conformity with this standpoint, Nation (2001) points to the interconnection between contextual vocabulary learning and intentional vocabulary learning designating them as "complimentary activities" (p.232), which suggests contexts make the process of vocabulary building more meaningful and perpetual (Otten, 2003). Akpınar (2013) argues that context is an important tool that the skilled readers utilize most to infer the meaning of unknown vocabulary as well. To this end, Graves (2008) enunciates using context as the most prevalently utilized strategy for increasing vocabulary knowledge. In line with this viewpoint, Smith (2008, p.21) referring to Nagy (1988) asserts that an effective vocabulary teaching should comprise three elements such as "integration", "meaningful use", and "repetition" where the term "meaningful use" corresponds to the students' use of the words in different contexts. Different contexts, in this sense, may also show diversity subject to the type and the content of the course to be taught (a translation, a reading, a literature or an ELT course etc.) making constructivism and contextual vocabulary teaching converge on the same plane (Barton, 2001; Gu, 2003; Rapport, n.d.). Thus, context becomes at least as important a factor as vocabulary depth for learners (Nassaji, 2003). What is more, research vindicates vocabulary depth and context has strong correlation in that the deeper vocabulary knowledge becomes, the better the contextual inference enacts (Restrepo Ramos, 2015; Montero, Peters, Clarebout, & Desmet, 2014; Barcroft, 2009; Pulido, 2007; Nassaji, 2006; Carlo et al., 2004). When making inference, Scott, Nagy, & Flinspah, (2008) propagate that context confines the use of a new word towards its targeted sense, thereby making it more readily comprehendible and prominent for retention in mind. Besides, they also report context and syntactic awareness as one of the very constituents of metalinguistic word learning strategies which are necessary for learning academic vocabulary. Blachowicz & Fisher (2008) stand the issue on its head and identify vocabulary instruction with metalinguistic development neither of which may be enunciated without context (Zipke, Ehri, & Cairns, 2009).

There is, considerable research reporting the drawbacks of counting on the context too much since it would lead to disappointment. Frantzen (2003, p. 168) highlights these drawbacks citing studies (L1: Beck, McKeown, & McCaslin, 1983; Carnine, Kameenui, & Coyle, 1984; Dubin & Olshtain, 1993; McKeown, 1985; Pressley, Levin, & McDaniel, 1987; Schatz & Baldwin, 1986; Shefelbine, 1990; L2: Bensoussan & Laufer, 1984; Haynes, 1984; Huckin & Bloch, 1993; Hulstijn, 1992; Kelly, 1990; Parry, 1993; Seibert, 1945; Stein, 1993) that report problematic sides of depending on context both for L1 and L2.

In view of the findings listed in the literature, the focal point of the current study is to contribute to the place of contextual vocabulary teaching from a Constructivist perspective when specifically implemented in an ordinary undergraduate course. Accordingly, the present study seeks to account for the following research questions:

1-Is there a statistically significant relation between the students' attitudes towards CVTC, and their ages?

2-Is there a statistically significant relation between the students' attitudes towards CVTC and gender?

3-Is there a statistically significant relation between the students' attitudes towards CVTC and their success levels?

4-Which aspects of CVTC were mostly appreciated by the learners?

2. Method

The current study is a quantitative research that aims to explore the role of age, gender and success in the students' attitudes towards CVTC in an ordinary undergraduate course at a foreign language department. In addition, the most appreciated aspects of the technique were also scrutinized. To do this, the ELT Studies course of the English Language and Literature Department of Selcuk University was selected as a model. Hence, after a 14-week ELT Studies course, the fourth year students of the English Language and Literature Department of Selcuk University were handed in a questionnaire that scrutinizes their attitudes towards the role of CVTC applied in the ELT Studies course. The fourth year students' attitudes towards CVTC in the ELT Studies course were examined by means of statistical procedures to detect any relation of their attitudes with their age, gender and success levels in the course separately. Finally, the most appreciated aspects of the technique were also submitted in tables consisting of their frequency distributions and their relative frequency distributions alike.

2.1. Sample / Participants

The current study was implemented at the English Language and Literature Department of Selcuk University in Konya, Turkey. The number of the participants in the present study was 40. The participants of the present study were determined to be in two age groups: 22 and below and 23 and above. The first age group represents the age range of the normal students who are supposed to start their university education at the age of 18 and who are again supposed normally to graduate from the university at the age of 22 while the second group represents those who may enter the university at their later ages or who are at the extension period for graduation.

Inasmuch as the majority of the English Language and Literature Department usually comprises the female students, most of the participants were females. The students of the program are welcome to the department following a placement test that verifies them to be proficient in English. Therefore, the participants of the present study were acknowledged to be proficient in English despite their label of non-native speakers. Accordingly, the entire participants of the study were supposed to be almost at the same proficiency level.

2.2. Instrument(s)

The questionnaire consisted of 17 questions each of which was responded to as *1) Strongly Agree 2) Agree 3) Not Decided 4) Disagree 5) Strongly disagree* consistent with their evaluation of CVTC. All question items of the scale were constructed by the researcher resting on the theoretical constituents of both contextual vocabulary teaching and constructivism.

2.3. Data collection procedures

Prior to the distribution of the questionnaire to the fourth year students in the ELT Studies Course, CVTC was applied in the course for a period of 14 weeks. In the first week of the course, participants were informed about the academic vocabulary that may most frequently take place in the course and again most frequently interfere with the comprehension of the academic texts. An additional guide-book was also recommended to the students for self-study which covers the most frequently employed basic and advanced academic vocabulary selected in terms of frequency of occurrence. Next, the students were also notified that they would be due to use both thesaurus and English to English dictionaries during the course. Hence, the students were given the opportunity to freely observe the content of the vocabulary that was bound to be applied in the course beforehand.

The application of CVTC rests on using synonyms, providing academic guidance, interaction and game-play. While the students feel free to ask any vocabulary question to the teacher as the guide, they may also refer to dictionaries themselves. In addition to the texts taking part in the books selected for the ELT Studies Course, the synonyms of the vocabulary analyzed in these texts are applied both in the same and different contexts by the teacher. Here, the point is that the teacher plays the role of a target. The students challenge the teacher in that they may ask for instantaneous teacher response concerning the meaning of any academic word and its synonym by heart. On the contrary, they are allowed to freely check out the vocabulary asked by the teacher in their dictionaries. At this point, the teacher should be experienced in teaching vocabulary and capable of listing at least 3 to 5 synonyms of a selected academic word by heart. After all, the teacher is supposed to be capable of both verbalizing and writing the synonyms in different contexts. Thus, in order to apply CVTC it is strongly recommended that the teacher be predominant over the vocabulary content of the selected books for the course.

All in all, following the permission procedure of Selcuk University in the Fall term of 2014-2015, the 40 copies of a two-page questionnaire were distributed to the fourth year students of the English Language and Literature Department of Selcuk University. All of the questionnaires were answered by the students and they were all returned back to the researcher without any loss.

2.4. Data analysis

The first questionnaire constructed for the current study comprised 20 items. However, as a result of the pilot study implemented to 40 fourth- year students of the English Language and Literature Department of Selcuk University, 3 items were discarded from the questionnaire. Then, the scale items were submitted to the evaluation of other experts in the field to provide additional consultancy.

The data analysis of the current study was realized using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 22.0. Both the reliability and the validity of the scale used for the study were measured through statistical procedures separately. The results monitoring the relation between the responses given to the 17 questionnaire items and the students' age, gender and achievement scores, and the most appreciated aspects of CVTC are all submitted in the tables with the abbreviations: number of participants with (N), mean with (Mean), mean difference with (Mean Diff.), standard deviation with (Std. D.), standard error with (Std. Err.), standard error mean with (Std. Err. Mean), standard error difference with (Std. Err. Diff.), F statistics with (F), degrees of freedom with (df), significance (p) value of Levene's Test (Sig.), 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference with (95% Con. Inter. Diff.), the two-tailed p value associated with the t-test with (Sig. (2-tailed)).

2.4.1. Reliability Analysis

The internal consistency level which measures the homogeneity or coherence of the scale was measured through the Cronbach's alpha analysis and the result was .843 reliable. Although item statistics showed that the scale items possessed close mean and standard deviation values, an explanatory factor analysis was carried out to determine the main factors of the scale items. Inter-Item Correlation Matrix showed either positive or negative correlation with absolute minimum and maximum values between 0.013 and 0.564. The items of the scale were exposed to ANOVA with Tukey's Test for Nonadditivity and the results showed that the items possessed additivity (p<0.001). Also, Hotelling's T-Squared Test validated that the scale items possessed homogeneity. Finally, Intraclass Correlation Coefficient criterion was tested and both the internal consistency for items (p<0.001) and the average measure (p<0.001) screened reliable results.

2.4.2. Validity Analysis

Construct validity of the scale was determined via exploratory factor analysis using Principal Component Analysis (PCA). Prior to PCA, the factorability of the scale was measured through the tests; Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity respectively. The KMO result was 0.65, which was acceptable. The Bartlett's test of Sphericity had a significant test value ($p<0.05$), which necessitated an explanatory factor analysis. Then a factor analysis via PCA was carried out to measure the construct validity of the scale. Five factors with eigen values greater than 1 were detected. The factors accounted for the total variance with a value of 67% cumulatively. Each factor accounted for the total variance with the percentages of 29.8 %, 11.1%, 10.2%, 9.3%, 6.6% respectively. However, the Scree Plot singled out the first factor from the others with a sharp decline in the plot. Therefore, the scale turned out to possess a one-factor pattern, which enabled the study to disregard factor rotation process. Instead, the factor analysis was repeated with the fixed number of factor extraction. As a result of the repeated factor analysis all the factors taking part in the Component Matrix were over .30 and the explained percentage of variance was 32.94. This was slightly over the acceptability criterion 30%. Consistent with these results two items were supposed to be either reclaimed or discarded from the scale. Since the study was a psychometric one, the scale items were reclaimed instead of being discarded. In this way, the validity of the scale was preserved.

3. Results

Research Question 1. Is there a statistically significant relation between the students' attitudes towards the technique, and their ages?

As it is indicated in Table 1 it is hard to say age groups and attitudes have strong correlations (m=1.8 for age group 22 and below; m=1.9 for age group 23 and above). The similar mean values represent no difference between the two groups, which means there is no significant correlation between the students' age and attitudes towards CVTC in general.

Table1. Descriptive Statistics for Age and Attitudes

	Age Groups	N	Mean	Std. D.	Std. Err. Mean
Attitudes Mean	22 and below	29	1.8	0.4	0.07
	23 and above	11	1.9	0.5	0.16

Table2. t-test for two Independent Samples in terms of Age

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			t-test for Equality of Means						
Attitudes Mean									
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Err. Diff.	95% Con. Inter. Diff. Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	0.95	0.33	-0.87	38	0.38	-0.13	0.15	-0.45	0.18
Equal variances not assumed			-0.76	14.38	0.45	-0.13	0.18	-0.52	0.24

A careful analysis of Table 2 demonstrates that Levene's Test for Equality of Variances shows no diversity between the variances of the two age groups, which enables t-test for Equality of Means to be taken into consideration and thus, the H_0 –null hypothesis- that assumes no relation between the students' age and attitudes is tested. Since the Sig. (2-tailed) value (0.38) is greater than p value=0.05, the H_0 hypothesis may not be rejected. This signifies that there is no significant correlation between the students' age and attitudes towards CVTC.

Research Question 2. Is there a statistically significant relation between the students' attitudes towards the technique and gender?

In terms of Table 3. no significant correlation between the students gender and their attitudes could be highlighted (m=1.94 for males; m=1.85 for females). The slight difference between the mean values of the two groups represents hardly any difference between the male and the female students. This also means there is no significant correlation between the students' gender and attitudes towards CVTC in general.

Table3. Descriptive Statistics for Gender and Attitudes

Gender of the Participants	N	Mean	Std. D.	Std. Err. Mean
Attitudes Mean				
Male	12	1.94	0.49	0.14
Female	28	1.85	0.42	0.08

Table 4. reveals that Levene's Test for Equality of Variances shows no diversity between the variances of two genders. When the t-test for Equality of Means is checked to decide whether there is a significant relation between the two groups, it makes the H_0 –null hypothesis- that assumes no relation between the students' gender and attitudes be accepted. Since the Sig. (2-tailed) value (0.59) is greater than p value=0.05, the H_0 hypothesis may not be rejected. This denotes that there is no significant correlation between the students' gender and attitudes towards CVTC.

Table4. t-test for two Independent Samples in terms of Gender

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			t-test for Equality of Means						
Attitudes Mean					Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Err. Diff.	95% Con. Inter. Diff.	
	F	Sig.	t	df					
Equal variances assumed								Lower	Upper
	0.03	0.84	0.53	38	0.59	0.08	0.15	-0.23	0.39
Equal variances not assumed									
			0.50	18.62	0.62	0.08	0.16	-0.26	0.42

Research Question 3. Is there a statistically significant relation between the students' attitudes towards the technique and their success?

Table 5. monitors no significant correlation between successful and unsuccessful students (m=1.88 for successful students; m=1.88 for unsuccessful students). The similar mean values represent hardly any difference between the two groups, which means there is no significant correlation between the students' success and attitudes towards CVTC in general.

Table5. Descriptive Statistics for Success and Attitudes

	Successful / Unsuccessful	N	Mean	Std. D.	Std. Err. Mean
Attitudes Mean					
	Successful	19	1.88	0.42	0.09
	Unsuccessful	21	1.88	0.47	0.10

Table 6. indicates that there is no diversity between the variances of two groups in terms of success when Levene's Test for Equality of Variances is checked (Sig. value= 0.41). This necessitates t-test for Equality of Means be taken into consideration. Therefore, the H_0 –null hypothesis- that assumes no relation between the students' success and their attitudes is tested. Since the Sig. (2-tailed) value (0.98) is greater than p value=0.05, the H_0 hypothesis is accepted. This vindicates that there is no significant correlation between the students' success and attitudes towards CVTC.

Table6. t-test for two Independent Samples in terms of Success

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			t-test for Equality of Means						
Attitudes Mean					Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Err. Diff.	95% Con. Inter. Diff.	
	F	Sig.	t	df				Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed									
	0.66	0.41	-0.02	38	0.98	-0.002	0.14	-0.29	0.28
Equal variances not assumed									
			-0.02	37.9	0.98	-0.002	0.14	-0.28	0.28

Research Question 4. Which aspects of the technique were mostly appreciated by the learners?

The results of the research question 4 are given in frequency tables successively. Only the items that reached a percentage over 50% of the participants with the response *1) Strongly Agree* are submitted in frequency tables. In view of the research criterion 50% (20 participants), only three items succeeded the desired level; item 3, item 5, and item 10. Accordingly, the results denote that the majority of the participants (60%) evaluate the most effective side of CVTC to be its functionality in facilitating learning academic vocabulary (f=24). Table 7. monitors both the frequencies and the percentages of item 3: helps to learn academic vocabulary.

Table 7. helps to learn academic vocabulary

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	24	60,0	60,0	60,0
	agree	15	37,5	37,5	97,5
	not decided	1	2,5	2,5	100,0
	Total	40	100,0	100,0	

The second highest percentage (57,5 %) the participants appreciated about CVTC is its amusing aspect when compared to classical vocabulary teaching techniques (f=23). Table 8.demonstrates both the frequencies and the percentages of item 5: amusing.

Table 8. amusing

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	23	57,5	57,5	57,5
	agree	11	27,5	27,5	85,0
	not decided	5	12,5	12,5	97,5
	disagree	1	2,5	2,5	100,0
	Total	40	100,0	100,0	

As for the last highest percentage (52,5%) the participants strongly agree is the facilitator role of CVTC in increasing curiosity (f=21). Table 9. signifies both the frequencies and the percentages of item 10: helps to increase curiosity.

Table 9. helps to increase curiosity

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	21	52,5	52,5	52,5
	agree	15	37,5	37,5	90,0
	not decided	3	7,5	7,5	97,5
	disagree	1	2,5	2,5	100,0
	Total	40	100,0	100,0	

4. Discussion

Based on the findings of the current study, the quantitative data revealed that there was no correlation between the students' age and attitudes towards CVTC. As hypothesized previously the result was consistent with the previously realized several university –level social science studies (Soku, Simpeh, & Osafo-Adu, 2011; Charkins , O'Toole, & Wetzel, 1985; Wetzel, James, & O'Toole, 1982) that report no correlation between the students' attitudes toward instruction technique and age. Correspondingly, our study has detected no correlation specifically between age groups representing four –year university education (either 22 and below or 23 or above at university level) and their attitudes toward CVTC. Of course, this may show diversity when the age level of the target population declines from university level or the subject to be focused is changed (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2009; McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1995; Strozer, 1994; Knudson, 1993; Skehan, 1989).

The field of language teaching covers a great deal of studies concerned with individual differences as a component of which gender appears to be the most prominent one. Research (Norton, & Pavlenko, 2004; Flood, 2003; McMahill, 2001; Sunderland, J., 1992, 1994) indicates that gender has much to do with language teaching/learning as far as achievement is concerned. Still, there is little if any studies implemented regarding the relation between student attitudes and gender, monitoring a significant correlation of these two in the field of language teaching (Kobayashi, 2010; Davis & Skilton-Sylvester, 2004; Sunderland, J., 2000; Ellis, 1994; Oxford & Ehrman, 1992). Nevertheless, as for the findings of the present study, neither male, nor female student attitudes revealed any significant correlation with gender.

Research (Wenden, 2014; Csizér, & Dörnyei, 2005; Zimmerman & Dale, 2001; Cotterall, 1999) signifies that a close relationship of attitudes and achievement in foreign language teaching is frequently existent. On the contrary, the present study reached no significant correlation between student attitudes and achievement. Gardner (1985) explains this occasion asserting the correlation between student attitudes and achievement, albeit its existence, may show diversity in terms of the content of the course or the classification of attitudes under the titles, "educational" or "social" (pp.41-42). This explanation of Gardner (1985) indicates that the correlation between attitudes and achievement would also appear to be non-existent at times depending on the individual differences of the students, teachers or the content of the course alone.

The findings of the current study revealed that three aspects of CVTC were more prevalently appreciated by the students. The majority of the students with 60 % seem to appreciate the

functionality of the technique most prevalently. Then, the second highest appreciated aspect of CVTC turned out to be its amusing property with a ratio of 57,5 % while the third highest appreciated aspect of CVTC vindicated to be its feature of increasing curiosity with a ratio of 52,5% successively. In the light of these findings, a striking difference from the literature of foreign language teaching appears to be the fact that the students attach utmost importance overtly to practicality of the technique although amusement is generally acknowledged to be the major factor of a technique that is preferred by the students in the literature of foreign language teaching (Cameron, 2001). Most probably, the slight difference between these two mostly appreciated properties of the technique would be referred to the university students' more developed cognitive evaluation skills when compared to those of young learners or high school learners. Finally, the third highest appreciated aspect of CVTC denotes that the students also seem to be intrigued by higher-order skill development (whether consciously or unconsciously) that has strong connection with curiosity (Pawlak, 2012).

5. Conclusions

The present study should be evaluated in several limitations concerning its foundations.

Preliminarily, research in the field of statistics as Lenth (2001, p.187) reports (Mace; 1964; Kraemer and Thiemann, 1987, Cohen, 1988; Desu and Raghavarao, 1990; Lipsey, 1990; Shuster 1990; Odeh & Fox, 1991) posits that the sample size of any study is a case of serious discussion. While some research (Comrey & Lee, 1992; Kline, 1979 cited in MacCallum, Widaman, Zhang, & Hong, 1999, p. 84) suggests the sample size either be at a minimum level of 100 or be at least ten times larger than its scale-item number (Kline, 1994), some others may decline this criterion to lower levels such as 50, 30 or even 18 (Willet, 2013; McCrum-Gardner, 2010). The main reason for this occasion stems from the arbitrariness of minimum amount of sample size required for factor analysis. As (Hoyle, 2000) explicates the case, factor analysis, generally defined as "a family of statistical strategies used to model unmeasured sources of variability in a set of score" (p. 465), is used either in a deductive or inductive mode that are designated as the fundamental two types, explanatory and confirmatory factor analyses respectively. When the type of focus is deductive on the way to "test hypotheses regarding unmeasured sources of variability responsible for the commonality among a set of scores" (p. 465), the analysis type is called confirmatory factor analysis (from now on CFA). However, when the same analysis is carried out in an inductive way, it is called explanatory factor analysis. Of the two, CFA is generally acknowledged to be the primarily used type of factor analysis to test the construct validity of empirical studies in the field of statistics. The function of CFA at this point is "to incorporate multiple constructs into a single model and evaluate the pattern of covariances among factors representing the constructs against a pattern predicted from theory or basic knowledge about the relations among the constructs" (Hoyle, 1991, cited in Hoyle, 2000, p. 471). While doing this, it is generally suggested -the larger the sample size is selected, the more precise the results are- rule should be taken into consideration resting on the evidence that "the theoretical distributions against which models (z) and parameters (X^2) are tested – unlike, for instance, the t and F distributions in mean comparisons – do not vary as a function of N" (Hoyle, 2000, p. 472) although he finally admits to the fact that:

Unfortunately, there is no simple rule regarding the minimum or desirable number of observations for CFA. Indeed, any rule regarding sample size and CFA would need to include a variety of qualifications such as estimation strategy, model complexity, scale on which indicators are measured, and distributional properties of indicators. (p. 472)

Therefore, the proportion in between the sample size and the number of the scale items also appears to be arbitrary. In fact, there exist no substantial decisive criterion for the issue save for

suggestions. Then, in the second place, there is not enough precision in the field of statistics as to what kind of tests should be selected while using Likert Scales. Broadly speaking, the identification of Likert Scale items as ordinal or interval in terms of scales of measurement delineates the borders of a study leading the researchers to realize whether parametric or non-parametric tests. Nevertheless, there is research either sides that evaluate Likert Scale items as ordinal or interval (Brown, 2011). Thus, this problematic situation makes it probable both to execute parametric and non-parametric tests with Likert Scales.

Third, it is necessary to evaluate the current study in terms of foreign language context. Hence, the findings of the study may show diversity in ESL environment as more or less effective and beneficial, especially taking four main areas, language aptitude, learning style, motivation, and learner strategies, into consideration (Skehan, 2015).

Ultimately, notwithstanding the limitations submitted heretofore, the current study would be beneficial for projecting upon to what extent the contextual vocabulary teaching and Constructivism can reconcile, especially, in situations where students' attitudes reveal no correlation with their individual differences and success alike. What is more, the study would have implications for further studies in that different age groups such as young learners or different content-based courses would be new cases of investigation as far as contextual vocabulary teaching and Constructivism is concerned.

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Appendix A.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Age: Gender: Female ☐ / Male ☐

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by placing a check mark in the appropriate box.
Thank you for your kind cooperation in advance.

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STUDENTS ATTITUDES TOWARDS "CONTEXTUAL VOCABULARY TEACHING ONSISTENT WITH CONSTRUCTIVIST EPISTEMOLOGY"	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Decided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I find it useful to teach contextual vocabulary in this course as it helps to choose the exact meaning of the word for the text.					
2. I find it useful to teach contextual vocabulary in this course as it helps to analyze complex paragraphs.					
3. I find it useful to teach contextual vocabulary in this course as it helps to learn new vocabulary.					
4. I find it useful to teach contextual vocabulary in this course as it helps to prevent forgetting new vocabulary.					
5. I find it useful to teach contextual vocabulary in this course as it helps to impart the lesson an amusing atmosphere.					
6. I find it useful to teach contextual vocabulary in this course as it helps to share and build information with other people in the lesson.					
7. I find it useful to teach contextual vocabulary in this course as it helps to increase concentration on the lesson.					

STUDENTS ATTITUDES TOWARDS "CONTEXTUAL VOCABULARY TEACHING ONSISTENT WITH CONSTRUCTIVIST EPISTEMOLOGY"	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Decided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8. I find it useful to teach contextual vocabulary in this course as it helps to increase both encouragement and self-esteem.					
9. I find it useful to teach contextual vocabulary in this course as it helps to make inferences for hermeneutics.					
10. I find it useful to teach contextual vocabulary in this course as it helps to increase curiosity.					
11. I find it useful to teach contextual vocabulary in this course as it creates consciousness about the proximity and the distance of two languages.					
12. I find it useful to teach contextual vocabulary in this course as it develops my reading skill.					
13. I find it useful to teach contextual vocabulary in this course as it develops my writing skill.					
14. I find it useful to teach contextual vocabulary in this course as it develops my listening skill.					
15. I find it useful to teach contextual vocabulary in this course as it develops my speaking skill.					
16. I find it useful to teach contextual vocabulary in this course as it reduces my anxiety during the lesson.					
17. I find it useful to teach contextual vocabulary in this course as it helps in teaching how to apply new information to similar texts.					

Öğrencilerin Bağlamsal Kelime Öğretimi Hakkındaki Görüşleri: Yapılandırmacı Bir Değerlendirme

Özet

Mevcut çalışma yabancı dil öğretimi alanında öğrencilerin yapılandırmacılığa uygun olarak bağlamsal kelime öğretimi hakkındaki görüşlerine ışık tutabilmeyi amaçlayan niceliksel bir araştırmadır. Bu sebeple, çalışma dördüncü sınıf üniversite öğrencilerinin yapılandırmacılığa uygun olarak bağlamsal kelime öğretimi hakkındaki tutumları ile bireysel farklılıkları ve başarı notları arasında herhangi bir ilişki olup olmadığını incelemektedir. Bu anlamda çalışmanın amacına uygun olarak vakaya özgü bir tutum ölçeği geliştirilmiştir. Sonuçlar, literatürde yer alan önceki çalışmalarla karşılaştırıldığında yapılandırmacılığa uygun olarak bağlamsal kelime öğretiminin yabancı dil öğretimi açısından yeni faydalar sağlayabileceğini işaret etmektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Bağlamsal kelime öğretimi; Yapılandırmacılık; Dil öğretimi; Öğrenci tutumu; Ölçek geliştirme.

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