# The Impact of Different Context Levels on Vocabulary Learning and Retention

**Elham Zarfsaz**
*Assistant Professor, Tokat Gaziosmanpasa University, Turkey*
 *https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6172-6388*

**Parisa Yeganehpour**
*Assistant Professor, Agri Ibrahim Cecen University, Turkey*
 *https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2982-9085*

**Abstract**
*According to research on new vocabulary development by text, frequent experiences with foreign words, as well as the context in which these words appear, facilitate word learning and retention. The aim of this analysis was to see how context levels, word occurrence rates, and the combination of these variables affected the understanding and retention of unfamiliar words. Both zero, reduced, and high contexts were included in the study. The research included 60 Turkish EFL university students, with 20 in each of the three situations. The target words were the same for all learners in each condition. The high informative context was discovered that increasing word occurrences had significant effects on both productive and receptive knowledge of meaning while increasing word occurrences had significant effects on both productive and receptive knowledge of word type. The influence of frequent experiences with new words on vocabulary learning was only seen in the more comprehensive sense. It is realistic to provide learners with new words in high context to trigger vocabulary acquisition and retention.*
**Keywords: Vocabulary, Context clues, EFL learners, Retention**

## Introduction

Learners should master the skills of listening, communicating, reading, and writing, as well as the sub-skills of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, to become fluent in English. Vocabulary has become increasingly important as the focus on communicative language teaching (CLT) has increased in recent decades (Russell, 1961). Vocabulary is regarded as one of the most crucial aspects of language instruction. Richards (1976) refers to the importance of vocabulary in any language by asserting that, unlike grammatical competence, which is limited, learning vocabulary even continues in adulthood. According to Coady and Huckin (1997), "vocabulary is central to language acquisition and of critical importance to the typical language learner" (p. 5).

Nation (2001) claims that "learners would need at least 95% coverage of the running words in the input to gain reasonable comprehension and to have reasonable success at guessing from context" (p. 114). Ghadessy (1998) asserts that for enhancing learners' production of sentences and phrases, lexical knowledge plays a more essential role than their structural and grammatical knowledge because without vocabulary knowledge, learners will be unable to produce and comprehend complicated units of language.

Huckin and Bloch (1993) refer to the importance of vocabulary in reading by mentioning that "second-language readers rely heavily on vocabulary knowledge and that a lack of vocabulary knowledge is the largest obstacle for second language readers to overcome" (p. 154). Laufer (1998) refers to the significance of vocabulary knowledge in writing and Joe (1995) in listening and

speaking tasks. The findings of the above-mentioned researchers imply that good second or foreign language readers, writers, speakers, and listeners are the ones who know much more vocabulary. Beck et al., (2008) also refer to the strong correlation between vocabulary knowledge and text comprehension and the prominent place of vocabulary instruction in literacy programs as well as L2 teaching.

Perfect knowledge of grammar or pronunciation is insufficient for meaningful L2 communication. Without the knowledge of words, meaningful communication will be hindered (McCarthy, 1990). Allen (1983) states that getting a native-like mastery over a language for a second or foreign language learner entails learning thousands of words. McCarthy (1990) asserts that meaningful communication in an L2 occurs only by mastery over a wide range of words.

Schmitt (2001) & Thornbury (2002) refer to using context clues provided by the text as the most useful strategy for understanding a text and guessing the meaning of the words. "There is no meaning without context. There's always a context for language. What we may consider 'no context' for language material is itself a context and will affect the interpretation of it" (Rivers, 1981, pp. 231-232). Read, and Chapelle (2001) believe that vocabulary knowledge is more than the knowledge of words out of context; in other words, they believe that the importance of vocabulary is measured by the linguistic context in which they are used since the context will affect the interpretation of the words. As a consequence, the aim of this research was to see how different degrees of context (zero, decreased, and maximum context) affected Turkish upper-intermediate EFL learners' vocabulary learning and retention.

**Literature Review**

Vocabulary has received a variety of interest, ranging from the grammar translation approach that relies on memorizing a lengthy list of terms to more modern methods that focus on words more explicitly. Despite their small scale, words, according to Zhan-Xiang (2004), are like the bricks that make up a building's strength. Effective communication, according to researchers, is dependent on vocabulary, which is one of the most critical aspects of language

(Oxford & Scarella, 1994). Vocabulary is needed to improve proficiency in the target language (Boers & Lindstromberg, 2008). L2 students can develop their vocabulary skills both formally and informally in the classroom, as well as by everyday contact with others and out-of-class experiences (Ghezelseflou & Seyedrezaei, 2015).

Scholars have differing opinions about the value of vocabulary. According to Rivers (1981), It is impossible to teach vocabulary. It can be introduced, illustrated, and incorporated into various events, but individuals must learn it. In the past, vocabulary was undervalued and misused often in literature (Judd, 1978; Nunan, 1991; Richards, 1976; Zimmerman, 1997). Most schools have concentrated on grammar and spelling rather than vocabulary (Fernandez et al., 2009). Emphasis on vocabulary began in the late twentieth century, according to Schmitt (2000). In other words, vocabulary instruction has been central to English language instruction over the past two decades (Ozgul & Abdulkadir, 2012; Morra & Camba, 2009).

There is a distinction between understanding a word and using it, according to McCarthy (1984), and knowing a word does not imply that it can be used in a variety of ways. According to Ellis (1994), language usage requires cognitive learning. As a result, understanding the meaning of words does not happen in isolation because it requires a socio-cultural environment such as a school, group, or home. "Literacy is a social activity," according to Scott et al., (2008), so students learn scholarly language through social experiences as part of the learning society (p. 197).

Therefore, a successful teacher should provide learners with various opportunities to practice and use language by designing appropriate instructional programs. According to Ellis (1998), "the teacher creates an atmosphere in which students can construct knowledge and reflect on what they are learning". As Hong (2008) states, developing vocabulary in a second/foreign language occurs in the four-stage sequence similar to the first language learning, which can vary from person to person due to different factors, namely, individual differences, interest, motivation, and learning environment. The sequence is as follows:

- **Silent/preproduction stage:** at this stage, learners resort to their first language as a means of communication.
- **Non-verbal/early production stage:** after being in the L2 context for a while, learners start communicating by gestures. Although they cannot speak at this stage, they are active listeners of L2 sounds and are struggling to comprehend the conveyed message.
- **Telegraphic speech stage:** at this stage, learners use two or three content words or formulaic phrases for communicating basic and essential messages.
- **Productive language-use stage:** finally, at this stage, learners form whole sentences and can use the language creatively to make sentences productively.

Vocabulary is a key in second language learning since it mediates language comprehension and production. In addition, vocabulary knowledge is necessary for comprehension, especially for the oral one (Tyler, 1990). Despite its great importance, there was little emphasis on vocabulary for years. However, researchers focus more on strategies and techniques for teaching vocabulary (Abdolmanafirokni & Karimi, 2013; Barzegar & Rahimi, 2012; Sadeghi & Farzizadeh, 2013).

Sadeghi and Nobakht (2014) looked into the impact of meaning on vocabulary acquisition and retention of students. One familiar word, one unfamiliar/new word, two familiar words, one unfamiliar/new word, and three familiar words, one unfamiliar/new word were used in the research by 47 experienced EFL learners in three separate contexts. The findings of the one-way analysis revealed that a context of two or three well-known words is too limited to have distinct semantic functions.

Furthermore, Ahour and Abbasi Dogolsara (2015) wanted to see how teaching multiple-choice items and sentence-writing exercises affected the vocabulary learning of EFL students. Sixty students were chosen and split into two classes for this reason. Following therapy, both groups were offered the same version of the vocabulary test used in the pre-test as a post-test to ensure that the treatment was successful. The sentence-writing task was found to be more successful than the multiple-choice task.

As a practice, Ebrahimian and Nabifar (2016) attempted to compare the effects of three vocabulary learning techniques on EFL learners' immediate and delayed vocabulary memory, namely word-part strategy, word-card strategy, and context-clue strategy. The study enlisted the participation of 90 students divided into three classes. PET was used to choose 20 students from each class to participate in the study. The three intact classes were then allocated to one of three experimental groups at random. When the findings were analyzed, it was discovered that the context-clue approach performed significantly better than the other strategies.

In a similar vein, Valizadeh and Ahangari (2016) looked into the impact of meaning on idiom learning. To do this, participants were divided into two study categories: extended-context and limited-context groups, as well as a control or decontextualized group. Group 1 learned idioms by listening to short stories that included the target idioms, Group 2 learned idioms by listening to single sentences that included the target idioms. The test group learned idioms by decontextualizing the target idioms. The findings of the immediate and delayed post-tests revealed that expanded contexts influenced the participants' idiom learning and retention significantly.

In addition, Ciftci and Uster (2009) looked at two methods for teaching vocabulary: teaching vocabulary in detail and teaching vocabulary by including word meanings. The subjects were given a pre-test to ensure that they were familiar with all of the terms and a post-test after the procedure to assess the efficacy of the procedures. Data analysis revealed that the two groups performed similarly well, indicating that both strategies should teach vocabulary pieces.

Even though both teachers and students recognize the role of vocabulary in studying English, most students remain passive in their vocabulary acquisition. This is attributable to students' attempts to acquire the native language equivalents of words rather than their meaning. The majority of them are familiar with them, but they are reluctant to apply them in real-life circumstances (Baleghizadeh & Ashoori, 2010).

According to reading (2000), in real-life communicative cases, learners are confronted with

many unknown terms about which they must devise strategies to guess the definitions. As a result of focusing solely on the native language equivalent of vocabulary, learners cannot comprehend authentic communication or use the words for practical purposes. Furthermore, students find teachers' interpretations and meanings of terms tedious, and as a result, they are unable to improve their language acquisition skills. Furthermore, with the short time allotted in class, their only opportunity to learn new vocabulary is through their textbooks or teachers' speeches, but they cannot get their point out and make it known.

According to Barimani and Naraghizadeh (2013), short-term memory difficulties, repeated mispronunciations, and a lack of user comprehension were caused by students' inability to learn new terms in a single class. Given the students' difficulties in mastering vocabulary skills, the aim of this study was to look into the impact of teaching vocabulary in different degrees of contexts (zero, decreased, and maximum context) on EFL learners' vocabulary learning and retention by answering the following research questions:

1. Does teaching vocabulary in different degrees of contexts (zero, reduced, and high context) affect Turkish upper-intermediate EFL learners' vocabulary learning?
2. Does teaching vocabulary in different degrees of context (zero, reduced, and high context) affect vocabulary retention in Turkish upper-intermediate EFL learners?

**Method**
**Participants**

The participants in this sample were 60 Turkish upper-intermediate EFL students at a Turkish state university learning English as a foreign language. Students from three intact upper-intermediate groups were originally chosen. Almost 65 students, ranging in age from 18 to 24, decided to participate in this study. Nelson 350 conducted a test to see whether the groups were homogeneous. All participants were given a questionnaire (Flower & Coe, 1976) to ensure that they were homogeneous, and 60 were chosen. After determining the participants' age, and lexical proficiency level, the researchers divided them into

three groups: zero context (N=20), reduced context (N=20), and high context (N=20).

**Instruments**

To collect the necessary data for the analysis, several data collection instruments were used during the data collection process. The below are the instruments:
• Proficiency test (Nelson)
• Pilot test
• Pre-test
• Post-test
• Delayed post-test
• Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1995)
• Top-Notch series (Summit 1A) by Saslow & Ascher (2012)

**Proficiency Test (Nelson)**

The researchers utilized the valid and reliable Nelson 350 A test (Flower & Coe, 1976) for homogenizing the participants' proficiency levels. This test contained 50 multiple-choice items.

**Pilot Test**

There was a need to verify the test's reliability and validity since the pre-test was planned by the researchers and was then shuffled and used as the post-test and postponed post-test. As a result, the test was piloted on 15 learners comparable in age and proficiency level to the study's key participants. The Cronbach's alpha review revealed that the test was trustworthy (r = 0.86). In addition, one simple item and three difficult items were updated based on the findings of the item review, and the final version of the measure was included in the report. The researchers had two qualified experts in applied linguistics review the test to ensure its material validity.

**Pre-test, Post-test, Delayed Post-test**

The researchers created a vocabulary test based on the treatment's vocabulary list, which was used as a pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test. There were 30 elements on this survey, and test-takers had 40 minutes to complete it. This test came in three different formats: a matching test, a multiple-choice

test, and a cloze test. The pre-test had ten elements in a matching test format in the first segment. In this analysis, the vocabulary was tested in a zero sense using a matching measure. The second portion of the pre-test consisted of ten multiple-choice elements used to assess vocabulary in a more limited context. The third section of the pre-test had ten items in cloze test used to test the vocabulary in a high context; accordingly, the participants were required to read the passage or paragraphs and complete ten blanks by the choices provided for them. They could either mark the right choice by circling it or putting a checkmark beside the right choice.

As was mentioned before, the pre-test was later used as the post-test and delayed post-test; however, the order of sections, words, questions, and distracters were different in the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test. The first section of the post-test included the cloze test, the second section matching test and the last section was a multiple-choice test. In addition, the order of all words, questions, and distracters was different from the pre-test. The first section of the delayed post-test included the multiple-choice test, the second section, cloze test, and the last section was the matching test. Moreover, the order of all words, questions, and distracters were different from the pre-test and post-test.

**Using Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1995) and Saslow and Ascher's (2012) Top Notch Series (Summit 1A)**

The vocabulary used in matching and multiple-choice tests were chosen from Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1995). The articles and paragraphs used for the close tests were selected from the Top Notch series (Summit 1B) by Saslow & Ascher (2012). In the treatment sessions, definitions of the vocabulary used in the zero context and the disconnected sentences used in the reduced context group were chosen from the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1995). The articles and paragraphs used for the high context group were selected from the Top Notch series (Summit 1B) by Saslow & Ascher (2012).

**Data Collection Procedures**

Three upper-intermediate intact classes from a Turkish state university were chosen to participate in the study, with 65 students ranging in age from eighteen to twenty-four. To begin, all of the participants were given the Nelson proficiency test to homogenize them and exclude outliers. Five outliers with scores of one standard deviation above and below the mean were excluded from the sample, and 60 people were chosen as participants. Following that, participants in three intact classes were randomly allocated to one of three study groups: a zero context group (N=20), a reduced context group (N=20), or a high context group (N=20).

There was a need to verify the reliability and validity of the test and items since the pre-test was planned by the researcher and was then shuffled and used as the post-test and delayed post-test. As a result, the test was piloted on 15 learners who were close in age and proficiency level to the study's actual participants. The final version of the pre-test was created based on the findings of the pilot test and included in the analysis. After the proficiency and pilot assessments, the learners were given a pre-test to see how different degrees of words affected their vocabulary acquisition and retention.

Saslow and Ascher's (2012) Top Notch (Summit 1B) series, which is the key book taught in the JDLI, included a list of vocabulary to be used in the courses. To teach the vocabulary, the first category (zero meaning) was given the vocabulary concept without any reference. The terminology was described in disconnected sentences in the second group (reduced context). Finally, the terminology was presented in high contexts, such as a paragraph, in the last category (high context).

The same test that was used as a pretest was used as a post-test to verify the acquisition of vocabulary that was learned during the treatment sessions, to check the future success of both classes after ten sessions of treatment. The same questionnaire was used as a delayed post-test three weeks after the post-test to check the retention of vocabulary learned during the treatment sessions.

**Design**

A pre-test, an immediate and delayed post-test, and treatment were all part of the analysis. Since all 60 students presented at an upper-intermediate level

were drawn from intact classes and were randomly allocated to three categories of zero, reduced, and complete contexts, it was a quasi-experimental analysis. Since this research studied the impact of different degrees of context (zero, decreased, and high context) on vocabulary learning and retention of Turkish upper-intermediate EFL learners, the sum of context was viewed as the independent and learners' vocabulary learning and retention as the dependent variable. As all of the subjects were at an upper-intermediate level at the study time, the proficiency level was used as a control variable.

## Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test ratings to identify any major category discrepancies in the pre-test, post-test, and

delayed post-test. Finally, post-test and delayed post-test ratings were compared using Tukey's posthoc analysis to see any substantial variations between the different degrees of contexts (zero, reduced, and high context).

## Results

This section outlines and elaborates on the findings of the investigation pertinent to the preceding research questions.

## Quantitative Data Analysis for the Pre-test

Before the procedure, a one-way Analysis of Variance was used to screen for any potential relevant differences between the participants' scores in all three classes (High context, Reduced context, and Zero context). The findings are seen in Tables 1 and 2.

### Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for the Pre-test

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | 95% Confidence Interval of Mean | | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | |
| High | 20 | 13.6957 | 2.09837 | .43754 | 12.7882 | 14.6031 | 10.00 | 18.00 |
| Reduced | 20 | 14.0000 | 1.21395 | .27145 | 13.4319 | 14.5681 | 12.00 | 16.00 |
| Zero | 20 | 14.2105 | 2.46259 | .56496 | 13.0236 | 15.3975 | 12.00 | 20.00 |
| Total | 60 | 13.9516 | 1.97050 | .25025 | 13.4512 | 14.4520 | 10.00 | 20.00 |

The mean score and standard deviation of the High context, Reduced context, and Zero context classes, according to the descriptive data, were: M = 13.69, SD = 2.09; M = 14.00, SD = 1.21 and M = 14.21, SD = 2.46 respectively. Table 2 summarizes the findings of a one-way ANOVA run on the pretest scores of classes to search for any potential differences in vocabulary competence between groups.

According to the statistics in the below table, $F_{(2,58)} = .35$, P = 0.70, there was no statistically meaningful difference in pretest scores for the three classes at the p.05 stage. The groups were compared in pairs using the Tukey post-hoc test to ensure

no gap between them. The results of a one-by-one analysis of the groups' average performance are seen in Table 3.

### Table 2: Analysis of Variances of the Pretest Scores of All the Groups

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2.827 | 2 | 1.414 | .356 | .702 |
| Within Groups | 234.027 | 58 | 3.967 | | |
| Total | 236.855 | 60 | | | |

### Table 3: Multiple Comparisons of Groups Using Tukey Post-Hoc Test

| (I) context type | (J) context type | | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| High | dimension3 | Reduced | -.30435 | .60892 | .872 | -1.7684 | 1.1597 |
| | | Zero | -.51487 | .61744 | .684 | -1.9993 | .9696 |

| | | High | .30435 | .60892 | .872 | -1.1597 | 1.7684 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reduced | dimension3 | Zero | -.21053 | .63804 | .942 | -1.7445 | 1.3235 |
| Zero | dimension3 | High | .51487 | .61744 | .684 | -.9696 | 1.9993 |
| | | Reduced | .21053 | .63804 | .942 | -1.3235 | 1.7445 |

Comparing the group means in pairs and the significance level of each pair demonstrated that there was no significant difference among the groups.

**Quantitative Data Analysis for the Post-test**

The post-test data were analyzed using ANOVA and a post hoc test to answer the first research questions, the findings of which are summarized in Tables 4 and 5. The descriptive statistics for all of the groups' post-test scores are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of the Score in the Post-test**

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | |
| High | 20 | 25.8261 | 2.56997 | .53588 | 24.7147 | 26.9374 | 18.00 | 30.00 |
| Reduced | 20 | 27.3000 | 3.62883 | .81143 | 25.6017 | 28.9983 | 17.00 | 30.00 |
| Zero | 20 | 22.6842 | 2.49561 | .57253 | 21.4814 | 23.8871 | 20.00 | 30.00 |
| **Total** | 60 | 25.3387 | 3.44485 | .43750 | 24.4639 | 26.2135 | 17.00 | 30.00 |

The mean score and standard deviation for the High context, Reduced context, and Zero context classes, respectively, were M = 25.82, SD = 2.56; M = 27.30, SD = 3.62; and M = 22.68, SD = 2.49, as seen in the table. The findings revealed a disparity in the groups' mean ratings, so an ANOVA and a Tukey posthoc test were used to determine whether or not this difference was important. The findings of the ANOVA test on the data are shown in Table 5.

Based on the statistics revealed in the table 5, $F(2,59) = 12.56$, $P = 0.00$, There was a statistically important gap in post-test scores between the three classes at the $p < .05$ stage. The scores of the groups were matched in pairs using the Tukey posthoc test

to determine which group outperformed the others. Table 6 shows the one-by-one comparison of the groups in the post-test.

**Table 5: Analysis of Variances of the Post-test Scores of All the Groups**

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 216.277 | 2 | 108.139 | 12.569 | .000 |
| Within Groups | 507.610 | 59 | 8.604 | | |
| **Total** | 723.887 | 61 | | | |

**Table 6: Pairwise Comparisons of the Different Context Type in Post-test**

| (I) context type | (J) context type | | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| High | dimension3 | Reduced | -1.47391 | .89680 | .236 | -3.6300 | .6822 |
| | | Zero | 3.14188* | .90933 | .003 | .9556 | 5.3281 |
| Reduced | dimension3 | High | 1.47391 | .89680 | .236 | -.6822 | 3.6300 |
| | | Zero | 4.61579* | .93968 | .000 | 2.3566 | 6.8750 |
| Zero | dimension3 | High | -3.14188* | .90933 | .003 | -5.3281 | -.9556 |
| | | Reduced | -4.61579* | .93968 | .000 | -6.8750 | -2.3566 |
| * - The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level | | | | | | | |

According to the significant degree of the contrast of the classes in pairs and the mean differences, the high context group (p=.00) and reduced context group (p=.00) outperformed the zero context group, and there was no meaningful discrepancy between the results of students in high and reduced contexts (p=0.23).

**Quantitative Data Analysis for the Delayed Pre-test**

A similar procedure used for post-test data was used to find the answer to the second question. A Delayed Post-Test was offered to all three groups, and the findings were analyzed using SPSS statistical tools to verify retention of vocabulary items learned by the participants as well as to examine the effectiveness of the given treatments. The descriptive figures of the Delayed Post-Test participants' scores are shown in Table 7.

**Table 7: Descriptive Statistics of the Scores in the Delayed Post-test**

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | |
| High | 23 | 25.1739 | 2.51635 | .52470 | 24.0858 | 26.2621 | 21.00 | 30.00 |
| Reduced | 20 | 27.0000 | 3.29274 | .73628 | 25.4590 | 28.5410 | 17.00 | 30.00 |
| Zero | 19 | 20.6842 | 2.92599 | .67127 | 19.2739 | 22.0945 | 18.00 | 30.00 |
| **Total** | 62 | 24.3871 | 3.86389 | .49071 | 23.4059 | 25.3683 | 17.00 | 30.00 |

Based on the descriptive statistics outlined in Table 7, it was found that the mean scores of the three classes differed in the delayed post-test. The mean score and standard deviation for the High context, Reduced context, and Zero context classes, respectively, were M = 25.17, SD = 2.51, M = 27.00, SD = 3.29, and M = 20.68, SD = 2.92, as seen in the table. An ANOVA and Tukey posthoc experiments were used to ensure that the observed discrepancy between groups was meaningful. Tables 8 and 9 present a summary of the findings.

According to Table 8, $F(2,59) = 24.29$, P = 0.00, there was a statistically important disparity in delayed post-test scores between the three classes at the p.05 mark. A Tukey posthoc test was used to compare the groups in pairs to find the most effective group in teaching vocabulary, similar to the post-test. Table 9 displays the results.

**Table 8: Analysis of Variances of the Delayed Post-test Scores of All the Groups**

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 411.300 | 2 | 205.650 | 24.295 | .000 |
| Within Groups | 499.410 | 59 | 8.465 | | |
| **Total** | 910.710 | 61 | | | |

**Table 9: Pairwise Comparisons of the different context type in Delayed Post-test**

| (I) context type | (J) context type | | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| High | dimension3 | Reduced | -1.82609 | .88952 | .109 | -3.9647 | .3125 |
| | | Zero | 4.48970* | .90196 | .000 | 2.3212 | 6.6582 |
| Reduced | dimension3 | High | 1.82609 | .88952 | .109 | -.3125 | 3.9647 |
| | | High | 6.31579* | .93206 | .000 | 4.0749 | 8.5567 |
| Zero | dimension3 | Full | -4.48970* | .90196 | .000 | -6.6582 | -2.3212 |
| | | Reduced | -6.31579* | .93206 | .000 | -8.5567 | -4.0749 |
| * - The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level | | | | | | | |

When the results of the delayed post-test in pairs were compared, it was discovered that the high context (p=.00) and reduced context (p=.00) classes outperformed the zero context group; however, no substantial difference was seen between the success of students in high and reduced contexts (p=0.10).

## Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this study was to see how using contexts (zero, reduced, and high contexts) affected the vocabulary learning and retention of Turkish upper-intermediate EFL learners. The results revealed that teaching vocabulary in contexts (zero, decreased, and high) had a substantial impact on upper-intermediate EFL learners' vocabulary learning and retention. In both the post-test and delayed post-tests, learners in high and reduced contexts performed slightly better than those in zero context. It was discovered that having context improves the performance of Turkish EFL learners at the upper-intermediate level as opposed to when no context is given. This suggests that understanding and remembering the meaning of words is much easier when presented in context.

It's informative to equate the findings of this study to those of previous ones by having different levels of context. The present findings are consistent with those of Khakpour Kermani and Seyyedrezaei (2015), Kang (1995), Khuwaileh (1995), Fulkink and De Glopper (1998), Rodriguez and Sadowski (2000), Baumann et al., (2003), and Redouane (2004). The results of the current research, like those of these studies, showed that having an explanation improved participants' success in guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words or learning and recalling them.

Furthermore, the delayed post-test findings supporting the high context group's dominance backed up Schouten-Van Parreren (1985), Haastrup (1991), and Mondria (1996). They conclude that context will aid learners in inferring the meaning of unfamiliar terms and improving retention. Contextual hints, according to Anderson (1990), Ellis (1995), and Hulstijn (2001), create connections between the unfamiliar word and idiom, their meanings, the context, and the learner's background information. The results support Schmitt's (2002) assertion that guessing a word's meaning from background cues is the most effective strategy of all.

The current observations, however, contradict those of Schatz (1984), Prince (1996), Dempster (1987), and Laufer and Shmueli (1997), who found that context can have little to no impact on vocabulary gains. Similarly, Sadeghi and Nobakht (2014) found that increasing the number of existing words without increasing the linguistic meaning of the words had little impact on the acquisition and retention of new vocabulary items in their research. Furthermore, no substantial gap was observed between the background approach and other methods in assisting learners to guess the meaning of unfamiliar terms or learn them in other research undertaken by Mc Danial and Pressley (1989) and Ciftci and Uster (2009). For instance, McDaniel and Pressley (1989) showed that the keyword method outperformed the meaning hint method in remembering vocabulary meanings.

The findings of this research may have pedagogical consequences for both teachers and students, as well as text developers. Teachers will use the findings of this analysis to determine the necessary amount of meaning to use when delivering lexical objects to students of different degrees of language proficiency. When learners are presented with enough contextual cues, they can feel at ease and inspired to learn and remember the meaning of the vocabularies. The findings will also be used by test developers to create the most appropriate materials with the correct meaning for learners with various proficiency levels.

For a variety of factors, the current research was bound to have certain limitations. The study's participants became one of the study's main limitations. Environmental extraneous factors may have influenced the participants' output because they were chosen from different groups at the same institute and thus were taught in different settings. Among the environmental variables, we can refer to "noise, temperature, adequacy of light, time of day, and seating arrangements" (Brown, 1995). Another downside of this research was the length of time it lasted. The therapy lasted just ten sessions because the researcher had to follow the university's program and other manuals rather than the ones used for the current report. Furthermore, since this research only concentrated on vocabulary instruction, the findings cannot be applied to other language abilities

and components such as grammar, listening, or communicating.

## References

Allen, Virginia. *Techniques in Teaching Vocabulary: Teaching Techniques in English as a Second Language*. Oxford University Press, 1983.

Baumann, James F., et al. "Vocabulary Tricks: Effects of Instruction in Morphology and Context on Fifth-Grade Students' Ability to Derive and Infer Word Meanings." *American Educational Research Journal*, vol. 40, no. 2, 2003, pp. 447-494.

Beck, Isabel L., et al. *Creating Robust Vocabulary: Frequently Asked Questions and Extended Examples*. Guilford, 2008.

Brown, H. Douglas. *Language Assessment: Principles and Classroom Practices*. Longman, 2004.

Ciftci, Hatime, and Sema Uster. "A Comparative Analysis of Teaching Vocabulary in Context and by Definition." *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2009.

Fukkink, R.G., and K. de Glopper. "Effects of Instruction in Deriving Word Meaning from Context: A Meta-Analysis." *Review of Educational Research*, vol. 68, no. 4, 1998.

Gairns, Ruth, and Stuart Redman. *Working with Words: A Guide to Teaching and Learning Vocabulary*. Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Harmer, Jeremy. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Longman Group, 1993.

Hong, Yang. "On Teaching Strategies in Second Language Acquisition." *US-China Education Review*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2008, pp. 61-67.

Huang, Shufen, and Zohreh Eslami. "The Use of Dictionary and Contextual Guessing Strategies for Vocabulary Learning by Advanced English-Language Learners." *English Language and Literature Studies*, vol. 3, no. 3, 2013.

Huckin, Thomas, and Joel Bloch. "Strategies for Inferring Word-Meanings in Context: A Cognitive Model." *Second Language Reading and Vocabulary Acquisition,* edited by T Huckin, et al., Ablex, 1993, pp. 153-178.

Kang, Sook-Hi. "The Effects of a Context-Embedded Approach to Second Language Learning." *System*, vol. 23, no. 1, 1995, pp. 43-55.

Khuwaileh, Abdullah. "Words and Context in EFL." *Grazer Linguistics Studien*, 1995, pp. 27-36.

Laufer, Batia. "The Development of Passive and Active Vocabulary in a Second Language: Same or Different?" *Applied Linguistics*, vol. 19, no. 2, 1998, pp. 255-271.

Laufer, Batia. "What's in a word that makes it Hard or Easy: Some Intralexical Factors that affect the Learning of Words." *Vocabulary: Description, Acquisition and Pedagogy*, edited by N. Schmitt and M. McCarthy, Cambridge University Press, 1997.

McCarthy, Michael. *Vocabulary*. Oxford University Press, 1990.

McDaniel, Mark A., and Michael Pressley. "Keyword and Context Instruction of New Vocabulary Meanings: Effects on Text Comprehension and Memory." *Journal of Educational Psychology*, vol. 81, no. 2, 1989, pp. 204-213.

Meara, Paul. "Vocabulary Acquisition: A Neglected Aspect of Language Learning." *Language Teaching*, vol. 13, 1980, pp. 221-246. (1980).

Morgan, C.L., and Wilbert L. Bailey. "The Effect of Context on Learning a Vocabulary." *Journal of Educational Psychology*, vol. 34, no. 9, 1943, pp. 561-565.

Nash, Hannah, and Margaret Snowling. "Teaching New Words to Children with Poor Existing Vocabulary Knowledge: A Controlled Evaluation of the Definition and Context Methods." *International Journal of Language & Communication Disorder*, vol. 41, 2006.

Nassaji, Hossein. "L2 Vocabulary Learning from Context: Strategies, Knowledge Sources, and their Relationship with Success in L2 Lexical Inferencing." *TESOL Quarterly*, vol. 37, no. 4, 2003, pp. 645-670.

Newton, Jonathan. "Task-based Interaction and Incidental Vocabulary Learning: A Case Study." *Second Language Research*, vol. 11, no. 2, 1995, pp. 159-177.

Oxford, Rebecca L. *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher should Know*. Newbury House, 1990.

Paribakht, T. Sima, and Marjorie Wesche. "Vocabulary Enhancement Activities and Reading for Meaning in Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition." *Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition: A Rationale for Pedagogy,* edited by James Coady and Thomas Huckin, Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 174-200.

Prince, Peter. "Second Language Vocabulary Learning: The Role of Context versus Translations as a Function of Proficiency." *The Modern Language Journal*, vol. 80, no. 4, 1996, pp. 478-493.

Read, John, and Carol A. Chapelle. "A Framework for Second Language Vocabulary Assessment." *Language Testing*, vol. 18, 2001, pp. 1-32.

Read, John. *Assessing Vocabulary*. Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Redouane, Rabia. *Assessing Instructional Methods in L2 French Vocabulary Acquisition: Guessing-from-context Method versus a Word-List Method*. 2004.

Rivers, Wilga M. *Teaching Foreign Language Skills*. University of Chicago Press, 1981.

Rodriguez, Maximo, and Mark Sadowski. "Effects of Rote, Context, Keyword, and Context/Keyword Methods on Retention of Vocabulary in EFL Classrooms." *Language Learning Journal*, vol. 50, 2000, pp. 385-412.

Russell, David H. *Children Learn to Read*. Newbury House, 1961.

Sadeghi, Karim, and Aysan Nobakht. "The Effect of Linguistic Context on EFL Vocabulary Learning." *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, vol. 14, 2014, pp. 65-82.

Saslow, Joan, and Allen Ascher. *Top Notch*. Pearson Education, 2012.

Schatz, Elinore Kress. *The Influence of Context Clues in Determining the Meaning of Low-Frequency Words in Naturally Occurring Prose*. University of Miami, 1984.

Schmitt, Norbert. *Vocabulary in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press. 2001.

Thornbury, Scott. *How to Teach Vocabulary*. Pearson Education Limited, 2002.

Yule, George. *The Study of Language*. Cambridge University Press, 1996.

**Author Details**

**Dr. Elham Zarfsaz**, *Assistant Professor, Tokat Gaziosmanpasa University, Turkey*

**Dr. Parisa Yeganehpour**, *Assistant Professor, Agri Ibrahim Cecen University, Turkey*
*Email ID: Yeganehpour.parisa@gmail.com*