

ISSN (print): 2588-5731 E-ISSN: 3060-6535

The Impact of Continuation Task and Reading Plus Continued Cloze Test on Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners' Vocabulary Learning

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Received Date: 11/07/2024

Accepted Date: 03/12/2024

Pp: 155-174

Abstract

This paper tries to investigate the impact of Continuation Tasks and Reading comprehension plus close test (RCC) on vocabulary development among Iranian intermediate EFL learners. A sample of 47 female participants aged 16 to 25, whose native language was Azerbaijani Turkish, was selected via the Oxford Placement Test. The subjects, divided into two intact classes through convenience sampling, were assigned to two experimental groups: one receiving instruction through Continuation Tasks (n = 23) and the other through RCC (n = 24). Vocabulary teaching was based on a teacher-made Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS), which included 120 words, of which 22 unfamiliar words were taught throughout the semester. After 12 sessions of instruction, a post-test was used to evaluate the effectiveness of the treatments. The findings revealed that the group taught using Continuation Tasks significantly outperformed the reading comprehension plus close test group in vocabulary retention and contextual usage. Statistical analysis of ANCOVA indicated that the Continuation Task group demonstrated superior improvements in both recalling and applying vocabulary. The study highlighted the effectiveness of Continuation Tasks in promoting deeper cognitive engagement and active interaction with new vocabulary, indicating a shift away from traditional memorization-focused methods toward task-based approaches that better address learners' practical language needs.

Key Words: Close test, EFL Learners, Reading Comprehension Task, Continuation Task, Vocabulary Learning

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Introduction

Vocabulary is one of the elements that acts as a core of the language and connects the four language skills (Hu et al., 2021; Macaro, 2022). Vocabulary knowledge is essential in language learning (Akbarian, 2010). Researchers (e.g., Ruutemets, 2005; Smith, 2019; Wang, 2012) focus on vocabulary learning through input enhancement. *Vocabulary* has been defined as the meaningful part of a language that the learner and the speaker of the language need to comprehend and use in the four skills of the language (Lewis, 1997; Nation, 2001). Lexical knowledge is an essential requisite for gaining mastery of language skills. Vocabulary learning is an inseparable part of a language. In order to communicate appropriately, learners should have a suitable amount of lexical knowledge (Schmitt, 2014). Liu, et al. (2024) demonstrated that morphological awareness influences reading comprehension across a wide age range. Carter and Hoffman (2024) suggest that comprehenders are sensitive to shifts in the topic of discourse and that they down regulate predictive processing when they encounter incoherence in the discourse.

Pulido and Hambrick (2008) found that vocabulary knowledge indicates a person's vocabulary quality. It helps to understand and express meaning in writing (Leki & Carson, 1994; Milton, 2013). Out of the theory of language acquisition variables, one core of language instruction is that language testing and teaching are integral parts of EFL classrooms (Johnson, 2017). Teaching and testing give teachers many insights into the teaching and learning processes they pursue (Shohamy, 2020). Similarly, the cloze method is frequently employed to assess students' reading comprehension. As a good test, it should also be a worthwhile teaching tool that can be applied to everyday reading instruction across all ability levels. Considering this, it is stated that cloze tests may be particularly beneficial in helping young learners develop one of the most crucial abilities they can learn: the capacity to use syntactic and semantic cues in reading (Zhang et al., 2022). Although the cloze method is frequently mentioned when measuring reading comprehension, it could also be more beneficial to consider as a teaching strategy (Buettner, 2011). Learning vocabulary through different methods and tasks has attained much attention since it can make learning easier (Donmus, 2010).

Reading Plus Continued Cloze Test (RCC Test) is an evaluation tool to assess reading comprehension and vocabulary development. It integrates elements from reading comprehension tests with cloze exercises and typically includes the following components. Participants are provided a full text or passage to read, which helps them grasp the overall content and context. After engaging with the passage, it is again shown with specific words or phrases omitted, creating blanks that participants must fill in. These missing elements are vital for comprehending the passage and are chosen based on their importance to the text's meaning or the vocabulary being tested. In specific versions of this assessment, learners must continue writing based on the passage or the cloze exercise. This may involve completing sentences, extending paragraphs, or crafting responses that effectively incorporate the newly learned vocabulary (Kroll, 2001). "Continuous tasks provide learners integration of

skills: reading, discussion and with an open-ended text and require them to complete it in writing most consistently and logically possible" (Jiang & Xu, 2016, p.133). A continuation task is an instructional activity where learners receive a sentence or text missing certain words or phrases. The learners' task is to complete the sentence or text by adding appropriate words or phrases that fit the context and meaning.

A Reading plus Continued Cloze Task (RCC task) is a learning method to enhance reading comprehension and vocabulary retention. In this approach, learners begin by reading a passage, followed by a cloze activity, a task where specific words are omitted from the text. Learners must use contextual clues to complete the blanks. The continued component of the task involves going beyond the essential cloze exercise, where learners further engage with the text, either by reading additional portions or by expanding on the content through writing. By integrating reading comprehension and vocabulary practice, the task encourages learners to deduce meanings and apply the vocabulary they have learned meaningfully (Nation, 2001).

Review of Literature

Jiang and Tu (2016) examined the impact of continuation tasks on vocabulary learning. Continuation tasks, which involve completing or extending a given text, engage learners actively with the language. They believe that tasks impact learners' ability to use newly acquired vocabulary within contextual settings effectively.

The cloze test was also confirmed by Sattar's (2022) research with Iraqi EFL undergraduates. This study aimed to assess how well EFL students' overall English language ability might be predicted using the cloze test. To do this, a sample of EFL students was given two different kinds of multiple-choice cloze exams and several additional tests as criteria. According to analyses, the cloze tests and the criteria measures showed moderate to significant correlations. The cloze tests strongly loaded on the one item the principal components analysis revealed as the solution. Therefore, these results were seen as proof of the cloze test's validity. Tremblay (2011) studied the cloze test to assess adult learners' general French language competency. Based on the fact that the proficiency groups varied significantly regarding one or more linguistic background factors and that the results obtained by the respondents increased with years of instruction, they concluded that the cloze test appeared valid. Second, they discovered evidence that the cloze test may be a valuable tool for accurately assessing the proficiency of L2 learners at a particular classroom level. Thirdly, they declared that the cloze test was realistic and could be administered practically as it took L2 students less than 35 minutes to finish. Overall, cloze tests are not a novel approach to assessing L2 proficiency. From the 1970s to the present, these tests have been the focus of significant assessment inquiry. There are different points of views about continuation and RCC tasks. In the Iranian context, they are new and few studies have done on them. However, considering both of them at the same time and focusing on vocabulary is something new. Therefore, researchers have decided to find out the effect of

continuation task and RCC tasks on developing vocabulary among Iranian EFL learners. Besides, learners have been chosen from a bilingual context in Iran.

Research Question

This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. Does the continuation task have any effect on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning?
2. Does the RCC task have any effect on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning?
3. Is there any significant difference between Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning receiving continuation task versus RCC task?

Methodology

Participants

The study participants included forty-seven learners who were chosen from the list of fifty-eight nonrandom sampling. They were studying English as a foreign language at Asre Jadid Language Institute in Tabriz, East Azerbaijan. Their age ranged from 14 to 18. They were bilingual students whose first language was Azerbaijani Turkish. The participants were at an intermediate level of language proficiency based on the scores of the previous exams. However, to be sure about their proficiency level, the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was used for learners whose scores fell one standard deviation above and below the standard deviation were selected as the study sample. Then, two intact classes were randomly assigned into two experimental groups.

Instruments and Materials

OPT

This 60-item test was used to check the homogeneity of the study participants.

Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS)

The Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) test consisted of 130 words extracted from the vocabulary used. The text was designed based on Paribakht and Wesche (1993) and consisted of two parts: vocabulary was given, and in front of it options were given. Learners were required to complete the test in eighty minutes. The purpose of administering this test was to see whether participants knew the given words or not to exclude known words from the treatment phase. Accordingly, the words known by students were excluded, and the remaining words were taught in the two experimental groups. Based on the test, learners knew 25 words, so they were excluded from the treatment phase. Words were selected from the North Star 3 reading section written by (Laurie Barton & Carolyn Doupaquie)

Post Test

VKS was used as the post-test. However, in the posttest test, just the words taught in the class were included in the posttest, and words known by learners in the posttest were excluded from the test to see what happened to their vocabulary development, so the posttest included just one hundred five words. The test reliability was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha, which showed an

index of 0.78. Two testing professors from Islamic Azad University checked its validity.

Procedure

The study began with administering the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) to an initial group of 58 learners at Asre Jadid Institute to ensure uniformity among the learners. 46 learners who got $\pm 1SD$ over the mean score were selected. Fell-out Participants continued attending sessions and receiving the same treatment as the other learners, however, their scores were not included. Participants were randomly divided into two groups. Both groups were administered a pretest measuring reading comprehension. This pretest established the learners' initial reading comprehension abilities, setting a baseline for comparison after the treatment phase. Before the treatment sessions, the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) was given to the learners to identify unfamiliar or partially known vocabulary items as a pre-test. These words became the focus of the lessons during the intervention. The VKS helped the researcher determine which vocabulary needed to be emphasized in the instruction. The treatment lasted eight weeks, with two 90-minute sessions each week, totaling 16 sessions. In each session, 40 minutes were dedicated to focused vocabulary instruction. Both groups used the American File textbook to maintain consistency in the teaching materials. However, the type of task used during the sessions differed between the two groups.

Group 1: RCC (Reading for Comprehension and Completion) Task

In this group, the session began with teacher-guided reading activities. Learners practiced skimming, scanning, and reading for detailed comprehension. After completing the reading, students were given a cloze test where they had to fill in the blanks with vocabulary words from the reading passage.

Group 2: Continuation Task

The second group focused on continuation tasks as their primary instructional activity. First, participants read a passage. Then, students were asked to complete the text by inserting appropriate words, phrases, or sentences that matched the context. This activity was designed to foster collaboration and encourage critical thinking about vocabulary use in context. Both experimental groups had the same vocabulary instruction, but the tasks differed in approach and execution.

Following the completion of the 16-session treatment, a posttest was conducted. This test contained 105 words selected through the VKS before the treatment began. The posttest assessed the learners' retention and understanding of the target vocabulary, testing their receptive and productive knowledge. Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess test reliability. It showed an index of 0.78. Two testing professors from Islamic Azad University checked its validity.

Design of the Study

This research enjoyed a quantitative design. This study conducted a quantitative analysis to find the significant impact of outlining versus summary writing strategies in the post-reading tasks among Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension and the possible significant difference between students' final achievements. Thus, the study was quasi-experimental due to the violation of

random sampling – including two experimental groups and pre-and post-tests. A convenience non-probability design was used for sampling. This means that the sample was selected nonrandomly. Furthermore, the researcher referred to only one high school in Tabriz. The independent variable was vocabulary tasks (RCC and continuation), and the dependent variable was the groups' performance in vocabulary knowledge on the posttest.

Data Analysis

SPSS version 21 was used to analyze the data. First, descriptive statistics were assessed. ANCOVA was used to compare the scores of two groups in vocabulary learning.

Research Findings

Results of Proficiency Test (OPT)

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of OPT Test Scores

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PET Proficiency Test Scores	58	30.00	60.00	48.25	3.78
Valid N (listwise)	58				

According to Table 1, (M=48.25, SD=3.78). So, 46 participants who got ± 1 SD over the mean were chosen.

Normality Distribution Test for the Pretest and Post-test Vocabulary Learning between Two Groups

Table 2: One-Sample Kolmogorov Smirnov Test for Pre-test and Post-test VKS Scores

		Pretest Vocabulary Knowledge Scale Scores	Post-Test Vocabulary Knowledge Scale Scores
Continuation Task	Groups		
	N	23	23
	Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	198.35
		Std. Deviation	375.63
			15.16
			32.13
	Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.321
		Positive	.120
RCC Task		Negative	.100
			-.321
			-.120
	Test Statistic		.321
	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.120
			.200 ^{c,d}
			.200 ^{c,d}

Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	195.20	340.13
	Std. Deviation	14.27	20.21
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.241	.170
	Positive	.141	.095
	Negative	-.241	-.170
Test Statistic		.141	.170
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200 ^{c,d}	.802 ^c

a. Test distribution is Normal.

As is shown in Table 2, the significant value of the intermediate participants' pretest and post-test VKS scores in the continuation task and RCC task groups were higher than .05. It means that Iranian intermediate participants' pretest and post-test VKS scores had a normal distribution.

Results of the Pretest Vocabulary Learning

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Pretest VKS Scores

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
VKS Scores	Continuation Task	23	198.35	15.16
	RCC Task	23	195.20	14.27

As it is clear from Table 3, in the continuation task group (M=198.35, SD=15.26), whereas the RCC group (M=195.20, SD= 14.27).

Table 4: Independent Samples T-test for Pre-test VKS Scores

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- taile d)	Mean Differen ce	Std. Error Differen ce	95% Confidenc e Interval of the Difference	
Prete st VKS Scor es	Equal varianc es assume d	21.2 50	.21 7	2.83 7	44	.159	3.93	4.08	Low -76	Upp er 30.7 6

Equal variances not assumed	2.36 8	40.1 04	.158	3.93	4.90	-.71	30.7 1
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As is accessible from Table 4, $t(44) = 2.837$, $p = .159 > .05$. It means there was no difference between groups in the pre-test.

Results of the First Question

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Pre- and Post-Tests VKS Scores in the Continuation Task Group

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Pair 1	Post-Test VKS Scores	375.63	23	32.13
	Pretest VKS Scores	198.35	23	15.16

As Table 5 indicates, in the post-test scores of the *Continuation Task Group* ($M=375.63$, $SD= 32.13$), but in the pre-test ($M=198.35$, $SD=15.16$).

Table 6: Paired Samples T-test for Pretest and Post-test VKS Scores in the Continuation Task Group

		Paired Differences							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Post-Test Vocabulary Knowledge Scale Scores - Pretest Vocabulary Knowledge Scale Scores	177.28	16.97	1.66	160.41	200.72	24.339	22	.022

Table 6 revealed that $t(22) = 24.339$, $p = .022 < .05$. It means continuation tasks had a significant effect on vocabulary learning.

Results of the Second Question

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics of Pre- and Post-tests VKS Scores in the RCC Task Group

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Pair 1	Post-Test VKS Scores	340.13	23	20.21
	Pretest VKS Scores	195.20	23	14.27

According to Table 7, post- test in the RCC task group (M=340.13, SD= 20.21), in the pre-test (M=195.20, SD=14.27).

Table 8: Paired Samples T-test for Pre- and Post-Tests VKS Scores in the RCC Task Group

		Paired Differences							
				Std.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				Sig. (2- tailed)
		Mean	Deviation	Error	Lower	Upper	t	df	
Pair 1	Post-Test Vocabulary Knowledge Scale Scores - Pretest Vocabulary Knowledge Scale Scores	144.93	5.94	.79	135.54	170.05	20.557	22	.000

Table 8 reveals that $t(22) = 20.557$, $p = .000 < .05$. Therefore, the RCC task had a positive effect on learning vocabulary.

Results of the Third Question

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics of Post-test VKS Scores in the Continuation Task and RCC Task Groups

Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Continuation Task	375.63	32.13	23
RCC Task	340.13	20.21	23
Total	357.87	26.17	46

Table 9 shows in the post-test in the continuation task group (M=375.63) and in the RCC task group (M= 340.13).

Table 10: Homogeneity of Regression Slopes for the Post-test VKS Scores

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1427.815 ^a	3	479.288	.761	.358
Intercept	12739.623	1	12739.623	42.834	.000
Groups	50.129	1	50.129	.104	.649
Pretest VKS Scores	14.325	1	11.292	.089	.557
Groups * Pretest VKS Scores	22.444	1	22.444	.247	.409
Error	19407.369	42	430.404		
Total	32258306.000	46			
Corrected Total	21145.134	45			

a. R Squared = .715 (Adjusted R Squared = .641)

Table 10 reveals that $F=.247$, $P=.409>.05$. Therefore, the homogeneity of regression slopes was met.

Table 11: Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Error Variances for Post-Test VKS Scores

F	df1	df2	Sig.
3.202	1	45	.197

Table 12: One-way between Groups Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) for post-test VKS scores

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	1420.121 ^a	2	558.811	1.327	.276	.057
Intercept	19721.211	1	22721.381	53.960	.000	.551
Pretest VKS Scale Scores	16.316	1	16.316	.331	.365	.141
Groups	843.301	1	843.301	1.806	.000	.427
Error	18527.613	43	444.082			

Total	4638606.00	46
Corrected Total	18235.654	45

a. R Squared = .807 (Adjusted R Squared = .784)

Table 12 reveals that there was a significant difference between the two groups since $p=.000$.

Discussion

The acquisition of vocabulary has a critical role in learning a language, with effective vocabulary teaching methods being essential for learners, particularly among Iranian EFL students who often face challenges in utilizing vocabulary appropriately in context. Traditional teaching methods, which focus on rote memorization without meaningful engagement, have proven insufficient, leading to passive learning experiences and a lack of vocabulary retention. Furthermore, Iranian high school curricula tend to neglect vocabulary instruction, resulting in students struggling to apply what they have learned. This study tries to address the impact of different task types specifically, Continuation Tasks and RCC (Reading plus Continued Cloze) Tasks on vocabulary learning, ultimately promoting a more dynamic and effective approach to vocabulary acquisition.

This research aimed to compare the effectiveness of Continuation Tasks and RCC Tasks on vocabulary learning. The findings show that learners who engaged in the Continuation Task demonstrated superior vocabulary retention and contextual usage compared to their RCC counterparts. Statistical analysis showed improvement in the Continuation Task group's ability to recall vocabulary items and apply them meaningfully in various contexts. This aligns with the prediction that well-designed continuation tasks foster deeper cognitive processing; enabling learners to better understand and retain vocabulary.

Conversely, while the RCC Task group exhibited notable short-term memorization capabilities, their performance in applying vocabulary flexibly in different contexts was significantly lower. The data suggested that although repetition and mechanical practice aided initial recall, it did not translate into effective vocabulary use in communicative situations. A comparative analysis between the two groups confirmed that the Continuation Task group performed better than the RCC Task group in assessments measuring the contextual application of vocabulary. The results underscore the importance of task design in vocabulary instruction, highlighting that tasks promoting active engagement and contextual learning yield better outcomes for language learners.

The findings present that the Continuation Task is more effective in fostering both retention and meaningful use of vocabulary. Various theoretical frameworks provide strong support for the findings of this study concerning the impact of continuation tasks on vocabulary learning among Iranian EFL students. Depth of Processing Theory (Craik & Lockhart, 1972) argues that the more deeply information is processed, the better it is learned. Continuation tasks push learners to engage with vocabulary in a meaningful and contextually

appropriate way, fostering deeper cognitive engagement than methods like rote learning. This supports the study's conclusion that learners in the continuation task group demonstrated better vocabulary retention and more effective use of vocabulary in context.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) highlights the importance of meaningful communication in the learning process. As an output-oriented activity, continuation tasks encourage learners to engage in authentic language production, which is viewed as more useful for vocabulary learning than more passive approaches, such as those used in RCC tasks. The study's findings confirm that continuation tasks promote active use of vocabulary, which leads to improved retention and contextual application.

Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) posit that tasks need greater cognitive attempt and motivation to yield superior vocabulary learning outcomes. Continuation tasks likely demanded higher levels of cognitive engagement, particularly through contextualizing words, which contributed to enhanced retention. This corresponds with the study's observation that learners in the continuation task group demonstrated better vocabulary acquisition.

Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) contends that learning occurs through social interaction and that using language in meaningful contexts fosters deeper learning. The communicative and interactive nature of continuation tasks may have supported learners in internalizing new vocabulary, contributing to better long-term retention and application.

Lastly, the Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1985) suggests that producing language forces learners to process it more thoroughly. Continuation tasks require learners to actively produce language, which reinforces vocabulary learning by encouraging recall and application in practice. The study's findings align with this hypothesis, showing that continuation tasks led to superior vocabulary retention and contextual usage. Together, these theories explain why continuation tasks were more effective than RCC tasks in developing vocabulary learning.

The present study's findings are in line with previous research. Jiang & Tu's (2018) study confirmed the usefulness of continuation tasks in enhancing vocabulary learning. Their research indicated that tasks requiring students to produce language in context led to better retention, as the active engagement encouraged deep processing of vocabulary items. This correlation highlights the consistent facilitative role that continuation tasks play in language acquisition across different contexts and language groups. Similarly, research by Lantolf and Thorne (2007) emphasizes the significance of sociocultural interaction in language learning, showing that tasks promoting contextual learning are more beneficial in vocabulary retention and usage.

Moreover, Wang and Wang (2015) mention the role of alignment between reading materials and learners' writing. Their work reaffirmed that well-designed continuation tasks promote deeper cognitive processing; allowing learners to connect newly acquired vocabulary with prior knowledge and experiences. This engagement aligns with Jiang & Chen's (2015) conclusion that continuous writing enhances accuracy and complexity, as

students utilize vocabulary within relatable and meaningful contexts, thereby reinforcing their learning. Such findings suggest that not only the type of task but also its design significantly impacts language outcomes.

The present study found that the Continuation Task group exhibited better long-term retention of vocabulary, consistent with findings from Zhang's (2016) research, which documented the effectiveness of continuation tasks in promoting sustainable learning outcomes over time. Zhang observed that tasks enabling students to use vocabulary in various contexts lead to improved retention rates, thereby promoting not only immediate recall but also lasting comprehension. This underlines the long-term benefits associated with tasks that encourage active engagement and the contextual integration of vocabulary into the learner's linguistic repertoire. The ability to recall and use vocabulary in diverse contexts is crucial for effective communication, underpinning the importance of task design in vocabulary learning pedagogy.

Lim and Mohtar (2011) explored different assessment formats rather than direct instructional methodologies. They concentrated on the utility of the cloze test as a measure of ESL proficiency, demonstrating a strong relationship between cloze test performances and standardized assessments like TOEIC. This primary focus on assessment methods illustrates a contrasting context and purpose of the present study's exploration of teaching techniques. The emphasis on testing rather than instructional practices may limit the applicability of findings to classroom settings, particularly when trying to design more effective vocabulary acquisition strategies. Moreover, where the present study suggests that the RCC Task group exhibits better short-term memorization but struggles with contextual application, it diverges from findings in studies that reported only moderate short-term benefits from cloze testing. For instance, Sattar's (2020) research focused exclusively on the validity of the cloze test as a measurement tool, not differentiating between types of tasks but emphasizing the tool's reliability. This highlights a gap in understanding how different instructional approaches might produce varying results in proficiency, reinforcing the notion that more focus is needed on how methodologies can directly impact language learning outcomes. Another study that its results support the findings of this research is Jiang and Chen (2015) examined the effects of continuation tasks on the performance and vocabulary development of learners studying English. Continuation tasks, which involve completing or extending a given text, are employed to engage learners actively with the language. The results of data analysis revealed that tasks impact learners' ability to effectively use newly acquired vocabulary within contextual settings.

Another divergence can be observed in the focus on syntactic complexity. The present study did not explicitly measure the impacts on syntactic structures, which were a notable focus in Wang and Wang's (2015) research. Their studies indicated that continuation tasks could develop the learning of complex syntactic structures. Their research demonstrated that students engaged in continuation tasks produced more complex sentences and utilized sophisticated grammatical structures more frequently than those engaged in simpler tasks. This highlights a dimension of language learning not

explored in the current investigation, suggesting a potential limitation in the present study's approach. Concentrating solely on vocabulary acquisition, it overlooks how syntactic complexity and vocabulary knowledge interact during language learning.

This finding underscores the pivotal significance of vocabulary learning among Iranian EFL learners, who encounter specific challenges. Traditional instructional approaches, which often emphasize rote memorization, fail to support long-term vocabulary retention. In Iranian educational settings, vocabulary teaching is often overlooked in high school programs, leaving students unable to apply their vocabulary knowledge effectively in practical situations. To address these shortcomings, the study investigates the effects of two distinct task types Continuation Tasks and Reading plus Continued Cloze (RCC) Tasks on vocabulary learning. The results demonstrate that Continuation Tasks are significantly more beneficial in aiding learners' vocabulary retention and contextual application. Learners who participated in the Continuation Task group performed better in recalling and utilizing vocabulary across various contexts compared to those in the RCC group.

The advantage of the Continuation Task can be linked to its demand for deeper cognitive engagement, prompting students to interact with vocabulary more meaningfully. This method encourages a more active and immersive learning experience, moving beyond simple memorization to promote stronger vocabulary retention and comprehension. The study's findings suggest that Continuation Tasks are a more effective strategy for vocabulary acquisition, equipping learners with better tools for real-world language use.

Conclusion

This research aimed to compare the effect of continuation tasks and RCC on vocabulary development. 47 participants via OPT were chosen. They were in two intact classes, so the convenience sampling method was used. 23 were considered as the first experimental group, and 24 were considered as the second experimental group. All of the learners were female. They were within the age group ranging from 16-25 years old. Their native Language was Azerbaijani Turkish. In order to teach vocabulary via Continuation task and RCC, learners had teacher-made VKS that consisted of 120 words; twenty-two of them were unknown by learners, so they were taught during the semester; in the third session, learners after 12 sessions of treatment had their posttest. The findings show the learners who had received continuation tasks outperformed the RCC group.

This study emphasizes the necessity of implementing more effective vocabulary teaching strategies, especially for Iranian EFL learners who frequently face challenges with vocabulary retention and appropriate contextual usage. The comparison between Continuation Tasks and RCC Tasks demonstrated that learners involved in Continuation Tasks exhibited significantly better retention of vocabulary and were more proficient in using the words in context. The statistical analysis further highlighted that the Continuation Task group showed marked improvements in both recalling and

applying vocabulary meaningfully, surpassing the performance of the RCC Task group.

These findings indicate that Continuation Tasks, by promoting deeper cognitive engagement and encouraging active interaction with new vocabulary, provide a more effective method for vocabulary learning. It focuses on the shortcomings of traditional, memorization-focused approaches, advocating for task-based methods that facilitate meaningful language use. This approach not only addresses the practical language needs of learners but also presents a solution to the gaps in Iranian high school curricula, offering a more relevant and impactful approach to vocabulary acquisition. Several key factors help explain why learners in the Continuation Task group outperformed those in the RCC Task group:

Continuation Tasks require learners to engage more actively with new vocabulary by using it in meaningful contexts, such as constructing sentences or creating narratives. This type of cognitive involvement helps to build stronger mental associations between words and their meanings, leading to improved retention and usage. In contrast, RCC Tasks focus more on repetition and mechanical completion, which fosters only surface-level memorization.

Continuation Tasks encourage learners to apply newly learned vocabulary in various contexts, which reinforces learning through meaningful practice. By incorporating these words into sentences or stories, learners are more likely to internalize them. On the other hand, RCC Tasks, while effective for reading comprehension practice, may not provide the same level of active, contextual vocabulary usage, limiting their overall effectiveness.

Continuation Tasks provide opportunities for learners to personalize their learning by generating their sentences or stories. This personalization deepens their understanding of vocabulary and gives learners a sense of ownership over their learning, which is less present in the more standardized approach used in RCC Tasks. Continuation Tasks naturally embed vocabulary into wider contexts, allowing learners to practice words in ways that mirror real-life language usage. This helps learners understand how vocabulary functions in different situations. RCC Tasks, however, often present vocabulary in more isolated or controlled environments, limiting learners' exposure to how words are used in more varied and authentic settings. Continuation Tasks, which involve more active and personalized engagement with vocabulary, are more likely to lead to long-term retention. Learners don't just memorize words temporarily but practice them in meaningful ways that strengthen long-term memory. In contrast, the repetitive nature of RCC Tasks tends to support short-term memorization but does not necessarily ensure long-term retention.

These factors collectively explain why learners who completed Continuation Tasks showed greater improvements in vocabulary retention and the ability to apply vocabulary effectively in context compared to those who participated in RCC Tasks. The results align with the expanding research on task-based language teaching (TBLT), demonstrating that continuation tasks, which involve learners creating or extending content based on reading material, serve as a productive tool for vocabulary acquisition. This indicates that

including such tasks in EFL curricula may promote better retention and application of new vocabulary, allowing students to engage in more creative and contextualized language use.

Continuation tasks' success suggests that tasks requiring learners to produce language, like storytelling or expanding texts, significantly enhance vocabulary learning. This has important consequences for EFL teachers, motivating them to incorporate more activities that encourage student output rather than limiting instruction to comprehension-based exercises. While RCC tasks emphasize understanding the text, continuation tasks appear to strike a balance between input (reading) and output (speaking/writing). The takeaway here is that a combination of both task types could lead to more effective vocabulary learning, as students benefit from comprehending new words in context (through RCC tasks) and using them in meaningful ways (through continuation tasks). Continuation tasks inherently allow learners to customize their language production based on personal interests, creativity, and perspectives. This can heighten student engagement and motivation, fostering a deeper connection to the language. Consequently, instructors might consider incorporating more learner-centered activities that offer students the freedom to apply new vocabulary in ways that resonate with them.

For curriculum designers, it focuses the integrating both RCC and continuation tasks into EFL programs. Continuation tasks, in particular, should be featured more prominently in textbooks and other educational resources, as they promote deeper processing of vocabulary. Moreover, resources that guide students through creative tasks can help them practice new vocabulary. Considering the bilingual learners, who speak Azerbaijani Turkish as their first language and Persian as their second, the study emphasizes the potential benefits of these tasks in multilingual classrooms. EFL teachers working in similar bilingual or multilingual environments can draw on these findings to support vocabulary development in students who are navigating multiple languages.

Future research could explore whether the advantages of continuation tasks extend beyond vocabulary learning to other language skills. Additionally, examining how different learner characteristics (e.g., proficiency level, learning style) interact with task types could provide further insight into more personalized and effective language teaching strategies.

It is suggested to investigate the sustained impact of continuation and RCC tasks on vocabulary retention. A longitudinal approach, monitoring learners' vocabulary progress over an extended period (months or years), may offer valuable insights into the longevity of the acquired vocabulary. It is better to focus on comparing continuation and RCC tasks with alternative task-based methods, such as gap-fill exercises, role-plays, or problem-solving tasks. This would help determine which approach most effectively supports vocabulary development. Varying Proficiency Levels: Since this research targeted intermediate learners, It is recommended that subsequent studies explore how these tasks perform with learners at different proficiency levels (beginner or advanced), investigating whether the effectiveness of these tasks varies across

different stages of language acquisition. Given the specific cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Azerbaijani Turkish and Persian) of the participants, It is suggested to examine whether the findings hold true in diverse linguistic and cultural contexts, offering a comparative perspective.

It is better to look at how technology, such as AI-driven platforms, mobile apps, or digital storytelling, might modify or enhance the impact of continuation and RCC tasks in promoting vocabulary acquisition. It is suggested to explore how teacher mediation and feedback influence the success of continuation and RCC tasks. Analyzing whether learners benefit more from teacher-guided or independent task completion could be particularly insightful. It is recommended to increase the adoption of blended learning, future studies could assess how continuation and RCC tasks can be adapted for hybrid learning environments (combining online and in-person instruction), examining their impact on vocabulary acquisition in these contexts. These suggestions could contribute to a broader understanding of task-based approaches in EFL vocabulary learning, helping to identify more effective instructional strategies.

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