



The Role of Forums in Enhancing Vocabulary Acquisition in English as Foreign Language Classrooms

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effectiveness of online forum-based collaborative learning versus traditional instructional methods for vocabulary acquisition among English as a foreign language learners. Twenty-one first-year translation and interpreting students participated in a comparative study examining two distinct vocabulary teaching approaches. For tourism vocabulary, students engaged in collaborative forum activities comprising writing descriptive texts and responding to peers' posts using 15 target lexical items. For media vocabulary, students received traditional instruction through individual exercises and instructor-led activities. The delayed assessments revealed significant differences in vocabulary retention. Students demonstrated a 62% lexical utilization rate following forum-based instruction compared to 35% following traditional methods, representing a 75.5% improvement. The forum-based approach facilitates functional lexical acquisition with appropriate semantic and pragmatic deployment. These findings support sociocultural theory and the interaction hypothesis, suggesting that collaborative forum environments create effective digital zones of proximal development, where meaningful peer interactions enhance vocabulary learning. This study provides empirical evidence that asynchronous online forums significantly outperform conventional vocabulary instruction by promoting deeper lexical processing through collaborative meaning negotiation.

KEYWORDS

EFL vocabulary acquisition; online forums; collaborative learning; computer-assisted language learning (CALL); digital language education; sociocultural theory.

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary acquisition is widely recognized as a cornerstone of language proficiency in the English as a foreign language (EFL) context (Nation, 2020). In today's digitally connected world, the integration of technology into language education has transformed traditional approaches to vocabulary instruction and acquisition (Zou et al., 2022). Among the myriad technological tools available to language educators, online forums have emerged as promising platforms for enhancing vocabulary learning outcomes among EFL students (Çakmak & Erçetin, 2018; Min, 2021). These asynchronous communication environments provide learners with opportunities to engage with language in meaningful contexts, facilitating incidental vocabulary acquisition while simultaneously fostering explicit vocabulary learning through peer-to-peer interactions (Sun & Yang, 2015).

Thus, vocabulary's importance in language acquisition cannot be overstated. Researchers have consistently identified vocabulary knowledge as a critical predictor of overall language proficiency (Schmitt et al., 2020). Nation (2020) asserted that learners must know approximately 98% of the words in a text to achieve adequate comprehension, highlighting vocabulary's central role in language mastery. Despite its recognized importance, vocabulary instruction often remains inadequately addressed in many traditional EFL classrooms, where time constraints and pedagogical approaches may limit meaningful vocabulary engagement opportunities (Alqahtani, 2015; Graves et al., 2019).

In recent years, the integration of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) has shown significant promise in addressing these limitations (Mahdi, 2018). Specifically, online forums represent a subset of CALL tools that align with sociocultural theories of language learning by emphasizing authentic communication and collaborative knowledge construction (Ziegler, 2016). Magfira et al. (2024) suggested that online forums provide rich vocabulary development environments by enabling learners to encounter, negotiate, and produce language in authentic contexts. However, despite the growing body of research on technology-enhanced language learning, systematic investigations into the specific mechanisms through which online forums contribute to vocabulary development in EFL contexts remain limited (Chen & Shih, 2019).

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is grounded in several complementary theoretical frameworks that illuminate online forums' potential value in vocabulary acquisition. First, sociocultural theory (Lantolf & Thorne, 2018; Vygotsky, 1978) emphasizes the social nature of language acquisition as a collaborative knowledge construction process facilitated through meaningful interactions. Within this framework, online forums serve as digital zones of proximal development, where learners can scaffold each other's vocabulary acquisition through peer feedback, collaborative problem-solving, and shared meaning-making (Nathan & Heath, 2018; Ziegler, 2016).

Additionally, this study draws on connectivism (Siemens, 2015), which conceptualizes learning as a networked process occurring across digital environments. From this perspective,

online forums represent nodes within broader learning networks, enabling vocabulary acquisition through connections among learners, content, and linguistic resources (Al-Shehri, 2011). Forum interactions' asynchronous nature allows for reflective engagement with vocabulary because learners have the time to process, research, and thoughtfully respond to language input (Huang, 2017).

This study also considers the interaction hypothesis (Long, 2020), which posits that language acquisition is facilitated through meaningful interactions. In online forums, learners engage in meaning negotiation, receive comprehensible input, and produce modified output, all processes linked to enhanced vocabulary acquisition (Zeng & Takatsuka, 2009). Moreover, this study integrates task-based language teaching principles (Ellis, 2018), viewing forum-based activities as authentic tasks promoting incidental vocabulary learning while engaging learners in meaningful communication.

Finally, dual-coding theory (Clark & Paivio, 2016), which suggests that information processed through multiple channels (e.g., verbal and visual) enhances learning outcomes, informs this study. Modern online forums often incorporate multimedia elements that facilitate multimodal vocabulary learning by integrating text, images, audio, and video (Cheng & Zhang, 2020).

The past decade has witnessed a growing body of research examining the relationship between participation in online forums and vocabulary development in EFL contexts. Chen and Shih's (2019) systematic review identified several key benefits of forum-based learning for vocabulary acquisition, including increased exposure to authentic language use, contextual vocabulary learning opportunities, enhanced learner motivation, and development of metacognitive strategies for vocabulary learning. Çakmak and Erçetin (2018), who observed significant improvements in vocabulary retention among university-level EFL students participating in structured forum activities compared with those in traditional classroom settings, supported these findings.

The nature of forum interactions appears particularly conducive to vocabulary acquisition. Min (2021) found that forum discussions' asynchronous nature allowed learners time to process unfamiliar vocabulary and research meanings and incorporate new lexical items into their own posts, leading to deeper processing and better retention. Similarly, Zeng and Takatsuka (2009) observed that the meaning negotiation that occurs in forum discussions facilitates the acquisition of both intentionally taught vocabulary and incidentally encountered lexical items.

Moreover, research has suggested that online forums may address certain limitations of traditional vocabulary instruction. Zou et al. (2022) noted that forums provide opportunities for repeated exposure to vocabulary in varied contexts, addressing the need for multiple encounters with new words. Such encounters are a requirement for effective vocabulary acquisition (Webb & Nation, 2017). Further, forums have been shown to reduce anxiety and

increase willingness to communicate among EFL learners, potentially removing affective barriers to vocabulary use (Yan, 2023).

Researchers have also identified the challenges and limitations of forum-based vocabulary learning. Alhamami (2017) noted that without careful scaffolding and monitoring, forum discussions may remain superficial, limiting opportunities for deep vocabulary processing. Cheng and Zhang (2020) observed that technical limitations, varying digital literacy levels, and inconsistent participation patterns undermine the effectiveness of forum-based activities. These findings highlight the importance of thoughtful strategies when integrating online forums into vocabulary instruction.

Research Gaps and Significance

Despite growing interest in forum-based vocabulary learning, several notable gaps remain in the existing literature. First, while numerous studies have documented positive correlations between forum participation and vocabulary gains (e.g., Çakmak & Erçetin, 2018; Min, 2021), few have systematically examined the specific mechanisms through which forums facilitate vocabulary acquisition. There is a need for research illuminating the cognitive, social, and pedagogical processes underlying effective vocabulary learning in online forums (Chen & Shih, 2019).

Second, significant methodological variation characterizes the existing research base, with studies differing in terms of implementation approaches, assessment tools, and analytical frameworks (Zou et al., 2022). This heterogeneity complicates efforts to synthesize the findings and develop evidence-based guidelines for practice. More consistent methodological approaches would enhance the comparability of results across studies and strengthen the empirical foundation of forum-based vocabulary instruction.

Third, much of the available research has focused on university-level EFL learners, with fewer studies examining younger learners or learners in nonacademic contexts (Yan, 2023). Given technology's increasing integration into K-12 education and the growing emphasis on lifelong language learning, there is a need for research exploring forum-based vocabulary learning's effectiveness across diverse age groups and educational settings.

Fourth, while researchers have begun to explore newer forum technologies and platforms' potential (Mahdi, 2018), many of them have examined traditional text-based forums without considering the affordances of more recent innovations, such as multimedia forums, mobile-accessible platforms, and forums integrated with other learning tools. Research investigating these newer technologies would provide valuable insights into the evolving best practices for forum-based vocabulary instruction.

Finally, limited research has examined the long-term retention of vocabulary acquired through forum participation (Schmitt et al., 2020). Longitudinal studies that track vocabulary development over extended periods would enhance our understanding of forum-based activities' sustained impact on vocabulary acquisition and maintenance.

The current study addresses these gaps by investigating the specific mechanisms through which online forums facilitate vocabulary acquisition among EFL learners, examining forum participation's immediate and long-term effects on vocabulary knowledge, and exploring various forum implementation strategies' differential impacts. By focusing on these understudied areas, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of forum-based vocabulary learning and provides empirically grounded guidance for EFL educators seeking to leverage online forums for vocabulary instruction.

Purpose and Research Questions

Given the identified gaps in the literature, this study aims to systematically investigate online forum participation's impact on EFL learners' vocabulary acquisition. Specifically, the study examines how different types of forum interactions and implementation strategies influence vocabulary learning outcomes across various vocabulary knowledge dimensions. The following research questions guide the study:

1. To what extent does participation in online forums enhance vocabulary acquisition among EFL learners compared with traditional instructional approaches?
2. Are collaborative tasks in forums effective for facilitating vocabulary acquisition?
3. How do different vocabulary knowledge dimensions (form, meaning, use, and collocation) develop through forum-based learning activities?

By addressing these questions, this study seeks to deepen our understanding of forum-based vocabulary learning and to provide practical insights for EFL educators seeking to integrate online forums into their vocabulary instruction. These findings will contribute to the growing body of research on technology-enhanced language learning and inform the development of evidence-based approaches to vocabulary instruction in EFL contexts.

METHODOLOGY

Twenty-one first-year students enrolled in Group 2 of the Translation and Interpreting degree program at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain, participated in the study. Participants were expected to achieve a B2 proficiency level based on their academic term's conclusion. The investigation focused on vocabulary acquisition through two thematic units from the Cambridge University Press Textbook *Empower B2 Upper-Intermediate*: Unit 6 (tourism and holidays) and unit 7 (TV series and films).

For each thematic unit, 15 lexical items were identified as essential vocabulary items that participants acquired and actively incorporated into their productive language skills. The ultimate objective was functional lexical acquisition rather than mere recognition.

The following terms were designated as core vocabulary for unit 6 (tourism domain): "on the outskirts," "venue," "breathtaking," "dramatic," "memorable," "remarkable," "exotic," "high-pressure tourism," "stunning," "peak season," "mind-blowing," "awe-inspiring," "dull," "out of this world," and "ordinary."

In contrast, for the media-focused unit (unit 7), the following lexical items were presented: “to be released,” “to be broadcast,” “share,” “the cast,” “crew,” “soundtrack,” “shot,” “script,” “producer,” “to be captured on video,” “to be cut (a scene),” “episode,” “viewers,” “editor,” and “director.”

The research design incorporated differentiated instructional methodologies for the respective units, followed by identical assessment tasks. The primary research objective was to evaluate students’ capacity to internalize and subsequently deploy targeted vocabulary in authentic communicative contexts.

Instructional Approach for Unit 6 (Tourism)

Following conventional textbook-based vocabulary instruction, a collaborative learning intervention was implemented:

1. Once the unit was explained, participants were organized into seven groups for a collaborative writing exercise.
2. Each group was tasked with creating a descriptive text (150 words) about their preferred location in Gran Canaria for a hypothetical tourism publication aimed at prospective visitors to the Canary Islands.
3. The assignment stipulated the integration of all the 15 predesignated lexical items within the composition.
4. The groups were allocated 50 minutes for deliberation, consensus building, and submission of their descriptive texts to an online forum.
5. Subsequently, each group was given 60 minutes to review all forum submissions, select three posts of interest, and compose responses (60–80 words) incorporating a minimum of five target vocabulary items.

Five days after this intervention, without prior notification, the participants completed an individual assessment within 60 minutes. Students were instructed to compose a description of a location they had visited in an attempt to incorporate all 15 target vocabulary items from the unit.

Instructional Approach for Unit 7 (Films and TV Series)

The initial intervention phase comprised individualized engagement with vocabulary through a sequence of strategically designed 50-minute exercises.

1. Participants were presented with a one-page text containing target lexical items, followed by definitional matching tasks requiring identification of specialized terminology (i.e., “crew,” “director,” “producer,” and “viewers”). This phase continued with advanced comprehension exercises requiring title selection based on textual content and contextual semantic analysis of embedded terminology (i.e., “shot,” “soundtrack,” “cast,” and “script”). The temporal allocation for this phase precisely mirrored the one previously dedicated to collaborative descriptive composition in forum-based activities.

2. The subsequent intervention phase focused on the target vocabulary's active implementation through contextual sentence completion exercises that utilized all 15 prescribed lexical items.
3. This was complemented by an instructor-facilitated definitional and synonymic exploration via visual projection of exemplar sentences.
4. The instructional sequence culminated in dialectical engagement through structured interrogatives, designed to elicit target terminology's critical application within authentic communicative contexts. Questions addressed conceptual distinctions between episodic structures, professional roles in media production, distribution modalities, and technical operations. All of them were purposefully selected to reinforce the contextual understanding of specialized vocabulary.

The temporal allocation of this phase corresponded precisely to the previously allocated duration for the forum-based responsive composition (60 minutes).

Evaluation of lexical acquisition efficacy was conducted through a delayed assessment protocol administered 5 days post-intervention without advance notification, thus minimizing preparation effects and enhancing validity. The assessment instrument required participants to produce descriptive text regarding audiovisual media content (TV programs, films, or TV series) with mandatory integration of all 15 target lexical items within a controlled 60-minute composition period.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Table 1 presents a comprehensive analysis of lexical implementation across individual student assessments. Specifically, it documents the utilization of the expressions of unit 6 within their descriptive discourse. For interpretive clarity, the expressions are codified as follows: E1 denotes "on the outskirts," E2 denotes "venue," E3 denotes "breathtaking," E4 denotes "dramatic," E5 denotes "memorable," E6 denotes "remarkable," E7 denotes "exotic," E8 denotes "high-pressure tourism," E9 denotes "stunning," E10 denotes "peak season," E11 denotes "mind-blowing," E12 denotes "awe-inspiring," E13 denotes "dull," E14 denotes "out of this world," and E15 denotes "ordinary." "X" means that the student used the term.

These findings indicated a heterogeneous pattern of lexical implementation with varying degrees of terminological incorporation. Specifically, 28% of participants (6) demonstrated the integration of 10 expressions from the prescribed set of 15. Additionally, 24% of participants (5) incorporated nine expressions, whereas an equivalent proportion (24%, 5) implemented eight expressions.

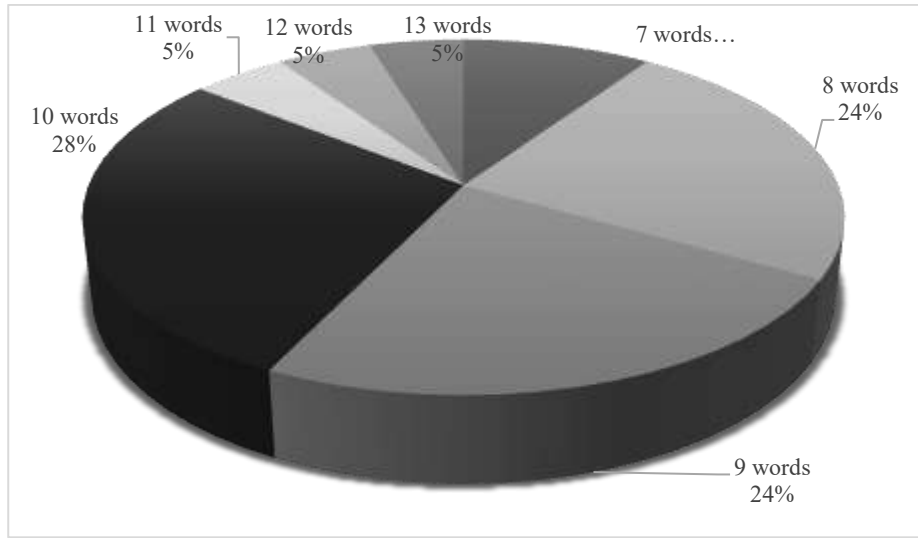
A smaller percentage of students, 9% of participants (2), utilized seven expressions, while isolated cases of more comprehensive implementation were observed: 5% (1) incorporated 11 expressions, another 5% (1) implemented 12 expressions, and the final 5% (1) demonstrated exceptional lexical integration with 13 expressions.

Table 1.
Use of the 15 expressions of unit 6 per student.

	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9	E10	E11	E12	E13	E14	E15
Student 1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X
Student 2		X	X	X	X	X			X		X		X		X
Student 3	X	X	X	X	X				X			X	X	X	
Student 4		X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X		X		X
Student 5	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X		X		X
Student 6	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X		X		
Student 7		X	X	X	X	X			X				X	X	
Student 8		X	X	X	X				X				X		X
Student 9	X	X	X	X	X			X	X				X		X
Student 10		X	X	X	X				X				X		X
Student 11		X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X		
Student 12	X		X	X	X	X			X		X		X	X	
Student 13			X	X	X	X	X		X		X		X		
Student 14		X	X	X	X		X		X	X		X	X		X
Student 15		X	X	X			X		X			X	X		X
Student 16	X	X	X	X	X				X				X	X	
Student 17	X	X	X	X	X	X			X				X	X	
Student 18	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X		X
Student 19		X	X	X		X	X		X		X	X	X		X
Student 20			X	X	X		X	X	X	X			X	X	
Student 21			X	X	X				X			X	X		X

Figure 1 provides a visual representation of this frequency distribution, illustrating students’ proportional representation across the spectrum of expression utilization. This graphical depiction facilitated the identification of central tendencies and outliers in lexical implementation patterns among participants.

Figure 1.
Percentage of words of unit 6 used by the students.



Quantitative analysis of the data revealed a mean lexical implementation rate of 9.3 expressions per student from the prescribed set of 15 terminological items. This represented a lexical utilization coefficient of 0.62, exceeding the threshold of 0.5 and indicating the target vocabulary's satisfactory acquisition and application.

Table 2.

Use of the 15 expressions of unit 7 per student.

	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9	E10	E11	E12	E13	E14	E15
Student 1	X			X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X		X
Student 2				X		X		X					X		X
Student 3	X			X		X	X	X		X			X		X
Student 4	X					X		X			X		X		X
Student 5	X	(L1)				X									X
Student 6	X			X		X							X		
Student 7				X		X		X					X		
Student 8				X		X	X	X					X		X
Student 9		(L1)		X		X	X								X
Student 10	X			X	X	X	X	X							X
Student 11	X			X		X		X					X		
Student 12	X					X							X		X
Student 13		X				X				X		X	X		X
Student 14				X		X									X
Student 15				X		X		X					X		X
Student 16		X		X		X		X			X				X
Student 17	X			X		X		X			X				X
Student 18	X					X									
Student 19				X		X	X					X	X		X
Student 20				X		X				X			X		X
Student 21	X			X		X		X				X	X		X

This finding is particularly significant because it demonstrates superficial familiarity and the functional command of the lexical items. The data suggested that participants developed adequate semantic comprehension and contextual awareness to facilitate the appropriate

implementation of specialized terminology. The absence of orthographic errors further substantiated participants' linguistic competence, whereas the consistent semantic and pragmatic appropriateness of expression usage confirmed meaningful acquisition rather than mere memorization.

Table 2 presents the lexical items each participant used in the descriptive discourse. To facilitate interpretation, the following terms were codified as follows: E1 represents "to be released," E2 represents "to be broadcast," E3 represents "share," E4 represents "the cast," E5 represents "crew," E6 represents "soundtrack," E7 represents "shot," E8 represents "script," E9 represents "producer," E10 represents "to be captured on video," E11 represents "to be cut [a scene]," E12 represents "episode," E13 represents "viewers," E14 represents "editor," and E15 represents "director." "X" means that the student used the term, and "L1" means first language interference.

Frequency distribution analysis revealed that only one participant (5% of the sample) demonstrated mastery of 10 of the 15 targeted lexical items. Similarly, one additional participant (5%) used eight items. Two participants (9%) utilized seven items, whereas the largest cohort, six participants (29%), employed only six items, representing less than half of the target vocabulary. Four participants (19%) demonstrated a command of five items, and an equivalent number (19%) utilized four items. Two participants (9%) employed only three items, whereas one participant (5%) demonstrated a minimal lexical range with only two items.

Figure 2.

Percentage of words of unit 7 used by the students.

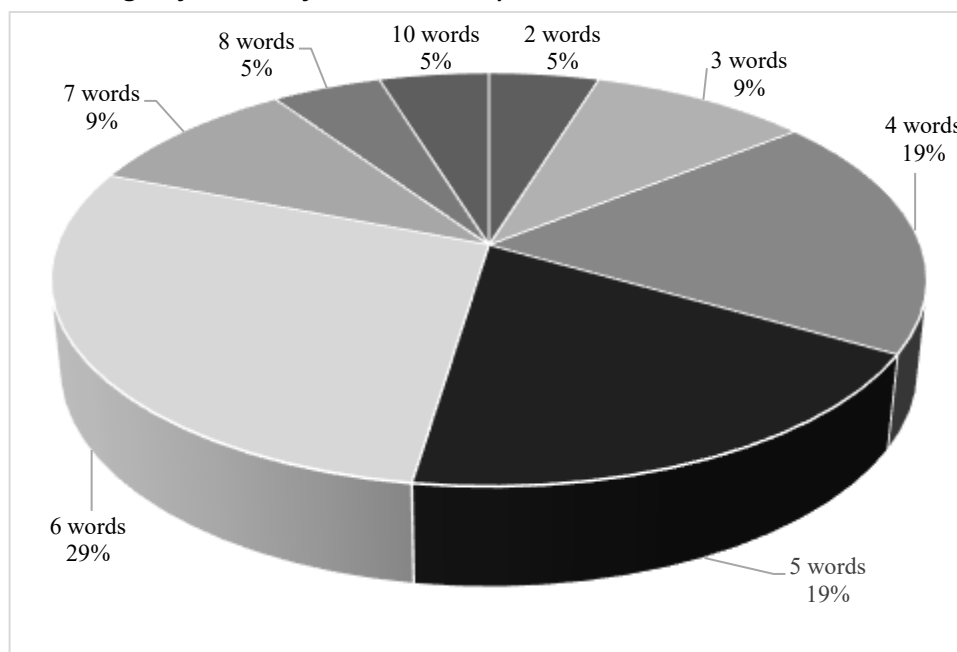


Figure 2 provides a visual representation of this frequency distribution, highlighting that nearly 30% of the participants employed only six lexical items, constituting less than half of the target vocabulary. Only two participants (10%) demonstrated a command of more than half of the targeted lexical items (eight and 10 items, respectively). Figure 2 provides a visual

representation of this frequency distribution, illustrating students' proportional representation across the spectrum of expression utilization.

Quantitative analysis of the data revealed a mean lexical implementation rate of 5.3 expressions per student from the prescribed set of 15 terminological items. This represented a lexical utilization coefficient of 0.35, which fell below the threshold of 0.50, indicating unsatisfactory acquisition and application of target vocabulary.

Notably, two participants exhibited first language (L1) interference, employing the verb "emit" rather than "broadcast" because of negative transfer from the Spanish term "emitir." With the exception of these instances of L1 interference, participants generally demonstrated appropriate lexical deployment with correct orthography and syntactic placement within sentential contexts.

DISCUSSION

The above findings align with and extend several of the theoretical frameworks that informed this study. First, they provide empirical support for sociocultural theory (Lantolf & Thorne, 2018; Vygotsky, 1978) by demonstrating how collaborative knowledge construction in online forums can create effective digital zones of proximal development, where learners scaffold each other's vocabulary acquisition. Students' superior performance in the forum-based condition highlights vocabulary learning's social nature and the importance of meaningful peer interactions in facilitating lexical development.

The results also validate connectivist principles (Siemens, 2015), confirming that learning occurs more effectively across networked digital environments where students can collaboratively engage with language. Forums' asynchronous nature appears to provide valuable opportunities for reflective engagement with vocabulary, allowing students time to process, research, and thoughtfully incorporate new lexical items into their writing. This is a practice that traditional time-constrained classroom activities may not adequately accommodate.

Furthermore, this study supports the interaction hypothesis (Long, 2020) by showing how the negotiation of meaning that occurs during collaborative writing tasks in forums facilitates enhanced vocabulary acquisition. The requirement to integrate specific vocabulary items into group-authored texts and responses likely prompted students to engage more deeply with word meanings and usage contexts than traditional individual exercises, which often focus on decontextualized recognition tasks.

The superior outcomes observed in the forum-based condition can be attributed to several interconnected mechanisms. First, the forum activities' collaborative nature created multiple opportunities for exposure to target vocabulary through peer interactions. When students read their peers' contributions and crafted responses, they encountered the same lexical items in varied contexts, addressing Webb and Nation's (2017) emphasis on the need for multiple encounters with new words for effective acquisition.

Second, the authentic communicative context provided by the forum tasks appears to have facilitated deeper lexical processing. Unlike traditional exercises that often require students to manipulate vocabulary in artificial contexts, the forum activities demanded meaningful communication about personally relevant topics (tourism locations in Gran Canaria), thereby creating stronger semantic associations and memory traces.

Third, the requirement for students to produce both original texts and responses to peers' posts created a dual-processing effect, engaging both receptive and productive vocabulary skills. This aligns with dual-coding theory (Clark & Paivio, 2016), because students processed vocabulary through multiple channels: reading peers' texts, discussing word choices within groups, and producing their own written contributions.

Particularly noteworthy is the evidence suggesting that forum-based activities promote functional lexical acquisition rather than mere recognition. Students demonstrated correct orthography in their use of target vocabulary and appropriate semantic and pragmatic deployment, suggesting genuine internalization of lexical items rather than superficial memorization. This finding addresses a common concern in vocabulary instruction—that students may learn to recognize words without developing the ability to use them appropriately in communicative contexts.

The absence of semantic or pragmatic errors in the forum-based condition contrasted with the L1 interference observed in the traditional instruction condition (where two students incorrectly used “emit” instead of “broadcast”). This suggests that collaborative negotiation of meaning helps students develop a more accurate understanding of lexical boundaries and appropriate usage contexts.

The results provide empirical support for conceptualizing online forums as digital zones of proximal development. The collaborative writing process appeared to create scaffolding opportunities where more knowledgeable peers could support those with less developed vocabulary knowledge. This peer scaffolding occurred naturally through the collaborative text creation process, where group members negotiated word choices and discussed appropriate usage, thereby creating learning opportunities that would not have existed in individual study contexts.

Conclusions

This research provides evidence that forum-based vocabulary learning significantly outperforms conventional methods, with students demonstrating nearly twice the lexical utilization rate when vocabulary is acquired through forum-based collaborative tasks (62%) compared to traditional instructional methods (35%). The most significant finding of this study is the marked difference in vocabulary acquisition outcomes between the two instructional approaches. When vocabulary was taught through forum-based collaborative activities, the students demonstrated substantially higher rates of vocabulary retention and productive use. In contrast, when taught using traditional methods, students showed considerably lower retention. This represents a 75.5% increase in vocabulary acquisition using forum-based methods.

The results suggest that forum interactions' collaborative and contextually rich nature creates more favorable conditions for vocabulary acquisition than traditional approaches focused on individual exercises and instructor-led activities. In particular, the forum-based approach appears to facilitate deeper lexical processing by requiring students to negotiate meanings collectively, make decisions about appropriate word usage, and observe how peers employ target vocabulary in authentic communicative contexts. Students demonstrated correct orthography in their use of target vocabulary and appropriate semantic and pragmatic deployment, suggesting genuine internalization of lexical items rather than superficial memorization.

This study provides valuable insights; however, several limitations should be acknowledged. The relatively small sample size (21 students) and focus on first-year translation and interpreting students may limit the generalizability of findings across different proficiency levels and academic contexts. Future research should examine forum-based vocabulary learning effectiveness across diverse age groups, proficiency levels, and educational settings to establish broader applicability.

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