The Effects of Rote and Contextualized Memorization on Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners' Vocabulary Development

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Abstract

It is obvious that vocabulary lies in the center of language learning and communication. This issue shows that vocabulary has a vital role in mastering all the skills of a language. Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) facilitate the process of learning lexical items. The present study investigated the role of two specific strategies in vocabulary learning, including rote memorization and contextualized among Iranian intermediate EFL learners. The design of the study was quasi-experimental, which consisted of two experimental groups and one control group. Some sixty Iranian intermediate female students were selected (twenty per group) based on random sampling. They were selected according to the results of the Quick Placement Test (QPT). Before the treatment, a pretest was administered. Then, the participants were taught thirty vocabulary items in three sessions from the book named "Barron's 1100 essential words" in two different methods. The control group didn't receive any of these strategies. Afterwards, two posttests (immediate and delayed) were administered. The data were analyzed by SPSS software. It was revealed that the contextualized strategy group (Mean=37.35) outperformed the rote (Mean=35.90) and control (Mean=25.75) groups. Moreover the results of the t-test showed the superiority of the contextualized over rote memorization group. The results of this study can be helpful for both teachers and learners to apply this strategy in the process of teaching and learning vocabulary items. Therefore, teachers can use and practice this strategy as one of the many ways of acquiring new vocabulary items. Additionally, this strategy can help in the process of long-term retention on the part of the learners.

Key Words: Rote memorization, Contextualized memorization, Strategy, Vocabulary Learning Strategies

1. Introduction

One of the chief problems for the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners is learning the vocabulary because it is considered to be "the most pressing needs of people learning another language" (Laufer & Sim, 1998). Nyikos and Fan (2007) consider vocabulary development as the most challenging task for learners. EFL learners in Iran are no exception; in order to master their needs in science and technology they need to come up with some specific ways to learn English language. Wilkins (1972) has asserted that "in the absence of grammar very little can be conveyed, but without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed" (pp.111-112). While Iranian educational system in teaching English considers the four language skills as the most important processes, teaching vocabulary items is incidental to a great extent, and it involves defining words in the texts in which they are used. This process makes learners highly dependent on dictionaries. Kafipour et al. (2011) argued that, this ad hoc

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approach to vocabulary teaching has led to a general inability in vocabulary learning among Iranian learners.

Learners can better learn vocabulary items with the knowledge of vocabulary learning strategies. According to Oxford (1990, p.1), learning strategies are "steps taken by students to enhance their learning", so strategies are said to raise autonomy and self-direction. When learners become familiar with learning strategies, the process of language learning is facilitated. Many researches have been done in the field of language learning strategies. The purpose of all of these studies was identifying the ways to make more self-directed and flexible learners. Lewis (1993) believes that vocabulary should be the most fundamental part in language learning. He conceives that vocabulary is the heart of language, however, in language teaching it is mistakenly assumed that grammar is the main part of language that leads to an effective communication. As Lewis (1993, p.95) stated, "The key principle of a lexical approach is that language consists of grammatical lexis, not lexicalized grammar".

This study provides feedback for teachers in order to encourage learners to identify two different types of strategies with which they can enhance their vocabulary learning. The researchers believe that the relationship between vocabulary learning strategies and vocabulary development make second/foreign language educators and curriculum designers more sensitive to their roles in teaching and learning. By focusing on the comparison of two different types of vocabulary learning strategies, this study will help the teachers to implement the best of these strategies in their classroom with the aim of helping their learners' vocabulary learning process. It will assist learners to become fully aware of the ways of more effective vocabulary learning strategies which lead them to become more motivated and autonomous learners. Consequently, it will facilitate the process of second/foreign language learning.

Based on the ideas discussed above, it is crucial to be aware of how learners adopt the strategies effectively to develop their vocabulary knowledge. Thus, the principal focus of this study was to examine two common types of vocabulary learning strategies, including rote, and contextualized strategies and their effect on the vocabulary development of Iranian intermediate EFL learners. The present study investigated to find answers to the following questions:

Research Question 1: Does rote memorization affect Iranian intermediate EFL learners significantly?

Research Question 2: Does contextualized memorization affect Iranian intermediate EFL learners significantly?

Research Question 3: Which of the two strategies (rote memorization or contextualized) has more effects on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' performance at the immediate and delayed posttests?

2. Review of The Related Literature

2.1.   *Vocabulary Learning Strategies*

Language, a marker of mental development and an instrument of comprehension, has a noteworthy role in cognitive and social improvement. Language is indivisible from thought. Ideas can be transferred through language and words are the major segments which enable ideas to be created. Different meanings of words are given in various sources. As indicated by Özbay and Melanlıoğlu (2008), a word is a mixture of sounds or voices that has a critical role in making a sentence and it is characterized as a method of articulation which is significant or helpful in making a sentence (Gencan, 2001). The word is essential in language teaching and learning. Vocabulary learning is a complex activity for language learners (Swan & Walter, 1984). As indicated by Korkmaz (1992, p. 19), "word is the language unit that consists of one or more phonemes and expresses a concrete or certain feeling or thought that corresponds to a certain

concept when used alone in the mind between people speaking the same language, or between abstract and abstract concepts."

Words are important structures of both written and spoken language. Thoughts and feelings are completely dependent on words. In this case, the more words an individual perceives, the more he/she has developed in thought since each word is situated in the human brain as a thought. In any case, people think by means of the words (Özkırımlı, 1994). Utilizing rich vocabulary is exceptionally important in essential language skills which are dependent on comprehension and narration (Karatay, 2007). Vocabulary is every word an individual uses (Vardar, 1998). According to Steven Stahl (2005, p. 118), "Vocabulary knowledge is knowledge; the knowledge of a word not only implies a definition, but also implies how that word fits into the world". In all over our lives, we keep on creating vocabulary. The vocabulary is kept in the memory as a result of the person's hard work in learning words (Güleryüz, 2002). The number of words the individual knows influences his/her capacity to comprehend and talk. Fluency and accuracy in talking can be brought out by the size of the vocabulary. Therefore, vocabulary knowledge additionally influences the improvement of the person's other language skills.

"The ability of the four basic language skills to read, write, speak and listen, and to be able to use these skills actively is close to acquired vocabulary" (Karatay, 2004, p. 21). Researches dealt with vocabulary learning are placed at the center of language learning (Coady & Huckin, 1997; Country, 2001; Harley, 1996; Read, 2000). It is recognized that the more vocabulary items a learner knows, the more viable he is to acquire the language. The difference between knowing vocabulary items and utilizing them must be considered. Learning vocabulary is the process of memorizing them to make oneself aware of the contexts in which they are used. Vocabulary learning strategies is one of the outstanding procedures of language learning. The process of thinking that the learners use to influence the coding procedure is defined as learning strategy (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986). The learning strategy can also be characterized as the ability of the learner to adapt new vocabularies or to make the learnt vocabulary items usable for a lifetime (Tok & Yıgın, 2013).

Language learning strategies are preferred by learners so as to enhance their target abilities in line with their learning prerequisites (Cohen, 2009; Oxford, 1990). A few specialists contended that language learning strategies have an essential role in enabling the learners to coordinate their own learning in an autonomous learning condition according to their requirements (Oxford, 2011). The ability of learners in mastering the target language is strengthened by learning strategies. A word in a second/foreign language can't be learnt immediately, however, it needs mindful attention and nonstop repetition. These hard works are continued outside the classroom since there isn't sufficient time in the classroom. This implies that the learner attempts to learn vocabulary autonomously (Apaydın, 2007). Vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) require specific methodologies, utilized by second language learners for learning and mastering the new words in the second/foreign language (Gu, 1994). VLSs are the means used by the language learners to learn new English words. Many researchers have proposed different characterizations of vocabulary learning strategies (Country, 2001; Gu, 2003; Stoffer, 1995).

Identifying vocabulary learning procedures, inspiring them to utilize strategies and instructing them strategies to upgrade language aptitudes, in a second/foreign language education, is extremely effective. Those special characteristics used by the learners, including their specific culture, past skills, social and economic states, their level of ability, importance of a language, the level of their knowledge of the language, learning styles, and learning strategies are exceptionally powerful in language teaching process (Baskin, Karagoz & Birol, 2017). Learning strategies influence the teaching-learning process. The variety of learning strategies augments the quality of the procedure by inspiring the learning and teaching course. "The application of learning strategies makes the student aware and improves the efficiency of the learner, provides the student the capability to learn self-reliantly, helps the student

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learn by taking advantages and makes them ready for post-school learning" (Özer, 2002, p. 20). Learners make use of various strategy types while learning a second/foreign or even native language. Learning strategy helps the learners to intensify their self-autonomy, paves the way for learning procedure, and mostly it helps the learners to become able in choosing the methods of their learning procedure.

Learners can be engaged in the complicated nature of the strategies and use all the learning strategies they know in the process of learning the new words of the second/foreign language. Schmitt (1997) contends that using a complicated cluster of the strategies cause a lot of time and power loss for the learners and for this reason, they should concentrate more on some specific types of strategies, such as vocabulary learning strategies so as to hinder this issue.

2.2.   Studies Related to Rote Memorization Strategy

Rote learning is considered as one of the important strategies in vocabulary learning. There exist many practical and theoretical justifications for this perspective. The practical reasons are based on the belief that a large vocabulary is essential for the mastery of a language. On the theoretical axis, studying vocabulary items and their spelling by rote helps us find out what acquisition is in general. Mostly learners believe that rote learning is the same as learning or memorization by repetition, without a clear understanding of the relations between the materials learnt.

In learning alphabetical lists or irregular verbs and some new vocabulary items, learning is facilitated by means of rote memorization, and then in some cases of language learning process, rote learning is very important. As a result, it becomes evident that learning by rote should be considered an important element in vocabulary learning. However, some researchers believe that, rote learning is a passive method in learning and some individuals assume it as a kind of pure memorization strategy.

Liu (2001) researched vocabulary learning by comparing the use of rote learning and keyword method. He suggested that the keyword method led to a better recall of vocabulary items and it is considered as a device, which brought about a fast vocabulary acquisition. Gu and Johnson (1996) also concluded that rote learning led to negative results in their study. Their research explained that visual repetition is a passive strategy for language learners. Cheung (2000) stated that rote learning-based system in Hong Kong's education decreases the creativity of the learners. Therefore, learning by rote is a mechanical way of learning which happens without necessarily understanding.

There are many researches who prove that EFL learners regard rote-learning as an effective strategy in their learning process, e.g., Barcroft (2009), Hummel (2010) and Li (2005). Nation (2001) described that,

> Repetition is essential for vocabulary learning because there is so much to know about each word that one meeting with it is not sufficient to gain this information, and because vocabulary items must not only be known, they must be known well so that they can be fluently accessed. Repetition thus adds to the quality of knowledge and also to the quantity or strength of the knowledge (pp. 74-6).

Yang and Die (2011) investigated rote memorization of vocabulary and vocabulary development among Chinese students. Their study revealed that cultural, educational background and traditional teaching practice in China are identified to be the factors that contribute to many students' heavy dependence on memorization as their sole approach to vocabulary learning. In addition to rote memorization, which has been proved useful and effective in the Chinese English Language Teaching

(ELT) context, they suggested that students should be presented with vocabulary learning strategies and be taught how to build vocabulary through other useful learning methods.

Wu (2014) investigated the rote strategy in memorizing vocabulary for English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. He created a wordlist vocabulary learning method with detailed procedures, called Cyclical Repetition Technique (CRT). He compared experimental groups involving 50 Chinese ESL college students. A pretest and two posttests were conducted to verify the technique. He found out that 1855 words were acquired in 20 days with 90.79% retention rate in a delayed posttest two months later. He demonstrated that CRT helped experimental Chinese ESL college students memorize English vocabulary quickly, effectively and perpetually.

2.3.   *Studies Related to Contextual Memorization*

Mediha and Enisa (2014) concentrated on the importance of mastering vocabulary items in the process of learning the target language. Their study was conducted on forty, ninth grade students in a private college. The subjects were assigned as experimental and control groups. Both groups took English lessons nine hours a week and the process took four weeks. They were given pretests before the study in order to determine the subjects' vocabulary knowledge and they were given the same test as the posttest and retention tests in order to find out how much they improved. While the experimental group studied vocabulary through literary texts, the control group was instructed by traditional method. At the end, the results were statistically analyzed. According to their results, integration of literature into the lessons had a positive effect on improving learners' vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, the literary context proved to be helpful for the learners.

Çetinavci (2013) investigated the contextual factors in guessing word meaning from context in a foreign language. He investigated whether Turkish EFL learners use contextual clues in their guessing process or not. A vocabulary guessing test was administered to the subjects who were the students attending preparation classes at the School of Foreign Languages of Uludag University. His results showed that unknown words in a rich context were guessed more successfully than unknown words presented in a poor context.

Zeeland (2013), in his study, aimed to shed light on this issue by comparing ESL learners' knowledge of the meaning of isolated words (decontextual knowledge) with their knowledge of the same words in both reading and listening (contextual knowledge). Decontextual knowledge was measured in a free recall interview. Contextual knowledge was measured through a task in which participants paraphrased sentences containing the target items from both a written and spoken narrative. The results showed that the learners' decontextual and contextual knowledge were compatible in 65% of the cases. This indicated a considerable gap between the two cases, and emphasized that scores on decontextualized vocabulary test should not be used as predictors of learners' vocabulary knowledge in context. In addition, the learners demonstrated a significantly better knowledge of word meaning in the reading than listening mode, which may be due to processing difficulties in listening as well as better inferencing opportunities in reading. Two additional factors which were found to affect both decontextual and contextual knowledge are word frequency and learners' vocabulary size.

Candry, Elgort, Deconinck and Eyckmans (2017) compared the effects of an increased attention to form condition and an increased attention to meaning condition. Their results demonstrated that the word-writing condition developed both form recall and meaning recall largely than the meaning-inferencing condition. They concluded that word writing benefited initial word learning more than meaning inferencing in a contextual word-learning situation.

Tusan (2016) aimed to shed some light on the place of students' views on Contextual Vocabulary Teaching in conformity with Constructivism (CVTC) in the field of foreign language teaching. Hence, his study investigated whether any significant correlation exists between the fourth year university students' attitudes concerning CVTC in terms of their individual differences and their achievement scores. In this sense, a case-specific attitude scale was also developed for the purpose of the study. His results which were juxtaposed with the previous findings in the literature indicated that CVTC would serve new benefits for the interests of foreign language teaching.

3. Methodology

This study took the advantage of a quantitative, quasi-experimental research design. It examined the role of two specific strategies in vocabulary learning. One group who received special treatment was called experimental group, which was compared with a similar group of individuals who did not receive any treatment and named as control group.

In the present study, two types of data were used. The independent variable was the type of the strategy applied to each of the two experimental groups and this type of variable is nominal. The second one was the vocabulary development of the learners, which was the dependent variable. It was measured by a pretest and immediate as well as a delayed posttests by the researchers. The type of this variable is ordinal.

2.4.   Participants

The characteristics of the participants were as follows:

Table 1: Characteristics of the Participants

Number of the participants	60
Age range	20-25
General English proficiency level	Intermediate
Gender	Female

2.5.   Material

For selecting intermediate learners, the standard placement test of *Oxford University* and *Cambridge University* (2004, version 2) were used. This instrument included 60 multiple-choice items, a cloze comprehension passage, vocabulary, and grammar sections.

Another instrument used in this study was the fifth edition of *Barron's 1100 Words You Need to Know*. This vocabulary building program is specifically designed for ESL students preparing to take the standardized exams. This book was selected by the researchers as the material for teaching vocabulary to the three groups. There are some reasons for the choice of this book as our material. *Barron's' 1100 Words You Need to Know* provides the learners with a proven plan for improving their English vocabulary while also preparing them for the exams. The words and practice questions that appear throughout this book maximize learners' understanding of words that are likely to appear in every section of the standardized exams. By following the program and mastering the words in this book, the learners will be ready to earn a higher score on these exams. The fifth edition of *Barron's' 1100 Words You Need to Know* has an extensive, revised list of 1100 words with definitions, sample sentences, and

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improved exercises. This edition makes *1100 Words You Need to Know* one of the most thoroughly researched books of its kind. Some thirty words were chosen randomly which were taught to the two groups in two methods (rote, and contextualized); however, the control group did not receive any of these strategies.

2.6.   Data Collection Procedure

The informed consent form was distributed among the learners. Informed consent is a voluntary agreement to participate in the research. It is a process which gives an understanding of the research and its risks to the participants. It informs the subjects about their rights, the purpose of the study, the procedures to be undergone, and the potential risks and benefits of participation. The goal of the informed consent process is to provide sufficient information so that a participant could make an informed decision about whether or not to take part in a study or to continue participation.

A pilot study was used in order to avoid time and money being wasted on an inadequately designed project and it improved upon the study design prior to performance of a full-scale research project and this study tried to improve the chances of a clear outcome.

A Quick Placement Test (QPT) was used in this study in order to choose those learners whose proficiency levels were roughly the same. Although these learners were in intermediate classes according to the institutions' rules, the QPT proved their intermediate level. This test was provided by the researchers and 100 learners were asked to participate in this study. Some sixty learners whose scores were above the mean were selected and randomly assigned into two experimental groups and one control group. This randomization increased the internal validity of the study.

Before the treatment, a 20 multiple-choice test of vocabulary with four possible answers, and 10 matching items, which had been administered to a pilot group, were used as a pretest by the researchers. During the pretest of all three groups, the researchers were present and observed each learner to avoid cheating. After the completion of the pretest, each experimental group received one type of vocabulary learning strategy in the class. The treatment was given to two groups. The researchers gave the rote and context-based strategies for the two experimental groups respectively. Some thirty words of *Barron's 1100 Words You Need to Know* were taught for each group. The control group received the conventional method of PPP (Present, Practice and Produce). The treatment lasted for 10 minutes in each of the three sessions. After the treatment sessions, some 20 multiple-choice vocabulary test with four possible answers and 10 matching test items were conducted as an immediate posttest for the three groups. In this test, the order of the questions and some of the items were changed by the researchers to increase the content validity. Two weeks later, the delayed posttest of 20 multiple-choice items and 10 matching items were implemented among the three groups. This test measured the degree of vocabulary retrieval in the two groups.

3.   Data Analysis

The present study was undertaken in order to explore whether the rote memorization strategy and the contextualized memorization strategy have a significant effect on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' vocabulary development in short and long term. This section presents the results of the study by answering each research question (RQ).

3.1.   Research Question 1

RQ1: Does rote memorization affect Iranian intermediate EFL learners significantly?

Descriptive statistics: The mean (M), standard deviation (SD) and the number of participants (N) are shown in Table 2. The rote memorization strategy group has a higher M than the control group, so it affects Iranian intermediate learners in both short term and long term time spans.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Rote and Control Groups in Immediate and Delayed Posttests

	Groups	M	SD	N
Immediate posttest	Rote Memorization Group	35.9000	7.90003	20
	Control Group	25.7500	7.16626	20
	Total	30.8250	9.04657	40
Delayed posttest	Rote Memorization Group	34.6500	9.04535	20
	Control Group	27.0500	7.61214	20
	Total	30.8500	9.10494	40

Inferential statistics: A one-way between-groups analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to compare the effectiveness of rote memorization strategy in comparison with control group on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' vocabulary development. The independent variable was the type of interaction (rote memorization strategy and control group), and the dependent variable consisted of scores on the test after the intervention was completed. The participants' scores on the pre-intervention administration were used as the covariate in the analysis.

Table 3 shows that there is a significant difference between the rote memorization strategy and the control group. The sig value is 0.00, which is less than .05; therefore, the rote memorization strategy group outperformed the control group on vocabulary learning test scores. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 3: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects of Rote Memorization Strategy

Dependent Variable: Scores

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	2616.020[a]	2	1308.010	84.057	.000	.820
Intercept	27.994	1	27.994	1.799	.188	.046
Covariates	1585.795	1	1585.795	101.909	.000	.734
Groups	684.947	1	684.947	44.017	.000	.543
Error	575.755	37	15.561			
Total	41199.000	40				
Corrected Total	3191.775	39				
a. R Squared = .820 (Adjusted R Squared = .810)						

3.2.   Research Question Two

RQ2: Does contextualized memorization strategy affect Iranian intermediate EFL learners significantly?

Descriptive statistics: The mean (M), standard deviation (SD) and the number of participants (N) are shown in Table 4. The contextualized memorization strategy group has a higher M than the control group, so that it affects Iranian intermediate learners in both short term (immediate posttest) and long term (delayed posttest) time spans.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of in Immediate and Delayed Post- tests

	Groups	M	SD	N
Immediate posttest	Contextualized Memorization Group	37.3500	6.15822	20
	Control Group	25.7500	7.16626	20
	Total	31.5500	8.83162	40
Delayed posttest	Contextualized Memorization Group	37.1000	6.26519	20
	Control Group	27.0500	7.61214	20
	Total	32.0750	8.55866	40

Inferential statistics: A one-way between-groups analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to compare the effectiveness of rote memorization strategy in comparison with control group on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary development. The independent variable was the type of interaction (contextualized memorization strategy and control group), and the dependent variable consisted of scores on the test after the intervention was completed. The participants' scores on the pre-intervention administration were used as the covariate in the analysis.

Table 5 shows that there is a significant difference in the contextualized memorization strategy in comparison with the control group. The sig value is 0.00, which is less than .05; therefore, the contextualized memorization strategy group outperformed the control group on vocabulary learning test scores. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected while alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Table 5: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects of Contextualized Memorization Strategy

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	2750.587[a]	3	916.862	113.304	.000
Intercept	114.714	1	114.714	14.176	.001
Groups1	122.572	1	122.572	15.147	.000
Covariates	1388.530	1	1388.530	171.592	.000
Groups1 * Covariates	34.361	1	34.361	4.246	.067
Error	291.313	36	8.092		
Total	42858.000	40			
Corrected Total	3041.900	39			
a. R Squared = .904 (Adjusted R Squared = .896)					

3.3.   Research Question Three

RQ3: Which of the two strategies (rote memorization or contextualized) has more effects on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' performance at the immediate and delayed posttests?

Descriptive Statistics: The actual difference in the mean scores between the two experimental groups in comparison with the control group is quite large at the immediate posttest. Table 6 shows the mean score for each group.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of Two Groups on the Vocabulary Learning at Immediate Posttest

Dependent Variable: Scores			
Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Rote Memorization Strategy	35.9000	7.90003	20
Contextualized Memorization Strategy	37.3500	6.15822	20
Control Group	25.7500	7.16626	20
Total	34.5750	8.44457	60

As it can be seen in Table 6, at immediate posttest, the contextualized memorization strategy group with the mean score of 37.35 outperformed the rote memorization strategy group with the mean score of 35.90. On the other hand, the rote memorization strategy group with the mean score of 35.90 outperformed the control group with the mean score of 27.75. Then, it is obvious that the contextualized strategy with the highest mean, approved to be the best of these strategies at the immediate posttest. The actual difference in the mean scores between the two experimental groups in comparison with the control group is quite large at the delayed posttest. Table 7 shows the mean score for each group.

As it is seen in Table 7, the contextualized memorization strategy group with the mean score of 37.10 outperformed the rote memorization strategy group with the mean score of 34.65. On the other hand, the rote memorization strategy group with the mean score of 34.65 outperformed the control group with the mean score of 27.05. Then, it is obvious that the contextualized strategy with the highest mean, approved to be the best of these strategies at the delayed posttest.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics of Two Groups on the Vocabulary Learning at Delayed Posttest

Dependent Variable: Scores			
Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Rote Memorization Strategy Group	34.6500	9.04535	20
Contextualized Memorization Strategy Group	37.1000	6.26519	20
Control Group	25.0500	7.61214	20
Total	34.4500	8.7538	80

Inferential Statistics: As it is revealed, the performances of the experimental groups were better than the control group. However, it is approved that the contextualized strategy group outperformed the rote and control groups. In order to complete these findings, Table 8 shows that there is a significant difference in the group scores in comparison with the control group. The sig value is 0.00, which is less than .05; therefore, the experimental groups outperformed the control group on vocabulary learning test scores. Finally, the results seem to be statistically significant.

Table 8: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects of the Groups

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	4389.649[a]	4	1097.412	66.168	.000	.779
Intercept	573.575	1	573.575	34.583	.000	.316
Covariates	2196.399	1	2196.399	132.430	.000	.638
Groups	1427.307	2	475.769	28.686	.000	.534
Error	1243.901	75	16.585			
Total	101268.000	80				
Corrected Total	5633.550	79				

a. R Squared = .779 (Adjusted R Squared = .767)

4. Discussion

Learning a foreign language is mostly dependent on vocabulary learning of that language. In order to learn the vocabulary of a language, one needs to master the Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLSs). This study examined the effects of two most commonly used strategies (rote, and contextualized strategies) among Iranian intermediate EFL learners. The present study included two experimental groups, which were taught vocabulary items through two different strategies. However, the control group did not receive any of these strategies. The results showed that the experimental groups outperformed the control group, while the contextualized strategy group outperformed the rote and control groups.

The findings of this study rejected the first null hypothesis and revealed that the rote memorization strategy has significant effects on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' vocabulary development. In other words, the experimental group which dealt with rote-based strategy of vocabulary learning outperformed the control group which did not deal with rote-based strategy of vocabulary learning. This finding rejected the findings of Liu (2001) who suggested that the keyword method led to a better recall of vocabulary items than rote memorization. Gu and Johnson (1996) also concluded that rote learning lead to negative results in their study, so their findings are not in line with the results of the present study. In line with Gu and Johnson (1996) and Liu (2001), Cheung (2000) also stated that learning by rote is a mechanical way of learning which decreases the creativity of the learners. Therefore, he rejected the findings of the present study.

On the other hand, Barcroft (2009), Hummel (2010), Li (2005), and Nation (2001) concluded that the learners regard rote learning as a positive way of learning vocabulary, which is essential for vocabulary development. Their findings approved the findings of this study, which showed that rote learning leads to statistically significant results among Iranian intermediate EFL learners. The results of this study are in line with Wu's (2014) study who mentioned that those who use Cyclical Repetition Technique (CRT), as a technique for rote-based strategy, memorize English vocabulary rapidly, efficiently and continually.

The present study showed that contextualized memorization strategy affects the improvement of vocabulary by Iranian EFL learners. Principally, the experimental group, which received contextualized

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memorization strategy, achieved more vocabulary development than the control group, which did not receive any contextualized memorization strategy. The results of this study are in line with the findings of Mediha and Enisa (2014) who pointed out that the contexts of literary type lead to better retention of vocabulary items. It shows the positive effect of context on vocabulary development of learners. The findings of this study are also consistent with Çetinavci's (2013) study who showed that unknown words in a rich context were guessed more successfully than unknown words presented in a poor context. His results also indicated the significance of learning word meanings by using the contexts. Zeeland (2013) found out that learners in a contextualized vocabulary test outperformed the decontextualized test, which approves the findings of this study. Candry, et al. (2017) rejected the findings of this study by stating that word writing benefited initial word learning more than meaning inferencing in a contextual word-learning situation.

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

The present study aimed at investigating two commonly used strategies (rote and contextualized) among Iranian EFL learners. For this purpose, two experimental groups of Iranian intermediate EFL learners received two different strategies. The experimental groups' results were compared with the control group, which received none of these strategies. According to the findings of the study, it is revealed that among Iranian EFL learners, the contextualized strategy as one of the determination strategies, leads to better development of vocabulary knowledge. Moreover, this study revealed using contextualized strategy in memorizing vocabulary items leads to a long-term retention of vocabulary items.

The findings of this study have some implications for classroom practice. Therefore, this study might have some important pedagogical implications for both teachers and learners by helping them redefine their proper responsibilities. In a broad sense, this study helps teachers to remember that no single L2 instructional methodology and strategy fits all students. Strategies help determine a particular learner's ability and willingness to work within the framework of various instructional methodologies. It is unwise to think that a single methodology could possibly fit all students who have a range of stylistic and strategic preferences. Instead, the teachers should be aware of different strategies used by learners and apply the best methodological approaches; such an approach allows creative variety to meet the needs of all learners in the class.

Different vocabulary learning strategies (other than rote and contextualized memorization) and their effects on vocabulary development can be investigated in similar studies. These strategies can be researched in different skills and subskills of language learning. It is possible to do the same study in other contexts all over the world. Finally, the vocabulary learning strategies can be taught at schools and language institutions. The learning differences in these two contexts can be investigated.

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