

Contributory Role of the Gestures and Facial Expressions in Teaching Concrete Vocabulary Items to Iranian Elementary EFL Learners

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Abstract

The present study examined to what extent using gesture and facial expression influence concrete vocabulary learning in English language among Iranian EFL learners. Accordingly, 60 female students were non-randomly selected from a language institute in Shiraz. First, a pretest was administered to the participants to determine their language proficiency level. Next, the subjects were assigned to an experimental and a control group, each comprising 30 students. The students in the control group received no treatment, whereas the participants in the experimental group were instructed through gesture and facial expressions. Drawing on a t-test, the null hypothesis stating that gesture and facial expression did not have any significant effect on the concrete vocabulary of Iranian EFL learners was rejected. In addition, the results of the t-test revealed that there was a significant difference between the experimental and the control groups in concrete vocabulary learning. Therefore, it is concluded that gesture and facial expression can play a significant role in improving vocabulary items.

Keywords: concrete words, gestures, facial expressions, vocabulary, EFL learners

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary considered as an important issue without which no language could exist. Speaking would be meaningless and perhaps impossible without vocabulary. Vocabulary teaching is one of the most important components of any language class. The main reason is the fact that it is a medium, which carries meaning; learning to understand and express the meaning is what counts in learning languages. Unlike e.g. learning grammar, which is a system based mainly on rules vocabulary is generally a matter of remembering. (Thornbury, 2004) To be able to teach as effectively as possible, it is important to know, how words are remembered and stored in students' minds and how long term memory is organized. Several authors agree that vocabulary is stored in the mind in a highly organized and complex web-like system, the so-called 'mental

lexicon'. In the mental lexicon, words are stored, categorized and interconnected in many ways, according to their features such as meaning, form, collocation, syntactic properties, cultural background etc. Consequently, a word being retrieved is looked up through several pathways at once, which is extremely economical based on time needed (Thornbury, 2004; McCarthy, 1992; Gairns & Redman, 1992). One of the important functions of the language teacher is to help their students find the easiest way of conveying new information into the already existing system of the mental lexicon. (Thornbury, 2004, P. 93) Moreover, students need to obtain the ability to store the information for as long as possible.

Language learners are quietly aware of the importance of increasing their vocabulary (Schmitt, 1997). Krashen (1989) vividly described their interest in vocabulary by the fact that they carry a dictionary more often than a grammar book. Language learners use more techniques in vocabulary learning than in any other linguistic competences (Schmitt, 1997). They use different strategies to find out the meaning of new words, to retain them in long-term memory, to retrieve them at will, and to use them in oral or written mode (Catalan, 2003). A direct relationship has been created between the use of vocabulary learning strategies and overall language learning success. Effective vocabulary learning strategies not only help acquire new words but also improve other language skills (Kojic-Sabo & Lightbown, 1999). Higher-achievement learners use more strategies than lower-achievement peers (Ahmed, 1989; Schmitt, 1997; Gu, 1994; Fan, 2003). In fact, these learners use more than twice the number of word-by-strategy instances than the lower-achievement learners and they employ learning strategies more consistently (Lawson & Hogben, 1996).

How to teach vocabulary

The two most common ways in which the meaning of new items is conveyed are as follows: 1) Traditional approaches and techniques, which are teacher-centered, and 2) Student-centered learning

Traditional approaches and techniques

Teacher-centered approaches are divided into three main types: visual techniques, verbal techniques and translation.

Visual techniques

In teaching the meaning of words, especially the elementary stage, we should try to establish a link between the word and the meaning by using one of the following means or techniques depending on the word to be taught:

- a) Realia, i.e. objects in the class, including the SS themselves, and other brought to class.
- b) Pictures, photos, drawings, flashcards, slides, wall charts, etc.
- c) Mime, gestures, actions, facial expressions, etc.

Of course, not all vocabulary can be presented in this way. According to Doff (1998, p. 14) vocabulary should only be presented visually if it can be done quickly, easily and clearly. However, for suitable vocabulary, it is a very effective method: it is directing, interesting and makes an impression on the class.

Verbal techniques

There are certainly other techniques which can be used to present vocabulary which are as follows:

- a) by giving examples of the type, e.g. to illustrate the meanings of superordinates;
- b) By using illustrative situations, to explain abstract words, for instance;
- c) Through definitions;
- d) With synonyms/antonyms.

Translation

Used sensibly, translation can be a useful technique to convey message as it saves time, and it allows us to check correct comprehension. On the whole, however, translation of vocabulary into the mother tongue should be kept under tight control. From the lower intermediate stages onwards it is better to resort to other techniques (e.g. a simple explanation in the target language). Apart from giving the student extra exposure to the target language (as students rarely listen so intently as when they are learning new words), this technique has another benefit: if on a future occasion he cannot remember the target item, he can always give an explanation or a synonym, a technique that is in fact often used by native speakers of the language. The problem with students who have been taught through translation techniques is that they often give up if the exact lexeme does not come to mind, while those who are accustomed to operating in the target language will often fall back on some type of alternative communicative strategy (Wallace 1988, p.48) Of course, it is also possible to use a combination of the techniques mentioned above.

Student-centered learning

Student-centered learning can also take place in different ways such as by allowing them to ask other students in the classroom, by using a dictionary or through contextual guesswork. As regards the proper and efficient use of a dictionary, it is something that students certainly should be trained in, if only as a way of helping the students' error derive from its wrong usage. Nevertheless, recourse to the dictionary should not be typical of every reading session as:

- it may encourage the tendency to concentrate on individual words rather than on overall meaning;
- the learner may not attempt to use the context to decode meaning, and over-frequent use of the dictionary decrease the flow of reading, and makes the passage more boring to read and perhaps even more difficult to understand since concentration is interrupted (Wallace 1988, p. 43).

We may also choose to teach vocabulary within a written context, especially at intermediate and advanced levels. If we are thinking about a comprehension lesson the teacher should make sure that SS have at least a general sense of the passage first and then continue with more specific question about the meanings of pieces of the text and individual words.

This technique is probably the most efficient in the long run. As the teacher will only be able to teach the student a small percentage of the words that he or she will later need, it seems to be a good idea to promote extensive reading so that the SS's vocabulary can grow naturally, and to spend some time on showing students what Nuttall (1996, p. 66) calls "word-attack skills". Through these it is possible:

- 1) to infer meaning from context in the same way native speakers or competent speakers of a foreign language do;
- 2) To show SS that many words can just be ignored, probably the first and most basic word-attack skill and the most difficult one to accept;
- 3) Students must be taught to use sentence structure to establish the grammatical category of the new item, word structure to find out the type of word it is and its meaning, as well as contextual, logical and cultural cues to discover the meaning (Grellet, 1990, p.14-16).

EFL readers certainly do require specific training in using this skill for different reasons:

- 1) "because L2 readers have less exposure to language than L1 readers and, therefore, have to make more conscious effort to learn words" (Nuttall1996, p.70);
- 2) because most SS are not aware that it is possible to understand new words without being told what they mean (Bright & McGregor, 1970);
- 3) because we need to encourage the students to adopt a positive attitude towards new lexical items instead of the negative one they instinctively adopt.

In spite of what we have said, the teacher may choose to ignore the unknown term, unless a question about it is raised by the students. This does not necessarily mean that the teacher is not doing his duty, as it is not always necessary to understand the meaning of every single word in a passage to grasp its general sense as happens when reading in our own language. It depends on the teacher's objectives.

Nonverbal communication includes conveying messages to an audience through body movements, head nods, hand-arm gestures, facial expressions, eye gaze, posture, and interpersonal distance (Kellerman, 1992). These visual cues as well as the lip movements that accompany speech sounds are helpful for communication: "eliminating the visual modality creates an unnatural condition which strains the auditory receptors to capacity" (von Raffler-Engel, 1980, p. 235). Goldin-Meadow (1999) suggested that

“gesture serves as both a tool for communication for listeners, and a tool for thinking for speakers” (p. 419). For speakers, gestures facilitate retrieval of words from memory and reduce cognitive burden. For listeners, they can facilitate comprehension of a spoken message (e.g., Cassell, McNeill, & McCullough, 1999) and convey thoughts not present in speech. The power of facial speech cues such as lip movements is well documented through studies involving the McGurk effect (the influence of visual or lip-read information on speech perception; e.g., McGurk & MacDonald, 1976; for a review, see Massaro, 1998).

Although nonverbal communication gives clues to what speakers are thinking about or enhances what they are saying, cultural differences may interfere with understanding a message (e.g., Pennycook, 1985). Facial expressions in Korean culture are different from those in Western cultures in terms of subtlety. Perceptiveness in interpreting others' facial expressions and emotions (*nun-chi*) is an important element of nonverbal communication (Yum, 1987). In Japan, gestures and facial expressions sometimes serve social functions such as showing politeness, respect, and formality. Bowing or looking slightly downward shows respect for the interlocutor (Kagawa, 2001). Engaging eye contact is often considered rude in Asian culture. Matsumoto and Kudoh (1993) found that American participants rated smiling faces more intelligent than neutral faces, whereas Japanese participants did not perceive smiling to be related to intelligence. Hand gestures represent an interactive element during communication. The majority (90%) are produced along with utterances and are linked semantically, prosodically (McNeill, 1992), and pragmatically (Kelly, Barr, Church, & Lynch, 1999). Iconic gestures, associated with meaning, are used more often when a speaker is describing specific things. Beat gestures, associated with the rhythm of speech, are non-imagistic and frequently used when a speaker controls the pace of speech (Morrel-Samuels & Krauss, 1992).

In the second language classroom, teachers behave in a specific way: the way they speak and the way they gesture are altered by the classroom situation. They slow down their speech, and they intensify the articulation of every word and of the prosodic parameters to make sure that the students will understand them better. For the same reason, they use helping gestures. We are not dealing here with typical everyday communicative gestures but with specific ones, which have to be clear and unambiguous in order to help the students understand the verbal input the gestures illustrate. This is particularly true when teaching to young children. Official and scientific texts dealing with the teaching of foreign languages to children advise teachers to use gestures to illustrate their speech and thus to improve the children's understanding and memorization of the foreign language. This is given as an affirmation and it appeared to us that nobody has ever tried to assess how much the teacher's gestures could help young children understand and memorize the foreign language lexicon.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the process of foreign language learning, many students have difficulty remembering the words they learn. In our EFL classes many students know the importance of

vocabulary and their problems as a result of their poor vocabulary knowledge; the problem may lie in the traditional methods of vocabulary presentation such as definition and translation. A number of techniques can be adopted to present new vocabulary items. Some techniques are more popular and more often used than others. Also it is up to the teacher which techniques he or she decides to use but always the effectiveness of teaching should be considered. Every teacher tends to use and prefers some technique that he or she finds interesting. And of course there are techniques that we as teachers try to avoid. There are techniques that are particularly appropriate for certain types of words – for example action words can be explained through pantomime. Another factor that is worth considering is the age of the learners. Younger ones react quite well when we show them new vocabulary by this strategy.

To meet the needs of EFL students, teachers also need to use visuals, body movement, gestures, and facial expressions so that students can be included and engaged in meaningful activities. Visuals, body movement, gestures, and facial expressions provide context that ELL students may not be able to pick up from words alone.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

One of the concerns of the teachers, especially in teaching vocabulary items is how to convey the meanings of the words. Elementary learners always have problem with understanding the meanings of the words. This study tries to help both teachers and learners. For teachers, gestures facilitate conveying the meaning of the words. For learners, they can facilitate comprehension of the words' meaning. We consider important that the impact of gestures in second language acquisition should be promoted in teacher's training. Reflection on gestures and second language learning as well as development of teaching gesture techniques should be part of teacher's training so that the majority of gestures can be made by learners, especially young ones.

Here we are not we are not going to consider everyday communicative gestures but with specific ones, which have to be clear and unambiguous in order to help the students understand the verbal input the gestures illustrate. This is particularly true when teaching to young children. Official and scientific texts dealing with the teaching of foreign languages to children advise teachers to use gestures to illustrate their speech and thus to improve the children's understanding and memorization of the foreign language.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present study aims to address the following questions:

1. Is there any significant difference between concrete vocabulary learning by Elementary EFL students who are taught through gestures and facial expressions and those who are not?

2. Is there any significant difference between concrete vocabulary retention by Elementary EFL students who are taught through gestures and facial expressions and those who are not?

In order to answer research questions the following null hypotheses were formulated:

H0₁. There is not any significant difference between using teachers' gestures and facial expressions and learning of concrete vocabulary by Iranian elementary EFL learners.

H0₂. There is not any significant difference between using teachers' gestures and facial cues and concrete vocabulary retention by Iranian elementary EFL learners.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants of this study were 60 female students within the age range of 10-13 studying at Padide language Institute in Shiraz. All of them were native speakers of Persian studying English Time 2 a well-known course book. Through a pretest it was determined they were at the same level of proficiency. They were randomly divided into two identical groups after pre-test. One group was experimental group (n= 30) and the other one was the control group (n=30). The participants were selected from the same institute to be similar in social, cultural, economic and academic level. Table (1) shows the distribution of the participants.

Table 1. The Distribution of the participants according to the Groups

Experimental	Control	Total
30	30	60

Instruments

The instrumentations in this study include a general test of vocabulary as a pre-test. 40 concrete vocabulary items were selected from students' textbook. The allotted time to respond would be 40 minutes. This pretest has been carried out by the students' own teacher a week before conducting the study. Another test is post-test that would be selected from ten units of the book "English Time 1" it was given to experimental and control group at the end of the semester.

It included 40 concrete words which the students had to answer. This test consisted of 40 items, hence it was scored out of 40. The experimental group was found to be more excited during the lesson, and this was reflected in their grades, too. Both groups have been taught by the same teacher (researcher). This has been done intentionally in order to control one variable. The number of items was 40 and the allotted time was 30 minutes. Finally a delayed posttest which had the same format and same questions but displayed the test items in a different order was administered to measure their retention of vocabulary knowledge. Validity and reliability are two major components in any language test. In this study experienced teachers confirmed the validity of the test and through Cronbach Alpha reliability was gained about 0.85 which is acceptable.

Procedure

First, the general test of vocabulary was administered to 60 participants, in which a list of 60 target words was given to the participants. They were supposed to write Persian equivalents of the target words in the blank space. The time given is thirty minutes to answer. Each item was received one point. Based on their responses, 40 target words that unfamiliar to students were selected for the study. After taking the test, then participants were divided into two groups. One group was experimental group who were taught the new words of units through gestures and facial expressions and in the control group the new words were presented through translation, definitions and synonyms. The semester was lasted three months and each session was held twice a week. At the end of semester, there was a vocabulary post-test of textbook for two groups. The items were 40 English words. Each answer receives one point. Wrong responses were not given penalty number. Then, the tests were scored by the researcher.

The researcher was presented for clarifying the ambiguities for the examinees in all test administrations. To score the tests the following steps was followed. If nothing or wrong translation was given about the target word, the item should be scored 0: if the full and exact meaning was recalled and write down, the item should be scored 1. So the scores ranged from 0 to 40 for each participant. After the required data were collected, they were analyzed statistically. Two weeks later, they were given a delayed posttest which had the same format and same questions but displayed the test items in a different order to measure their retention of their vocabulary knowledge.

Data analysis

The data were collected through a pre-test, posttest and delayed posttest in order to answer the research questions. The results of both tests were analyzed using the SPSS program. First, the data of the posttest for each group were inserted and analyzed separately in order to find the mean and standard deviation of the scores of each group. The same procedure was followed with the scores of the delayed posttest of each group a T-Test was employed to see if there were significant differences in vocabulary learning and retention between the control and experimental groups. The hypotheses were tested at a .05 level of significance.

RESULTS

The Participants' Performances in the English Vocabulary pre-test

The scores obtained from the test of English vocabulary for both group of the control and the experimental were compared and analyzed statistically. The means and standard deviations for the pretest scores are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for the Participants' Performance in the English vocabulary Pretest

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental group	30	24.4667	4.96007	.90558
Control group	30	25.0667	4.54808	.83036

As shown in Table 2 above, the mean of control group was higher than that of the experimental group (25.06 and 24, 46, respectively). To see if this difference was statistically significant or not, an independent t-test was applied. Table 3 shows the results.

Table 3. Independent Samples t-test results for the participants' performance on the vocabulary pretest

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.018	.894	-.488	58	.627	-.60000	1.22865	-3.05941	1.85941
Equal variances not assumed			-.488	57.569	.627	-.60000	1.22865	-3.05980	1.85980

As shown in Table 3, the mean difference between the two groups was not significant ($t = -.488$, $sig = .627$). This shows that the students in the two groups were at the same level of English vocabulary knowledge. Figure 1 shows the graphical comparison of the two groups in the pretest.

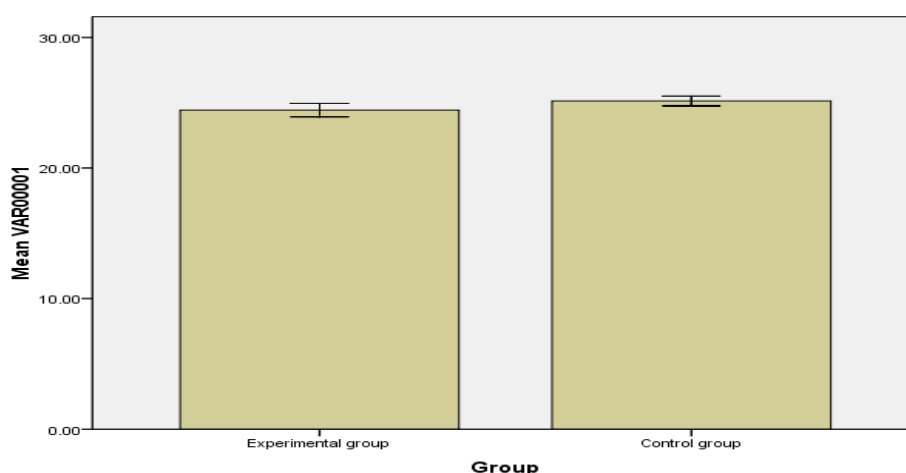


Figure 1. The Graphical Representation of the Groups' Performances in the English Pretest.

The participants' performances on the immediate vocabulary posttest

The scores obtained from the immediate posttest of vocabulary for both groups of the control and the experimental were compared statistically. The means and standard deviations for the immediate posttest are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for the participants' performance on the immediate posttest

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental group	30	30.4667	4.11669	.75160
Control group	30	26.3333	3.54608	.64742

As shown in table 4 above, the mean of the experimental group was higher than that of control group (30.46 for the experimental group and 26.33 for control group). Therefore, standard deviations of the two groups were also different (4.11 for experimental group and 3.54 for control group).

After the data were collected, an independent was performed using SPSS to analyze the possible differences between the two groups which were involved. The results are showed in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Independent Samples t-test results for the participants' performance on the vocabulary immediate posttest

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.045	.834	4.167	58	.000	4.13333	.99200	2.14763	6.11903
Equal variances not assumed			4.167	56.755	.000	4.13333	.99200	2.14670	6.11996

The result of the independent samples t-test calculation in Table 4.4 shows that there was a significant difference between the two means ($t = 4.167$, $sig = .000$). At the level of $p < 0.05$. Therefore, it can be concluded that participants of the experimental group has improved to a great extent and has a great effect on their performance on the immediate posttest. Therefore the answer to the research question one is that using gesture and facial expressions has effectively improved participants' learning of vocabulary. This information is illustrated in Figure 2.

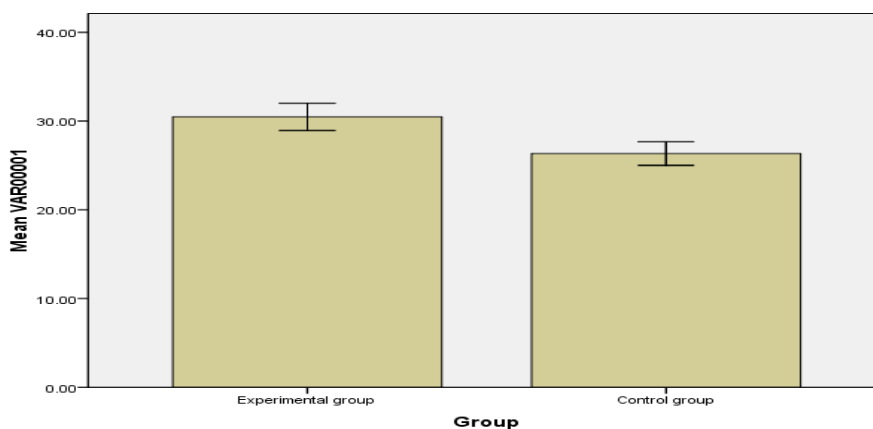


Figure 2. The graphical representation of the groups’ performance on the immediate post test

The participants’ performances of control group on the vocabulary delayed posttest

Paired sample T-test was used for the delayed posttest results. All the scores were analyzed by the software (SPSS). The statistical analysis of the delayed posttest for the control group is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Descriptive statistics of control group on the delayed posttest

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Posttest of control	26.3333	30	3.54608	.64742
Delayed posttest of control	21.9000	30	6.48260	1.18356

As shown in Table 6 above, the mean of control group in posttest was higher compared to delayed posttest (27.33 and 22.90, respectively). The standard deviation of the two groups was also different (64.742 for control group in posttest and 1.18356 for control group in delayed posttest). In order to see whether differences was significant or not, a paired samples t-test was run. Table 7 shows the result.

Table 7. Paired sample T-test results control group on the delayed posttest

Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Paired Differences		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
			Lower	Upper			
4.43333	7.61434	1.39018	1.59009	7.27657	3.189	29	.003

According to Table 7, the value of the t-observed reveals that difference between the means was statistically significant (t=3.189 and sig=.003). The results showed that the differences between two means was statistically significant for delayed and immediate posttest of the control group (p>.05). Therefore, the performance of the control groups' posttest was better than that of delayed posttest. It shows that the students in the delayed posttest lost a lot of their knowledge of English vocabulary they have learned.

Figures 3 show the graphical comparison of the control groups means in the posttest and delayed posttest.

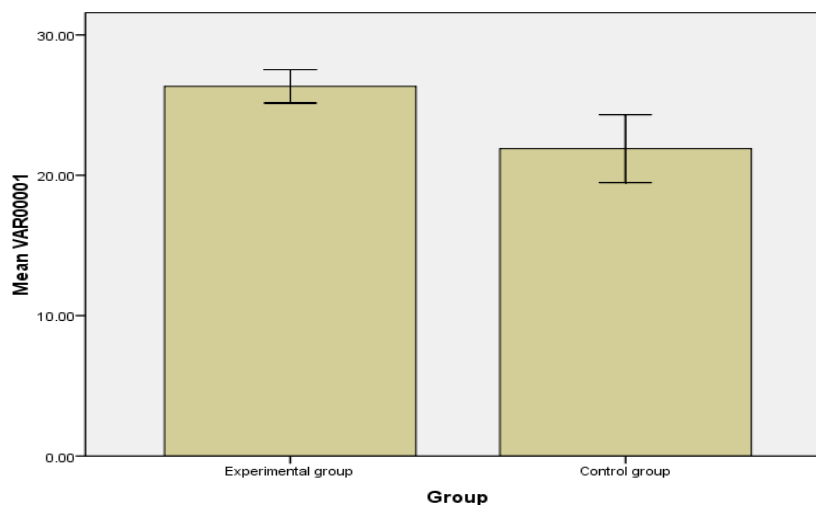


Figure 3. Graphical representation of groups on the delayed posttest

The participants' performances of Experimental group on the vocabulary delayed posttest

Paired sample T-test was used for the delayed posttest results. All the scores were analyzed by the software (SPSS). The statistical analysis of the delayed posttest for the experimental group is presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Experimental Groups' Performance in the Immediate and Delayed Posttest

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Posttest of control	30.3333	30	4.86602	.88841
Delayed posttest of control	29.4333	30	4.83296	.88237

According to the above table, the mean of the experimental group on posttest was higher than the delayed posttest (30.33 and 29.43, respectively). In order to see whether differences were significant or not, a paired samples t-test was run. Table 9 shows the result.

Table 9. Paired T-test Results for the Experimental Group's performance in the English Vocabulary Immediate Posttest and Delayed Posttest

Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Paired Differences		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
			Lower	Upper			
.90000	2.56434	.46818	-.05754	1.85754	1.922	29	.064

The results of the paired samples t-test calculation in Table 9 shows that there was not a significant difference between the two means ($t=-1.620$, $\text{sig}=.506$) at the level of 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that participants' performance of the experimental group

in delayed posttest has not changed to a great extent compared to their performances in the immediate posttest. Therefore, the answer to the second research question is that using gestures and facial expression has effectively improved participants' retention of vocabulary. This is illustrated in Figure 4.

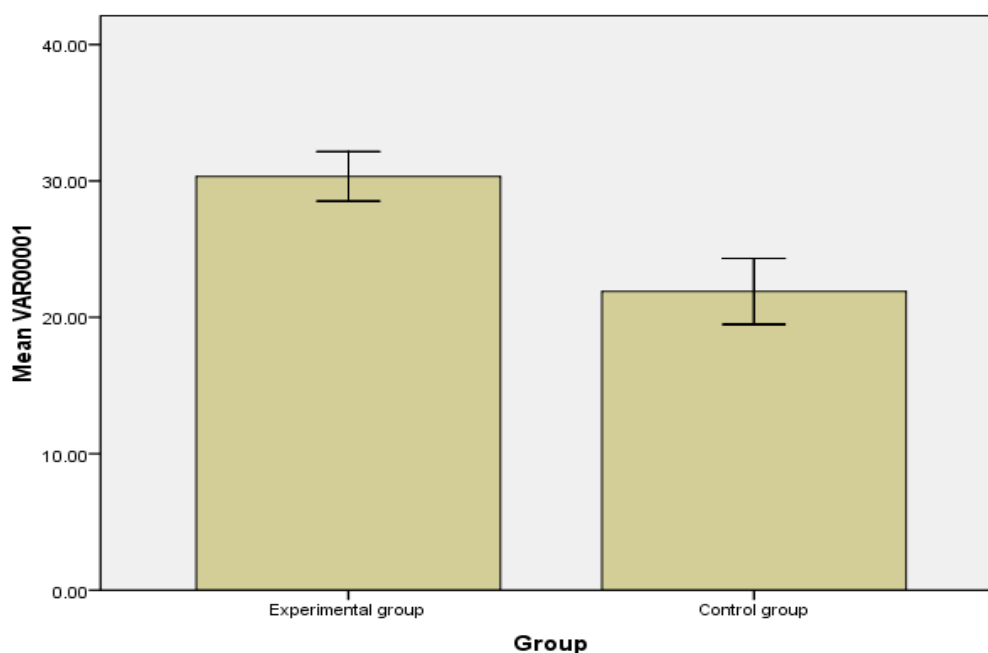


Figure 4. Graphical Representations of Experimental Groups in the Immediate and Delayed Posttest

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to see whether teaching concrete vocabulary through gestures and facial expressions helps students to learn better and also investigate the role of gesture and facial expressions in retention of the vocabulary.

After analyzing the data through descriptive statistics and a t-test for the experimental and the control group on posttest and delayed posttest, the results revealed that the experimental groups' outperformed the control group. Therefore it can be said that the training program had positive effects on the experimental groups' performance. Several studies have emphasized the role of gestures L2 acquisition (for an overview, see Gullberg, 2008). Teachers tend to gesture a lot (Sime, 2001; Hauge, 1999), especially when addressing young learners and/or beginners. It is commonly acknowledged that 'teaching gestures' (i.e. gestures used deliberately by teachers to help their students) capture attention and make the lesson more dynamic. Using analyses of video recordings of English lessons to French students, Tellier (2007) examined whether reproducing gestures has a greater impact on children's' memory span than merely looking at them. 42 French children were asked to repeat the words out loud in their first language after listening to them. There were three groups for the study. A control group listened to the words and repeated them. A first experimental group (EG1) listened to the words and repeated them as well but also looked at illustrative gestures

with each word. A second experimental (EG2) group was told to listen to the words, repeat them, look at the gestures and reproduce them. They were then given a free recall task. Results show that the second experimental group (EG2) did significantly better than the two other groups (control and EG1). This confirms the impact of the reproduction of gestures on short term memorization in the L1.

The findings of this study support the above mentioned studies which were based on gesture and facial cues. The findings of the study confirm that the experimental group's mean score was greater than that of control group due to the teaching procedures. Therefore it can be said that the gesture and facial cues based instruction positively affect learning vocabulary by the Iranian EFL elementary learners. Regarding the participants' retention of the vocabulary, students were also given a delayed posttest, the result revealed that there was a significant difference between experimental and control group. Experimental groups' outperformed the control group. Therefore, it can be said that training program had also positive effect on the retention of the vocabulary.

There has been very little work on the impact of gestures on short term and long term memorization in general. Experiments by Cohen and Otterbein (1992) have demonstrated that adult subjects exposed to sentences illustrated by pantomimic gestures remembered significantly more sentences than subjects who did not see the gestures and subjects who saw non-pantomimic gestures. They worked with three groups of adult subjects. The subjects had to watch a video containing several different sentences in their L1 and then to write down as many sentences as they could remember in a free recall task. Each group received the same verbal input but the videos were slightly different: one just presented the sentences, the second showed somebody illustrating each sentence with pantomimic gestures, and in the last video, sentences were accompanied by non-pantomimic (i.e. meaningless) gestures. A similar experiment set up by Feyereisen (1998) confirms Cohen and Otterbein's results. Feyereisen hypothesized that a sentence accompanied by a gesture is better remembered either because the gesture constitutes a distinctive effect (the gesture adds some particularity to the sentence) or because the gesture conveys significant information related to the meaning of the sentence in a visual modality which is added to the verbal information (double coding theory).

While discussing these results, it would be relevant to recall briefly some other important issues mentioned in the review of literature. Firstly, according to Clark and Paivio's Dual Coding Theory (1991) suggests that learning is reinforced when both verbal and non-verbal modalities co-occur. His assumption was proven throughout the experiment where our students who received instruction base on gesture and facial cues achieved higher scores in the post-test than those who did not. Moreover, informal observation during the experiment consistently showed that experimental group students were more motivated than the control group students. They demonstrated more eagerness and interest in learning.

Finally Engelkamp and Zimmer (1985) demonstrated that the free recall of enacted sentences is superior to the recall of spoken sentences and to the recall of visually

imaged sentences. Thus, the enactment effect is not a mere visual effect. Engelkamp and Zimmer (1985) explain the enactment effect on memorisation by postulating a motor system above the visual and the verbal memory systems. It seems that the encoding of enacted events involves a verbal modality, a visual modality and a motor modality. Thus, enactment adds something to the memory trace of the event, it makes the trace richer, or more distinctive, and consequently easier to find at recall. The results of the present study proved Engelkamp and Zimmer's claim. The experimental group outperformed the control group. This entails that gesture and facial cues do have a positive effect on the retention of new words.

CONCLUSION

Using gestures and facial expressions were shown to be an effective way to vocabulary learning compared to GTM vocabulary list memorization in short term retention. Learner absorbed target vocabulary items when they repeat them accompany with gestures. In other words, those who learned target vocabulary items by using gesture and facial expressions performed better on immediate posttest in comparison with those who learned traditionally. Also, the results of the delayed posttest show that using gesture in teaching vocabulary does have significant effect on the long term retention of the vocabulary items compared to traditional ways of vocabulary learning. In fact, retention of vocabulary in control group decreases significantly more than those of in the experimental group in time interval. In addition, learners find this strategy enjoyable and helpful in EFL vocabulary learning items.

The result of this study confirms that using gesture and facial cues is beneficial at least in the case of English vocabulary learning and retention. As previously mentioned in chapter 1, vocabulary learning is considered to be an important part in learning a new language. Therefore, results of this study can have implications for teachers and instructors in modern era who are willing to use new ways of teaching to improve their students' rate of learning. So, gesture and facial expressions can be considered as teaching techniques, a tool for learning, or an opportunity that schools and English institutes should not neglect.

Some limitations were involved in this study. First of all, the participants in the study were selected only from one sex, all females; therefore, the result could not be generalized to other groups of language learners. The next limitation is the limited time devoted to conduct this study i.e. short period of the experiment. By conducting a long-term experiment would have yielded more precise and more generalizable results. Third, the students' level of language proficiency was limited to elementary learners, while it can be conducted with students at different level of language proficiency.

This study has shown some remarkable findings, yet there other factors to be considered. Here the researchers present some suggestion for further research. Eager researchers can investigate the role of gender in vocabulary retention of students who worked with gesture and facial expressions which was disregarded in this study. Other suggestion for researcher is to investigate the effect of using gesture and facial cues on

vocabulary learning of participants with different English proficiency level which might bring new and interesting results. This current study investigated the effect of using gesture and facial expressions on vocabulary learning and retention of students. Another topic which can be considered as an interesting field for research is to investigate the effect of using gesture and facial expressions on storytelling.

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