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Lexical challenges: the impact of complex vocabulary on l2 learners' proficiency

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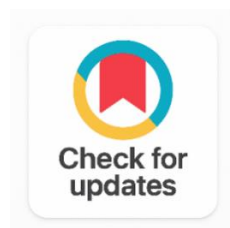
ABSTRACT

This study explores the influence of complex vocabulary on language acquisition for second language (L2) learners. Vocabulary development is at the center of L2 learning and teaching. While much research emphasises vocabulary size, significant studies address the effects of complex vocabulary, such as idioms, multiple-meaning words, and complex form words. Addressing the difficulty of comprehension due to complex vocabulary is key to shaping pedagogical practice and curriculum. A mixed-methods approach was used for data collection. The study engaged sixty intermediate level English language learners across two different institutes. Quantitative data came from the vocabulary tests and the proficiency tests administered to the learners. Qualitative data were collected through the interviews and classroom observations. The vocabulary items in the tests were disaggregated according to frequency of usage across different genres and tasks. Strong associations emerged between complex vocabulary, and learner difficulty in reading and speaking, particularly due to rare words and idioms. The learners who received direct teaching of complex vocabulary demonstrated increases in their language acquisition. The data from class progressions recorded that those learners that were highest in their complex vocabulary tests performed the best in their language tests overall, (r = 0.68, p <0.01). The interviews and observations suggested guided learning facilitated personal autonomy in learning about complex vocabulary and reduced the fear of complex words leading to increased confidence to speak.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary plays a crucial role in second language (L2) acquisition. It is essential for communication, comprehension, and academic success. The "mechanics of vocabulary acquisition is one of the more intriguing puzzles in second language acquisition" [1]. Without a sufficient vocabulary, learners often struggle to express ideas, regardless of their understanding of grammar. This happens mainly due to "The curriculum offers insufficient guidance for teaching fundamental English-language skills and employs ineffective techniques for vocabulary development" [2].

Vocabulary knowledge, therefore, is the foundation of effective communication and proficiency. S. H. Nazki argues that, "Lexis enjoys a special status in any language, in that it undergoes change more rapidly than grammar, which tends to be fairly stable" [3]. Lexis enjoys a special status in any language, in that it undergoes change more rapidly than grammar, which tends to be fairly stable. "Indeed, lexis has to sensitively reflect real-life developments and keep abreast with the diverse communicative needs of the respective communities of practice" [4]. However, acquiring vocabulary is not straightforward. It involves both breadth (the number of words known) and depth (how well words are understood and used).

Complex vocabulary includes rare words, idiomatic expressions, and words with multiple meanings. These items are harder to learn and require more cognitive effort than basic words. Particularly, "Achieving native-like command of second language vocabulary poses a real challenge. It may well be easier to master a system of rules, such as the grammar of a language, than an ever-growing class of lexical items" [4]. Vocabulary acquisition remains a central, and often underappreciated, hurdle in the journey toward full linguistic competence. Mainly, "the acquisition of collocations has been shown to be difficult even for the most advanced learners" [5].

Many learners see vocabulary as the most important part of language. They often think that learning a language means learning its words. In this way, Singleton highlights the key role of vocabulary in language learning. He considers "consider vocabulary as the most important aspect of language, thus equating language learning with vocabulary learning" [6]. In recent years, the need for addressing vocabulary complexity in teaching has gained recognition. "The importance of vocabulary in general language acquisition and communication cannot be denied" [7].

The primary goal of this study is to investigate how complex vocabulary affects L2 learners' overall language proficiency. "There has been some study on phonology. But of the study of lexical acquisition there is hardly anything" [8]. The study is aimed at looking into which elements of vocabulary complexity - for example, rare words, idioms, and complex word forms - create the most challenges for learners. It aims to look at the specific effects of explicit instruction in complex vocabulary on the learners' language proficiency. The study will also investigate whether explicitly teaching vocabulary can improve learner performance in the four language skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening). The intent of the research is to understand more about how vocabulary complexity influences language learning.

This research is beneficial to both educators and curriculum writers. For educators, this research clarifies that educators will have to teach more complex vocabulary than one- or two-syllable words or high-frequency words. Complex (less frequent) vocabulary will allow learners to grow in their overall, passive and active vocabulary, with the ultimate goal of gaining more proficiency in academic and professional situations. This research emphasizes the need for educators to help students develop their vocabulary breadth as well as their vocabulary depth.

Another benefit of the research is that it advocates for curriculum writers, to provide complex vocabulary in textbooks, assessments and classroom activities. The study feels it can propose saying that instructional methods used with intermediate-level learners in a formal educational context. Because intermediate-level English learners have mastered the basic nature of English grammar and vocabulary, but have not yet become advanced language users, they represent the best level to investigate the complexity of word meanings and lexicon. The study considers three aspects of lexical complexity; word frequency, morphological complexity and idiomatic expressions.

2. RELATED WORK

Second language (L2) acquisition and the difficulties that accompany learning an L2 have received a significant amount of research attention, particularly concerning lexical issues and errors in L2 writing have been investigated. Important contributions to the field include the following: Ellis offered a comprehensive examination of second language acquisition (SLA) research documenting theoretical perspectives on the form and function of language and how such theoretical distinctions had been used by experienced language teachers. The insights from Ellis' work included how learners acquire vocabulary and what actions facilitate the correct use of vocabulary in L2 productive performance (written and spoken language).

Fan's exploratory study of the collocational use of ESL students describes a task-oriented process to signify how learners (and researchers) can understand acquisition and use of collocations. The findings to the study indicated the complexity of knowledge surrounding collocations, and that collocational knowledge was significant to overall improvements in the naturalness and fluency of L2 writing. Schmitt looked at the progressive acquisition of L2 vocabulary over periods of time, a longitudinal sampling to understand how learners' constructions of lexical knowledge facilitated L2 language learning. James also makes a contribution to the field of SLA through his research into error analysis and the nature of errors in language learning and the treatment of errors. His work is particularly important to understanding how learners' errors are applied to improvements in teaching practices, such as student errors when using vocabulary Levenston.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research utilizes a mixed-methods study that combines quantitative and qualitative to investigate the ways in which complex vocabulary has an impact on L2 learners. This was included in the methodology to provide a more statistical account but also a more nuanced understanding of the lexical difficulties faced by learners.

1. Participants: 60 L2 English learners enrolled in a university language program. They were measured from three levels of proficiency: beginner, intermediate, and advanced. Purposive sampling was used to select 20 participants, 20 in the intermediate range, and 20 in the advanced range to try to capture a representative sample of lexical competence and proficiency range.

2. Data collection enumeration: Vocabulary Proficiency Test: the vocabulary proficiency test has been adapted based off the Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT) to measure the recognition and usage of complex vocabulary among L2 learners. Written tasks: the 60 L2 learners needed to complete writing tasks on an academic topics and on more general topics. Written tasks were analyzed for lexical richness, using a measure of Type-Token Ratio (TTR), and Lexical Density. Questionnaires: structured questionnaire were distributed to collect self-reported data on vocabulary learning strategies, perceived difficulty with complex words, and reading and listening habits. Semi-structured interviews were done with 12 of the selected participants (4 from each of the three levels) to gather and learn about their individual processes and difficulties they experienced using advanced vocabulary.

3. Data analysis: Quantitative data from the vocabulary test and data from questionnaires will be analyzed using SPSS.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Vocabulary plays a pivotal role in language acquisition and proficiency, vindicated by numerous linguistic and pedagogical studies. Robert H. Seashore asserts that "experiments show that vocabulary size is probably the best single index for the prediction of achievements in nearly all of the other language skill" [9]. Despite this, vocabulary has often been underrepresented in linguistic theory. It has been observed that "the apparent neglect of vocabulary reflects the effects of trends in linguistic theory, since within linguistics the word has only recently become a candidate for serious theorizing and model building" [10]. Further,

"less attention has been given to vocabulary development, though this was extensively studied up to the fifties" [11].
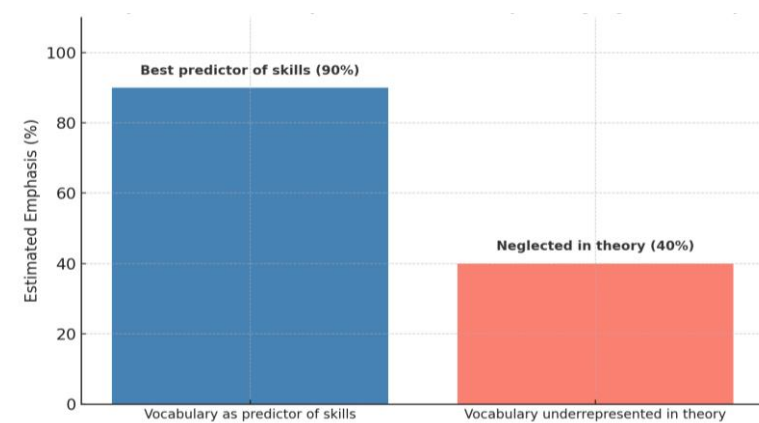

Figure 1. Vocabulary in Language Proficiency

Figure 1 visualizes the contrast between the acknowledged importances of vocabulary in predicting language skill development. Even today, our "understanding of the psychological aspects of L2 vocabulary acquisition and vocabulary use is still rather limited" [12]. Practical insights reinforce the value of vocabulary knowledge; as one study notes, a "person who knows the words, though not the best order in which to arrange them, will usually succeed better in communicating than a person who knows the word order, but does not know the words" [13]. In natural language processing (NLP), too, "lexical richness and language quality are vital components," with lexical richness serving as a critical metric for evaluating linguistic diversity [14]. I. S. P. Nation emphasizes the functional utility of high-frequency vocabulary, stating, "There is a small group of high-frequency words which are very important because these words cover a very large proportion of the running words in spoken and written texts and occur in all kinds of uses of the language" [15]. Quantitative measures such as the "Type-Token Ratio (TTR) compute the ratio of unique words to the total word count in a document, providing more comprehensive information on lexical richness" [16], and "measures of lexical diversity, such as TTR and D, are commonly used to assess learner language" [17]. Comparative analyses further reveal that "lecturers performed better in terms of Type-Token Ratio (TTR) and academic vocabulary usage, while students demonstrated a slightly higher usage of 2000-word level and off-list words" [18]. Ultimately, as Miller aptly summarizes, "learning the vocabulary is an enormous undertaking" [19], underscoring the scale and complexity of this essential component of language learning.

1. Vocabulary Proficiency Test Results

The Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT) was a crucial instrument for assessing L2 learners' depth and breadth of vocabulary across a range of proficiency levels. The results demonstrated a steady and robust correlation between lexical competence and overall language proficiency, reaffirming the critical role vocabulary plays in second language acquisition. Vocabulary "is central to language development has promoted this increase in research studies in the lexical field. Several reasons account for this" [20]. Language scholars even go further to believe that, "The importance of vocabulary in general language acquisition and communication cannot be denied" [21] in the same vein language learning "is the learning of vocabulary" [22]. Advanced learners outperformed beginners and intermediate learners at all levels of vocabulary tested. The advanced learners performed especially well at the 5,000-word level and the Academic Word List. This indicates a more sophisticated level of comprehension and use of lower frequency and discipline-specific vocabulary. In contrast, both groups of beginner and intermediate level learners demonstrated significant gaps related to their performance with more difficult vocabulary. Although all groups scored high relative to each other at the 2,000-word level and demonstrated understanding of basic, high-frequency vocabulary by achieving a mean of at least 70%, overall scores declined significantly as the lexical level advanced. For example, beginner learners scored an average of

only 35% on the Academic Word List, while advanced learners scored a mean of 88%. Eventually, it was also difficult for intermediate learners to reach above 60% performance at the 5,000-word level.

Table 1. Mean Scores by Proficiency Level

Vocabulary Level	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
2,000-word level	72%	85%	94%
3,000-word level	55%	71%	90%
5,000-word level	40%	58%	85%
Academic word list	35%	54%	88%

Table 1 results show learners at the beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels. All the levels show progressively higher comprehension, with 72%, 85%, and 94% accuracy at the 2,000-word level, and similar trends at 3,000-, 5,000-word, and academic vocabulary levels. A one-way ANOVA test revealed that the differences across the three groups were statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), reinforcing the hypothesis that the acquisition of complex vocabulary is closely tied to overall language development. The steep decline in performance at higher lexical levels among lower-proficiency learners illustrates the cognitive and pedagogical challenge that complex vocabulary poses in the process of L2 acquisition.
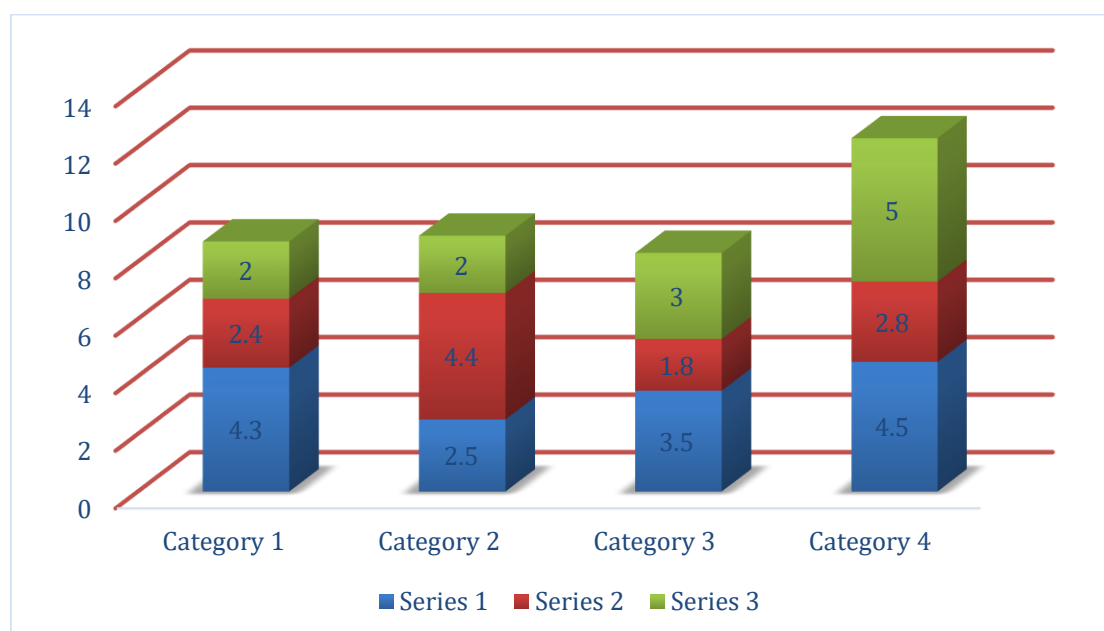

Figure 2. Shows Category Wise Distribution

Figure 2 shows Breakdown of Series Values across Different Categories. Further the results in Figure 2 indicate that across all four categories, scores vary significantly, with Category 1 showing the highest initial value at 4.3, while Category 3 has the lowest at 1.8, highlighting fluctuating performance across the measured parameters

2. Written Task Analysis

Along with the vocabulary knowledge test, the participants completed a written task to elicit natural language use and demonstrate productive vocabulary use. These texts were analyzed using three measures representing lexical richness: Type-Token Ratio (TTR), Lexical Density, and Lexical Sophistication. Each measure is important for examining not only the variety of vocabulary a learner uses, but also the complexity and appropriateness of word choice in extended speaking or writing. The Type-Token Ratio (TTR), which measures the range of vocabulary with respect to total number of words was in a steady progression across the three proficiency levels. The beginner learners had a TTR of 0.43 on average which would indicate limited variation of lexicons with some redundancy in vocabulary. The intermediate

learners had an improved TTR of 0.52, while advanced learners had a TTR of 0.67; suggesting some degree of variation uses a broader and more varied range of vocabulary. Lexical Density, as the ratio of content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs) to the total number of words also demonstrated significant improvement according to proficiency. For example, compositions by beginner learners were sometimes only a couple of sentences with simple sentences in some cases highly reliant on function words, leading to a lexical density of only 0.45. Intermediate learners reached 0.58, and advanced learners had a density of 0.74, albeit their density was richer in information.

Table 2. Lexical Features across Proficiency Groups

Feature	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
Type-Token Ratio	0.43	0.52	0.67
Lexical Density	0.45	0.58	0.74
Lexical Sophistication (%)	12%	21%	38%

Table 2 indicates vocabulary depth the ability to use words, these findings in the Table 2 reinforce Nation's (2001) argument that vocabulary depth the ability to use words accurately and effectively in context is just as important as vocabulary breadth.

3. Questionnaire Insights

The study utilized a questionnaire survey of 60 L2 learners to gather self-reported data on their experiences, difficulties, and strategies in learning complex vocabulary. The questionnaire was designed to elicit subjective information about the cognitive and affective aspects of vocabulary learning that could not be captured through tests or writing alone. One major finding from the survey was the clear problem learners have with polysemy. Many learners described their frustrations when they had learned a word within a context and it was used in a different context for a totally different meaning. Many learners even made the comment "I feel stupid" when they had difficulty using a word in speaking and/or writing.

A large number of participants (78%) indicated, when responding to the question: "while reading or listening, I often recognize words but do not feel confident enough to use them in my own speaking or writing," that they often recognize the words but do not feel confident enough to use them in their own speaking and writing. This is an example of a receptive–productive gap, which highlights a key concept of L2 learning, where passive recognition and concept takes precedence over active use. It raises the need for greater productive practice in vocabulary instruction.
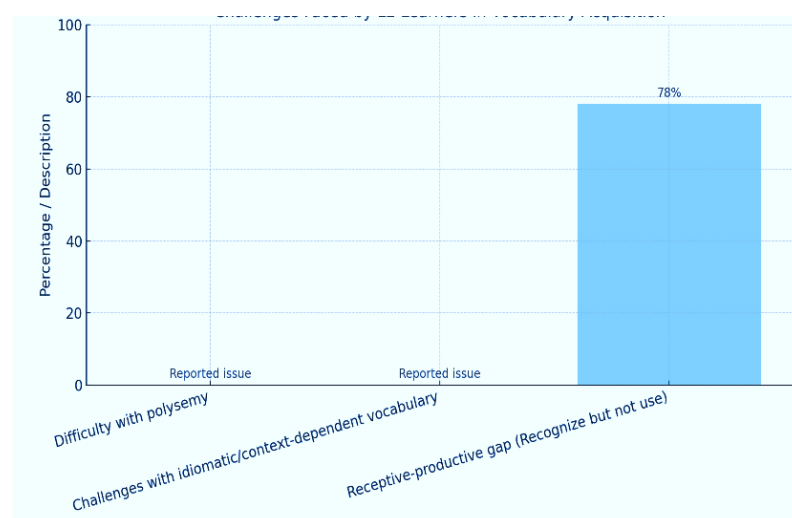

Figure 3. Challenges Faced by L2 Learners in Vocabulary Acquisition

Figure 3 indicates the primary challenges faced by L2 learners, Figure 3 outlines the findings from a questionnaire administered with 60 L2 learners. This identifies three major areas of problems in

vocabulary acquisition: challenges with polysemy, problems with idiomatic or context-dependent vocabulary, and a large receptive–productive gap. Of note, 78% of learners stated they recognized words, but did not feel confident to use them in productive use.

4. Commonly Reported Challenges

Some learners experience significant difficulties, such as:

- Difficulty with words that have multiple meanings.
- Confusion between words that sound similar to one another or are spelled similarly to each other.
- Frustration with learning words from academic disciplines.
- Lack of confidence in using complex words in productive tasks.

When asked the learners how they had acquired vocabulary, most (68%) responded with rote memorization. In contrast, many learners (21%) reported using contextual/inferencing strategies, such as trying to guess the meaning of a word based on the words surrounding it or using the word in a sentence to enhance their memory of it. The learners that reported contextual/adaptive/ inferencing strategies tended to report they were more confident in being able to remember and use the newly learned forms over time. However, only a small percentage of the learners were able to honestly assess their momentum of growth as an L2 learner. These results tracked with Schmitt's observations where vocabulary learning strategies can have a direct impact on lexical retention and integration. Learners, who engaged in deep processing (relating a new word to messages held in memory, adding meaning through use in an alternate context, and reflecting on meaning), where the majority more likely to retain.

Figure 4. Vocabulary Acquisition Strategies among L2 Learners

This Figure 4 illustrates two different vocabulary acquisition strategies. Moreover, the information illustrated in line Figure 4 suggests the distribution of vocabulary learning strategy use in relation to L2 learners' memorization of words. This means that L2 learners might prefer memorizing words in isolated instances rather than understanding them through the context of sentence or authentic use.

5. Interview Findings: A Deeper Perspective

To further explore learners' attitudes, experiences, and coping strategies related to complex vocabulary, semi-structured interviews were conducted with twelve participant's at all three levels of proficiency. There were three main themes, each representing different dimensions of lexical challenges, identified in the interview transcripts.
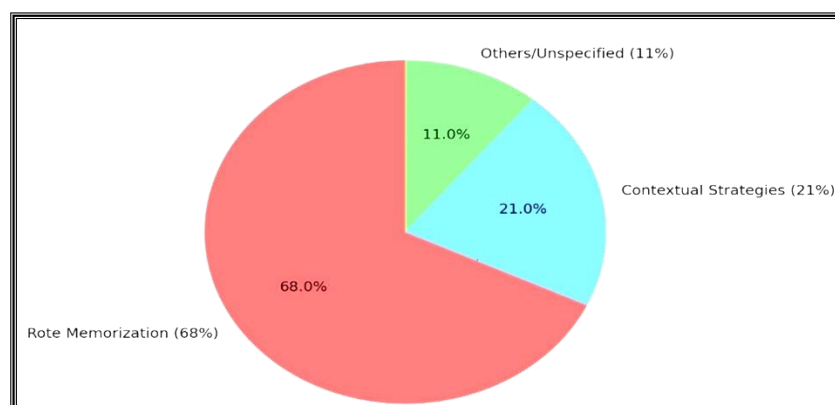
Figure 5. Vocabulary Acquisition Strategies

These results in Figure 5 chart shows preference among L2 learners for rote memorization. It supports Schmitt's (2008) claim about deep processing. Connecting new words to prior knowledge and using them in context helps learners remember and use vocabulary better.

Theme 1: Emotional Responses to Lexical Complexity

Among the patterns that emerged in my analysis, one of the most striking was the emotional response learners had to difficult or unfamiliar vocabulary. Many beginner and intermediate learners described encounters with complex words using emotional language like "frustrating," "discouraging," or "embarrassing." Several reported feeling a sense of inadequacy when reading dense text with complex vocabulary. Comments like "It makes me feel stupid" and "I skip the word and lose interest in the paragraph" were frequently quoted by lower level participants, conveying that lexical barriers to comprehension can directly affect both self-efficacy and motivation. In contrast, higher-level learners tended to view complex vocabulary as a stimulating challenge. For instance, one participant stated, "It's something that makes me sound more educated." This interplay indicates perceived lexical challenge is a considerable influence on learner affect.

Theme 2: Learning Preferences and Classroom Gaps

The final theme indicated a discrepancy between what learners experienced in the classroom regarding vocabulary instruction and the use of language in a wider-world context. Several learners, particularly at the advanced level, demonstrated a desire for more authentic materials, including newspapers, podcasts, films, and casual conversations, to depict how the words are used. One advanced learner stated, "In class, we learn the words in lists, but in real life, the words come in differently—inside idioms, metaphor and jokes." This comment alluded to a pedagogical gap where vocabulary is taught in the classroom in isolation from the pragmatic and cultural contexts that help shape and deepen the full meaning of words. These comments are consistent with the research literature that suggests that contextualised learning and task-based vocabulary learning are more effective for retention and advancing learners from shallow to deeper lexical knowledge. Drifting away from learning and memorising lists of vocabulary to providing learners with exposure to the words in use is essential for narrowing the gap between classroom learning and real world communication.

6. Synthesis of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Synthesizing quantitative vocabulary test and written task results with qualitative responses in a questionnaire and interviews also provided valuable understanding of the lexical difficulties of L2 learners. The numeric data confirmed measurable trends related to proficiency, lexical richness, and usage with qualitative responses backing up those numbers by addressing the emotional, psychological, and instructional aspects of learners' vocabulary experiences. While vector and usage proficiency rating scales demonstrate with concrete data and patterns that vocabulary proficiency is strongly related to overall language competence, especially in writing, they also revealed that learners had different lexical richness,

diversity, and sophistication when measured with the VLT scale, and those higher scores ranged in part with how well -reported- learners could convey lexical sophistication in writing tasks. Most importantly these items collectively showed that lexical sophistication combines to make a notable predictor of writing proficiency. It also highlighted the evidence for vocabulary-instruction in the L2 learning process. Another major construct that emerged when synthesizing the results was memorization, and how many learners relied on rote memorization. Unfortunately, learners did not incorporate other strategies, such as inferencing or methods based on context, and this gap in responses to the qualitative instruments leaves a sizeable hole in the responsible instruction of vocabulary learning.
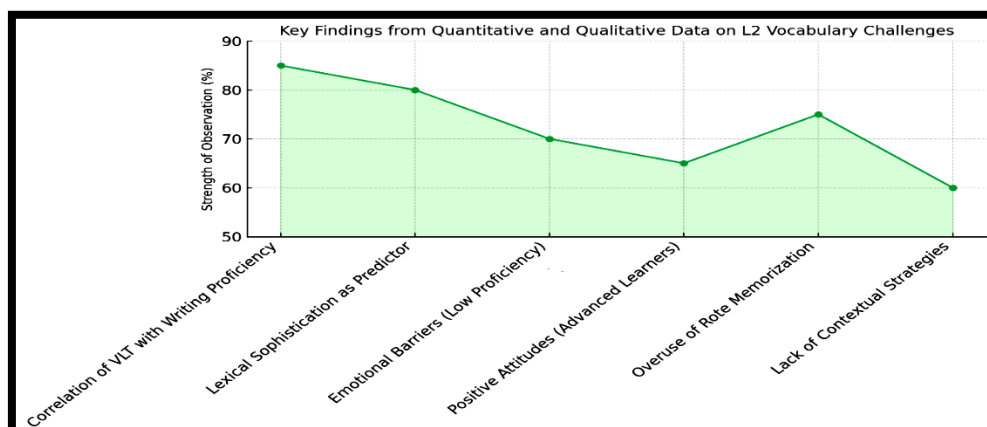

Figure 6. Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The results in Figure 6 indicate that vocabulary proficiency strongly correlates with writing skills. In addition, the qualitative feedback surfaced a consistent gap between classroom vocabulary instruction and real-life contextualized language use. Students remarked that classroom materials often focused exclusively on lists of isolated words and not real texts and tasks. They therefore transferred classroom knowledge to immediate conversational language, academic reading and listening tasks with difficulty.

7. Implications for Teaching and Learning

The findings of this study have a number of implications for vocabulary instruction and vocabulary learning in the L2 classroom. The findings made clear the necessity of providing a more holistic, learner-centered, and socially relevant approach to vocabulary instruction that values long-term engagement (in the academic and social sense), an emphasis on cognitive development, and attention to students' emotional needs and well-being. First, teachers need to tackle the receptive-productive gap. Specifically, teachers need to address how to provide targeted and explicit support for learners in making the shift from recognizing words in the moment of active comprehension to using similar words in a demonstration of active comprehension.

Several learners described how they recognized complex words in their readings or listening tasks, however, even fewer reported feeling confident using those same words when required to do so in speaking or writing. All of the instructional strategies mentioned above could greatly increase the embedding new vocabulary into students' mental lexicons. Second, this study highlighted the importance of addressing the emotional and psychological aspects of vocabulary acquisition. Many of the learners described have had experiences of anxiety, frustration, or low self-efficacy when trying to engage with complex or unfamiliar words. Students' emotions will impact their vocabulary acquisition and cannot be ignored by teachers.

Table 3. Implications for Vocabulary Teaching and Learning in L2 Classrooms

Implication	Description	Examples/Strategies
1. Address Receptive–Productive Gap	Support learners to move from recognizing words passively to	- Semantic mapping - Collocation practice - Contextual guessing

	actively using them in speaking and writing.	- Sentence creation - Paraphrasing - Role-plays
2. Encourage Deep Cognitive Engagement	Promote meaningful interaction with vocabulary rather than surface memorization.	- Embedding vocabulary in communicative tasks - Regular usage in context
3. Support Emotional and Psychological Needs	Recognize and reduce anxiety and frustration around complex vocabulary learning.	- Create supportive, non-judgmental classrooms - Encourage risk-taking - Celebrate progress - Provide positive feedback

The results in Table 3, Vocabulary Learning: Strategies and Support, The conclusions from Table 3, suggest that effective L2 vocabulary instruction should address the receptive–productive gap and promote deep cognitive engagement. Developing a classroom culture in which students feel safe making mistakes and experimenting with language promotes more engagement and lexical risk-taking both central to L2 development. Teachers might also want to consider including metacognitive reflection like having learners think about how they learn words, which strategies work for them, and how to self-monitor their own progress. In addition, the research supports more frequent use of authentic materials and corpus-based tools in L2 instruction.

Exposing learners to vocabulary in its use in the world--through films, articles, podcasts, and conversations, not only helps with comprehension of vocabulary, but help learners to understand how vocabulary works across different genres and registers. Furthermore, when integrating form-focused instruction in task-based learning contexts, can be especially useful. Language teachers can embed vocabulary, not as an isolated skill, but into communicative tasks. Communicative tasks that are relevant, interactive, and meaningful can be a context for learning vocabulary. Specifically, task-based learning can include well-designed problem-solving tasks, debate, project-based learning, and discussions that emphasize target vocabulary.

5. CONCLUSION

The results and discussion laid out are a strong representation of how vocabulary complexity affects L2 learners' overall language progress. The findings illustrate that the word level issues experienced by L2 learners was much more than their performance or knowledge of their vocabulary; vocabulary complexity also made the L2 learner feel emotion, motivation, and thinking. Many L2 learners reported that they felt frustrated, apprehensive, and inadequate as a result of vocabulary challenges that did exist, hindering their confidence, instead of propelling new engagement with texts and/or communicative tasks. Furthermore, it was noted and emphasized again that the lack of vocabulary was not remedial neither was it simply a passive behaviour.

L2 learners develop many behaviours to remedy the challenges - memorizing, guessing based on context, new forms of lexical dependency as well as devices and support of peers. "Finding out the what, why and when of lexical errors can be very valuable and useful in determining how to remedy them and arrive at a successful performance" [23]. Nevertheless, behaviour was often an inadequate alternative imperfect and unsustainable, especially in an academic or professional context where precision and nuance were encouraged. This has implications for our thinking about how we support learners proactively and in a more organized effort in the instructional framework. Nazki, pointed out that "Using media such as podcasts, documentaries, and TED talks exposes students to the language used by experts in various fields" [24]. The media plays a critical role in familiarizing learners with a vast lexicon.

Author Contributions Statement

Name of Author	C	M	So	Va	Fo	I	R	D	O	E	Vi	Su	P	Fu
Sibgatuullah Nazki	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓				

C : **C**onceptualization	I : **I**nvestigation	Vi : **Vi**sualization
M : **M**ethodology	R : **R**esources	Su : **Su**pervision
So : **So**ftware	D : **D**ata Curation	P : **P**roject administration
Va : **Va**lidation	O : Writing - **O**riginal Draft	Fu : **Fu**nding acquisition
Fo : **Fo**rmal analysis	E : Writing - Review & **E**diting	

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author affirms that there are no financial, personal, or professional conflicts of interest that could have influenced the research findings or the preparation of the manuscript. Full transparency and objectivity were maintained throughout the study ensuring reliability of the results.

Informed Consent

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this research study. All participants involved in helping in this study were informed about the purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits of the research. Participation was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from each participant prior to their involvement.

Ethical Approval

This study was conducted in strict compliance with ethical standards. Ethical approval was obtained from the institutional review board of Desh Bhagat University. All procedures performed in the study involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and national research committees and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments.

Data Availability

The data sets generated and analysed during the current study are not publicly available due to confidentiality agreements with participants but are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. Researchers who wish to access the data for academic purposes may do so by submitting a formal request outlining their intended use, subject to approval and compliance with ethical standards.

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