
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Unveiling Moroccan EFL Teachers' Perceptions of the Impact of Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

Hassan El Garras¹✉, Mourad El Hanafi² and Hassan Ait Hammou³

^{1,2}Laboratory of Values, Society, and Development (LVSD), Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, Ibnou Zohr University, Agadir, Morocco

³Faculty of Letters, languages and Arts, Ibn Tofail University, Kenitra, Morocco

Corresponding Author: Hassan El Garras, **E-mail:** hassanelgarras@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The present paper reports on a quantitative study that explored Moroccan EFL high school teachers' attitudes and perceptions of explicit vocabulary instruction. A survey with 12 closed-ended items was sent to 62 teachers via Google Forms. The survey aimed at eliciting teachers' perceptions of daily teaching practices, teaching materials, learner characteristics, etc. The overall findings indicated that teachers have positive perceptions of explicit instruction in improving learners' vocabulary repertoire. Yet, due to curriculum constraints and lack of rich, interesting materials, teachers could not have their learners exposed to explicit instruction routines. The current study offers comprehensive results of EFL Moroccan teachers' attitudes of explicit and direct vocabulary instruction and its impact on language development, which could yield useful information and insights for better and more effective teaching practices in EFL contexts.

KEYWORDS

Vocabulary size, explicit instruction, form-focused instruction, EFL

ARTICLE INFORMATION

ACCEPTED: 01 January 2025

PUBLISHED: 11 January 2025

DOI: 10.32996/ijllt.2025.8.1.9

1. INTRODUCTION

Having a wide vocabulary repertoire is considered very important for learning a second or foreign language. It plays a crucial role in both language acquisition and reading comprehension (Nation, 2001). Being equipped with a good vocabulary provides the basis for conveying meaning. Wilkins (1972) stated: "without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed" (p. 111). Research has indicated that vocabulary is intrinsically related to success in reading, listening, writing, and grammar (Schmitt, 2010). In turn, it is now accepted that acquiring a significant portion of vocabulary is accomplished through exposure to rich interesting input. In the initial stages of language learning, students' vocabulary size facilitates language development. Nevertheless, EFL contexts lack enough exposure time. Thus, learners need to encounter a word multiple times to enhance their understanding and mastery. Learners need to focus on spelling, meaning, pronunciation, collocation, etc.; this is key for achieving long-term retention.

In foreign language learning contexts, where exposure to rich and authentic vocabulary is extremely limited, a systematic approach to vocabulary teaching is crucial to facilitate learners' intake and to help them develop different aspects of vocabulary knowledge (Akbarian, 2010). Experts suggested that language teachers include a component of explicit vocabulary instruction in their teaching routines. The study at hand aims at exploring how EFL Moroccan teachers perceive explicit instruction and their beliefs on its worthiness in developing learners' language proficiency level.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Vocabulary acquisition

Vocabulary acquisition has been the center of academic research since the 1980s. Nevertheless, those concerned with this area of applied linguistics have not agreed upon one method for vocabulary teaching (Schmitt, 2010). Inside the classroom, vocabulary teaching emphasized word lists and word cards. Once students reach the intermediate stage, it has been assumed that they will pick up and acquire vocabulary in their ongoing journey of language acquisition without much interference from teachers. Brown (2007) stressed that this assumption is not well established, and that vocabulary learning entails its due attention inside the classroom. It has been evident that vocabulary learning is a complex matter and at the same time it constitutes the foundation for all language skills (Nation, 2013; Schmitt, 2008).

According to Pellicer-Sanchez (2018), some of the factors that contribute to vocabulary learning include the frequency of target words and phrases as well as the number of encounters that students have at exposure to certain words. Researchers maintained that for acquisition and retention of target vocabulary to take place, students should have six to ten times of exposure (Horst et al., 1998; Pellicer-Sánchez & Schmitt, 2010; Pigada & Schmitt, 2006; Webb, 2007).

There are several factors that influence how well learners acquire vocabulary inside the language classroom. These include learners' mother tongue, cultural background, motivation, learning materials, learners' age, etc. All these variables have an impact on vocabulary acquisition (Schmitt, 2000). Therefore, language teachers are required to take these into consideration when designing intervention materials to adopt inside the classroom. Around the world, the communicative language teaching method has occupied a large portion of research in English language teaching. Within this perspective, vocabulary learning is thought to occur thanks to the amount of exposure to meaningful input as well as meaningful and rich interactions that students engage in when working on different language skills, such as reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Nonetheless, a number of scholars called for a more systematic and direct learning and teaching time targeting key vocabulary items within the classroom (Ahmadvand & Nejadansari, 2014; Fainman & Tokar, 2019; Tahir et al. 2020; Yirssie et al., 2023). On the other hand, it has been thought that L2 researchers in vocabulary acquisition do not assume that vocabulary knowledge constitutes one dimension anymore.

Experts consider that vocabulary knowledge is a multidimensional construct (Qian & Schedl, 2004). Thus, there are several kinds of knowledge involved in determining one's ability to use a word or phrase properly and effectively in a foreign language. Literature makes use of two aspects of vocabulary knowledge: depth and breadth. The latter refers to the size of a learner's vocabulary repertoire, while the depth aspect has implications in how deep a language learners masters and knows about a given word or expression, which includes word frequency, collocates, spelling, pronunciation, etc. (Qian, 1999). It was Nation (1990, 2001) who devised a vocabulary knowledge model. In this model, he discussed three different aspects of knowing a word.

- a. Form: spoken, written, word parts
- b. Meaning: form-meaning relationships, concepts and referents, associations
- c. Use: grammatical functions, collocations, constraints on use

In this regard, researchers have investigated the extent to which depth and breadth impact students' language development. For example, Susoy and Tanyer (2019) investigated how depth and breadth of vocabulary knowledge affect EFL learners' reading skills. The researchers recruited 30 college-level participants. Following the reading assessment stage and the vocabulary knowledge tests, different analysis techniques were employed including descriptive statistics and Pearson product moment correlations. The findings indicated that there was statistically significant impact ($r = .718$, $p < .01$) of the depth aspect in developing and augmenting learners' reading comprehension.

2.2. Explicit instruction

Explicit instruction has originally been used in teaching grammar forms, but recently it has been adapted to vocabulary instruction. According to Archer and Hughes (2011) explicit instruction refers to "a structured, systematic, and effective methodology for teaching academic skills" (p. 1). They labeled it explicit since it involves an unambiguous and direct method of learning and teaching in terms of both the instructional design and delivery procedures. Archer and Hughes (2011) pointed that to have an effective application of this method, teachers need to provide simple and clear scaffolding techniques. The authors emphasize that scaffolding activities and techniques should make use of content that is at the level of learners, provide clear tasks, and activate learners' prior knowledge. Archer and Hughes (2011) continue stating that: "Initial practice is carried out with high levels of teacher involvement; however, once student success is evident, the teacher's support is systematically withdrawn, and the students move toward independent performance" (p. 10). Nation (2013) added that teachers who desire to implement explicit instruction techniques can have language learners engage in activities such as flash cards, translation, using dictionaries, doing isolated exercises, etc. Moreover, it was illustrated that when applying explicit instruction, teachers can bring both deductive and inductive modes (Youngblood, 2014).

There have been a number of methods designed to apply the guidelines of the explicit teaching approach. One popular method is the form-focused instruction (FFI), which aims at facilitating the vocabulary learning process. Long (1991) coined the term form focused instruction which has two different modes or applications. The first one is called *Focus on Form* and the other is called *Focus on forms*. Applying the latter entails having learners exposed to linguistic forms directly while providing overt

explanations and drills. Teachers holding this perspective provide a clear syllabus, illustrating clear steps and stages that should be implemented in a specific order. In contrast, *focus on form* often happens in learning situations where the main focus is on communication and meaningful tasks and activities. Those applying this teaching mode usually avoid having learners work on isolated linguistic forms or vocabulary exercises since the main focus is on communication.

In applied linguistics, several studies reported significantly positive effects of explicit teaching on vocabulary growth and retention (Ahmadvand & Nejadansari, 2014; Fainman & Tokar, 2019; Tahir et al. 2020; Yirssie et al., 2023). Similarly, Nation (2002) claimed that deliberate explicit instruction of vocabulary can be very useful in increasing learners' vocabulary and fostering their retention. Researchers and practitioners have favored one mode over the other. Spada and Lightbown (2008) explained that it is very important to know when to choose the appropriate mode of FFI to adopt inside the language classroom.

2.3. Explicit vs. implicit vocabulary instruction

In literature, there are two main teaching methods in regard to vocabulary instruction, either explicit or implicit. These correspond to Long's (1991) *Focus on Form* and *Focus on Forms*. In explicit teaching and learning, learners' attention is unambiguously drawn to language itself (Nation, 2001). Dornyei (2009), argued that explicit learning tends to occur in classroom situations that put learners in a conscious and deliberate focus on mastering and solving linguistic and vocabulary tasks. In terms of implicit instruction, Schmitt (2010) pointed out that learning and language development are thought to happen as a by-product of meaningful and communicative tasks. Therefore, according to this view, learning and acquiring vocabulary takes place incidentally as a by-product of different language learning activities, including reading a text, watch a video, or listening to music. In turn, Spada and Lightbown (2008) mentioned two similar modes of teaching, isolated and integrated form focused instruction. The authors illustrated in the isolated mode, students focus on specific features and forms of language, and they are usually separate from meaningful interactive use of language. On the other hand, in integrated mode, teachers are found to make use of tasks and activities that favor focusing on communication and interaction.

Ellis (1994) explained that implicit learning, which concerns the "acquisition of knowledge about the underlying structure of a complex stimulus environment by a process which takes place naturally, simply and without conscious operation", is favored over the explicit learning mode. In contrast, explicit learning or "more conscious operation where the individual makes and tests hypotheses in a search for structure" (p. 1) is considered to have more importance particularly in vocabulary instruction.

To put this in perspective, to this day, though, there is still an ongoing controversy concerning the best approach to vocabulary instruction. Teachers are sometimes found to be in a dilemma regarding which mode of instruction to adopt. Several studies indicated that the issue of explicit versus implicit instruction is not a dichotomy, but it is considered as a continuum (Lee & Tan, 2012; Nation 2001; Schmitt, 2008). It is considered a continuum since teachers' choice can vary depending on learner characteristics, task at hand, learning objectives, etc. Both modes of instruction can have their own place in language classrooms.

Several research studies have explored both explicit and implicit vocabulary acquisition. In Schmitt's (2013) study, Dutch students tried to infer the meanings of unfamiliar French words from sentences, then confirmed their guesses using a word list before memorizing them. The results showed that they retained a similar amount of vocabulary (about 50 percent of the target words on a receptive test two weeks later) as students who received a translation before memorization. This suggests that incidental or implicit vocabulary learning, followed by explicit instruction, can be just as effective as direct explicit instruction alone. In different studies, Ahmed (2017) and Yamamoto (2014) reported that explicit or intentional learning was superior to incidental learning in enhancing learners' vocabulary retention.

According to Nation (2001), learning that happens incidentally through guessing the meaning of words within familiar context tends to be more effective than any other form. He continued claiming that language learners "do not experience the conditions that are needed for this kind of learning to occur" (p. 232) since they need to be equipped with a large vocabulary repertoire. The author also suggested that to learn vocabulary within context, reading or listening, a learner would have to read weekly approximately one graded reader per level. Moreover, Nation (2001) added that not only do language learners have to read one graded reader per week, but they also need to have direct exposure supplemented by isolated forms of learning.

Rafieyan (2017) conducted a quantitative study to investigate how FFI would affect learners' acquisition and mastery of formulaic sequences. The experiment followed two different modes of FFI, *focus on form* and *focus on forms*. His objective was to measure their impact on improving learners' performance and particularly in enhancing their mastery of FCL. The researcher followed an experimental research design with two different conditions. His participants were 30 university EFL students from an intensive language learning program. The researcher included two research instruments, such as cued output tests and recognition tests in order to assess learners' performance before and after the treatment (FFI). The mixed between-within subjects' analysis of variance revealed that the two modes of teaching, *focus on form* and *focus on forms*, were found to yield positive outcomes on the part of conditions.

In turn, Thomson (2016) compared how effective are two different methods of teaching lexical bundles, explicit noticing and incidental exposure. The sample of this study was made of three intact classes of second year college students. The 65 participants in this study had Japanese as their L1. They were put into three different groups: noticing with context completion (n= 26), noticing with schematic linguistic representation (n=15), and meaning focused exposure (n = 24). A pretest was given

in order to assess learners' mastery of lexical bundles and to remove those that the learners are familiar with. The treatment targeted 9 different lexical bundles which were selected from Liu's (2012) academic resource, based on frequency and relevance to classroom teaching. Following the treatment, learners' performance was measured using ANOVA analysis of variance and illustrated that the impact was significantly greater in the immediate posttest for the schematic linguistic representation mode, but after the delayed post-test this difference disappeared. The statistics indicated that the condition that was exposed to noticing with schematic linguistic representation made better progress ($M = 7.63$) compared to the noticing with context completion ($M = 4.38$). Therefore, the findings showed that while noticing lexical bundles with schematic linguistic representation led to initial positive results, it was not a reliable indicator in terms of long-term retention of lexical bundles.

Rahimpour and Salimi (2010) carried out a study to investigate how would FFI impact EFL learners' language achievement. The body of participants was made of 30 intermediate level female learners. They were put into experimental and control groups. The experimental group received feedback in the form of recast (formal explicit instruction); in contrast, the control group followed the communicative teaching method without any direct instruction. The researchers used multiple-choice and grammatical judgment tests. After analyzing the results, it was concluded that explicit instruction is favored and leads to better outcomes.

To conclude, based on this brief discussion of the difference between implicit and explicit vocabulary instruction, it is obvious what determines which mode to select is the purpose of learning. Each method of vocabulary instruction has some advantages. However, in EFL learning environments where authentic and rich linguistic input is extremely limited, it is vital to equip learners with clear scaffolding techniques to help them acquire vocabulary. They need more exposure and a systematic approach that vacillates their acquisition of multiple aspects of vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, sometimes, a combination of the two modes of form focused instruction would produce better retention and acquisition. In addition, several studies have investigated different methods of vocabulary learning, nevertheless, not one method can claim to have superiority over the other since the evidence in literature is not conclusive.

2.4 Research objective

This study aims at exploring EFL Moroccan high school teachers' attitudes and perceptions of explicit vocabulary instruction.

2.5 Research question

The study at hand attempts to find an answer to the following research question:

What are Moroccan EFL high school teachers' attitudes and perceptions of explicit vocabulary instruction?

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

To answer the research question, a basic quantitative study was adopted so that the researcher could analyze different patterns and trends. Selecting a quantitative approach for exploring EFL teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards explicit vocabulary instruction offers several advantages. A quantitative design permits us to measure and analyze EFL teachers' attitudes and perceptions, as well as yielding data that can be analyzed for different patterns and trends. Creswell (2014) explains that quantitative approaches are effective when a researcher tries to avoid being subjective in interpreting trends and frequencies, since using and administering closed-ended survey items is scored with consistency, which in turn strengthen the reliability of the study.

3.1. Participants

The total number of participants in this quantitative study is 62 Moroccan EFL teachers from the region of Marrakech, Morocco. They were sent a Likert scale survey with 12 items. For each close-ended item, teachers can choose from the following degrees (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree). This scale is useful since it allows for measuring attitudes on a spectrum. In turn, this is effective for understanding the strength of teachers' attitudes and opinions.

3.2. Data collection and analysis

This research is primarily descriptive in nature since it aims to explore perceptions and attitudes of EFL teachers. The major research instrument is the Likert scale survey. The purpose of the survey was to elicit teachers' attitudes and perceptions of explicit instruction. This includes their daily practices, teaching materials, learning challenges, ect. The researcher administered the survey via Google Forms. In terms of analysis tools, the researcher provides descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) using the SPSS software to summarize teachers' perceptions and attitudes.

4. RESULTS

This study aimed to investigate Moroccan EFL teachers' attitudes toward vocabulary explicit instruction. The questionnaire was composed of 12 closed-ended items, that the participants responded to using a Likert scale. The goal was to elicit the extent to which teachers agreed or disagreed with the statements in the survey.

First of all, the researcher had to check the reliability of scores using Cronbach's Alpha. Table 1 below indicates that Cronbach's Alpha is .92, which shows a significantly high reliability score of the internal consistency of the questionnaire.

Table 1
Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,926	,923	12

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' Responses

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	T
1. Vocabulary plays an essential role in language acquisition.	16.1	-	-	11.3	72.6	100 %
2. The more vocabulary students have, the better achievement scores they get.	14.5	1.6	4.8	45.2	33.9	100 %
3. The more vocabulary a learner knows, the more fluent s/he is.	12.9	11.3	19.4	41.9	14.5	100 %
4. My classroom lessons tend to expose learners to rich input with authentic language.	12.9	11.3	19.4	41.9	14.5	100 %
5. My students have a limited vocabulary repertoire.	11.3	8.1	19.4	37.1	24.2	100 %
6. EFL learners should spend enough time learning and engaging in explicit instruction.	12.9	4.8	16.1	40.3	25.8	100 %
7. Learners have difficulty remembering vocabulary items in class.	8.1	6.5	32.3	35.5	17.7	100 %
8. I often plan specific tasks for the learning and teaching of target vocabulary.	8.1	22.6	22.6	40.3	6.5	100 %
9. Textbook reading and listening materials lack interesting and authentic input.	9.7	14.5	16.1.	37.1	22.6.	100 %
10. Classroom vocabulary activities aim at drawing learners to notice and engage with vocabulary in context.	11.3	21	27.4	35.5	4.8	100 %
11. Classroom activities lack enough opportunities to explicitly learn target vocabulary in each unit.	12.9	22.6	29	30.6	4.8	100 %
12. Explicit vocabulary instruction deserves more classroom attention inside the language classroom.	11.3	6.5	16.1	38.7	27.4	100 %

*[SA= strongly agree, A= agree, N= neutral, D= disagree, SD= strongly disagree, T= total]

The survey responses show high degrees of agreement in regard to the statements in the questionnaire. Table 2 shows the respondents' degrees and views of each item in the survey. Most teachers' reactions to items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 12 reveal that mastering a rich vocabulary repertoire is key to language development. In addition, teachers' responses reveal that explicit instruction is held as an essential ingredient for achieving language proficiency.

Table 3 shows respondents' views on the 1st item on the survey. It shows that more than 83% of the respondents believe that having a rich wide vocabulary repertoire is essential for acquiring a language.

Table 3
Vocabulary plays an essential role in language acquisition.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	10	16,1	16,1	16,1
	Agree	7	11,3	11,3	27,4
	Strongly agree	45	72,6	72,6	100,0
	Total	62	100,0	100,0	

Providing and exposing language learners to several opportunities to experiment and engage with rich authentic language is critical for facilitating vocabulary acquisition.

Table 4

Classroom activities expose learners to rich authentic language

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	8	12,9	12,9	12,9
	Disagree	7	11,3	11,3	24,2
	Neutral	12	19,4	19,4	43,5
	Agree	26	41,9	41,9	85,5
	Strongly agree	9	14,5	14,5	100,0
	Total	62	100,0	100,0	

Item 4 in the survey had the teachers express their perspectives on the extent to which their students were exposed to real authentic input inside the classroom. Table 4 shows a breakdown of teachers' views. Only about 56 % of the teachers believe that classroom tasks and activities include authentic language.

Explicitly having EFL learners engage with vocabulary tasks both within the context and in isolated exercises has potential for facilitating their uptake. Table 5 indicates that around 65 % of the respondents revealed that language learners need more opportunities to acquire new vocabulary.

Table 5

EFL learners should spend enough time learning and engaging with explicit instruction

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	8	12,9	12,9	12,9
	Disagree	3	4,8	4,8	17,7
	Neutral	10	16,1	16,1	33,9
	Agree	25	40,3	40,3	74,2
	Strongly agree	16	25,8	25,8	100,0
	Total	62	100,0	100,0	

Table 6 below shows teachers reactions that indicate that more than 59 % revealed that textbook reading and listening are characterized by poor input and lack of authentic language.

Table 6

Textbook reading and listening materials lack interesting and authentic input

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	6	9,7	9,7	9,7
	Disagree	9	14,5	14,5	24,2
	Neutral	10	16,1	16,1	40,3
	Agree	23	37,1	37,1	77,4
	Strongly agree	14	22,6	22,6	100,0
	Total	62	100,0	100,0	

In the same line of argument, the survey items required that the respondents provide their views of the quality of the teaching and learning materials used in Moroccan EFL classrooms, such as the official textbooks. The findings indicate that most teacher respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with the textbooks used in EFL teaching.

Table 7

Explicit vocabulary instruction deserves more classroom attention inside the language classroom

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	7	11,3	11,3	11,3
	Disagree	4	6,5	6,5	17,7
	Neutral	10	16,1	16,1	33,9
	Agree	24	38,7	38,7	72,6
	Strongly agree	17	27,4	27,4	100,0
	Total	62	100,0	100,0	

Likewise, as it has been stated so far, more than 66% of the teachers think that explicit teaching of vocabulary is worth more attention and time in language classes. Overall, the teachers' perspectives seem to favor allocating enough explicit teaching time for vocabulary inside the classroom.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings from the survey revealed that Moroccan EFL teachers hold the view that explicit vocabulary instruction is a key aspect of vocabulary instruction. In the review of literature, it has been stated that vocabulary knowledge is essential for achieving language proficiency (Nation, 2013; Schmitt, 2008).

Overall, the survey respondents expressed and showed high degrees of agreement with the survey items. In fact, we noticed that more than 66 % agreed that explicit vocabulary instruction is worth more time and attention inside the language classroom. A number of research studies are in line with this claim, arguing that exposing EFL learners to direct study time for expanding their active vocabulary has significant merits and has great potential at facilitating learners' proficiency. Overt explicit vocabulary teaching is thought to have positive effects on language development in EFL contexts. Nation (2002) claimed that deliberate explicit instruction of vocabulary can be very useful in increasing learners' vocabulary and fostering their retention. Several studies reported significantly positive effects of explicit teaching on vocabulary growth and retention (Ahmadvand & Nejadansari, 2014; Fainman & Tokar, 2019; Tahir et al. 2020; Yirssie et al., 2023).

Having a wide range of vocabulary knowledge entails spending and including interesting reading material for learners. In Item 5 of the survey, about 59 % of the respondents indicated that their students often have a limited vocabulary in general. This is the case for similar EFL contexts where motivation to read is reported to be very low among school students (El garras et al., 2024). This requires the inclusion of a component of explicit instruction to support the intake of a wide range of words and expressions. For example, teachers can provide word lists and flash cards, do explicit vocabulary exercises, and nurture a habit of taking notes of active vocabulary in students' notebooks. In a study by Rahimpour and Salimi (2010), they carried out a study to investigate how FFI impacts EFL learners' language achievement. The body of participants was made of 30 intermediate level female learners. They were put into experimental and control groups. The experimental group received feedback in the form of recast (formal explicit instruction); in contrast, the control group followed the communicative teaching method without any direct instruction. The researchers used multiple-choice and grammatical judgment tests. After analyzing the results, it was concluded that explicit instruction was favored and led to better outcomes.

One critical issue in language acquisition is seen in learners' ability to retain vocabulary for long stretches of time. In the survey, more than 52% of the respondents mentioned that EFL learners encounter difficulties remembering vocabulary items targeted in class. The reason for such a finding might be the fact that, in EFL contexts, learners usually do not have enough opportunities for exposure to naturally occurring target language. The EFL class is the only space learners have to hear, read, or engage with English input. Helping and providing more direct instruction and scaffolding techniques are vital for increasing learners' vocabulary retention. Rafieyan (2017) conducted a quantitative study to investigate how FFI would affect learners' acquisition and mastery of vocabulary, particularly of formulaic sequences. The experiment followed two different modes of FFI, *focus on form* and *focus on forms*. His objective was to measure their impact on improving learners' performance and particularly in enhancing their mastery of FcL. The researcher followed an experimental research design with two different conditions. His participants were 30 university EFL students from an intensive language learning program. The researcher included two research instruments, such as cued output tests and recognition tests in order to assess learners' performance before and after the treatment (FFI). The mixed between-within subjects' analysis of variance revealed that the two modes of teaching, *focus on form* and *focus on forms*, were found to yield positive outcomes on the part of both conditions.

Only around 56 % of the teachers reported that their learners have multiple opportunities for exposure to rich authentic

input. Krashen, the famous applied linguist, has always emphasized the superiority of including varied, rich, and intriguing input. His *Input Hypothesis* theory (2011) proposes that language learning and acquisition happen when language learners are engaged and presented with rich input that is slightly above their current proficiency level. Krashen's theory holds the view that when learners understand the input in a second language, it facilitates their linguistic progress.

On a related point, the teaching materials that are adopted in EFL language classes do not give due attention to the quality of the input presented through reading and listening activities. The ninth item in the survey, around 60 % indicated that textbook reading and listening materials lack interesting and authentic input. This view could be due to employing textbooks with outdated and uninteresting content. Woods (2010) and Murray (2016) suggested that sometimes the textbooks adopted in language classes might not fulfill students' interests and expectations. On this day and age, high school students have a variety of stimuli and content on the internet at their fingertips; therefore, material developers and curriculum writers are required to keep up with all the changes in society and trends that influence teens and their preferences.

6. CONCLUSION

The survey aimed at exploring EFL Moroccan teachers' attitudes and perceptions of explicit instruction of vocabulary in English language classes. The overall findings indicated that the teachers believe that explicit instruction is an important component that has direct effects on English language proficiency. In this regard, it was found that most respondents perceive textbooks and language teaching materials used in public schools need to include interesting, rich, and authentic linguistic input. On the other hand, only about 55% of the teachers reported that their own daily practices target exposing learners to explicit instruction. By the same token, we can infer that explicit instruction is worthwhile in facilitating language development.

In brief, having language learners' attention directed to target words and expressions in the curriculum can improve and foster their vocabulary repertoire and retention. In addition, having learners engage in hands-on activities is crucial for expanding their language development level (El garras, 2021). Some studies have researched the effects of explicit and direct instruction on vocabulary learning and retention, while other researchers have investigated the impact of implicit teaching activities. It has been concluded that form focused or explicit instruction can lead to better results in comparison to implicit instruction alone, in EFL contexts in particular (Boers et al., 2017; Boers et al., 2014; Nergis, 2021; Peters & Pauwels, 2015; Spada & Lightbown, 2008).

7. IMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

It should be noted that the current study has a few limitations that should be mentioned. The main one was the sampling bias. The body of participants in this study includes 62 teachers which is probably not representative of the overall population of EFL teachers in the region of Marrakech, Morocco. The second main limitation concerns the survey. Using surveys as the major data collection tool may not effectively capture all the intricacies of teachers' perceptions and experiences. Having a broader view of this topic requires combining and adding a quantitative approach along with some qualitative data (e.g., interviews or open-ended questions) which would allow for deeper insights of the research topic at hand.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Publisher's Note: All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers.

References

- [1] Ahmadvand, M., & Nejadansari, D. (2014). Attention to meaning and form vs. attention to meaning alone: The effect of focus on form on vocabulary retention in an EFL context. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 98, 116-121.
- [2] Ahmed, S. (2017). *Intentional learning vs incidental learning*. *Journal of Psychology and Clinical Psychiatry*, 7(2), 1-5
- [3] Akbarian, I. (2010). The relationship between vocabulary size and depth for ESP/EAP learners. *System*, 38, 391-401. doi:10.1016/j.system.2010.06.01
- [4] Archer, A. L., & Hughes, C. A. (2011). *Explicit instruction: Effective and efficient teaching*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- [5] Boers, F., Dang, T. C. T., & Strong, B. (2017). Comparing the effectiveness of phrase-focused exercises: A partial replication of Boers, Demecheleer, Coxhead, and Webb (2014). *Language Teaching Research*, 21(3), 362-380.
- [6] Boers, F., Demecheleer, M., Coxhead, A., & Webb, S. (2014). Gauging the effects of exercises on verb-noun collocations. *Language Teaching Research*, 18(1), 54-74. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168813505389>
- [7] Brown, H. D. (2007). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (5th ed.). Pearson Longman.
- [8] Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- [9] Dornyei, Z. (2009). The L2 motivational self-system. In Z. Dornyei & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self* (pp. 9-42). *Multilingual Matters*

- [10] El garras, H., Ghaicha, A., & Yacoub, M. (2024). Unlocking Potential: Exploring the Impact of Free Voluntary Reading on Moroccan High School Students. *Canadian Social Science*, 20, (2), pp. 6-19. DOI:10.3968/13312
- [11] El garras, H. (2021). To what extent can flipped learning improve EFL learners' speaking and writing skills in online education? *Revue Linguistique et Référentiels Interculturels*, volume 2, n° 2.
- [12] Ellis, N. C. (1994). Introduction: Implicit and explicit language learning – An overview. In N. Ellis (Ed.): *Implicit and explicit learning of Languages* (pp. 1–31). AP.
- [13] Horst, M., Cobb, T., & Meara, P. (1998). Beyond a Clockwork Orange: Acquiring second language vocabulary through reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 11, 207-223.
- [14] Krashen, S. (2011). The compelling (not just interesting) input hypothesis. *The English Connection: KOTESOL*, 15(3), xx-xx.
- [15] Lee, B. C. & Tan, D. (October, 2012). Language learning approaches: A review of research on explicit and implicit learning in vocabulary acquisition. *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 55, 852-860.
- [16] Long, M. H. (1991). Focus on form: A design feature in language teaching methodology. In K. d. Bot, R. Ginsberg & C. Kramsch (Eds.), *Foreign language research in cross-cultural perspective* (pp. 39-52). Benjamins.
- [17] Nation, I. S. P. (1990). *Teaching and learning vocabulary*. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.
- [18] Nation, I.S.P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [19] Nation, I.S.P. (2013). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139524759Murray> (2016)
- [20] Nergis, A. (2021). Can explicit instruction of formulaic sequences enhance L2 oral fluency? *Lingua*, 103072. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2021.103072>
- [21] Pellicer-Sánchez, A., & Boers, F. (2018). Pedagogical approaches to the teaching and learning of formulaic language. In A. Siyanova-Chanturia & A. Pellicer-Sánchez (Eds.), *Understanding formulaic language: A second language acquisition perspective*. *Routledge*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315206615-9>
- [22] Pellicer-Sánchez, A., & Schmitt, N. (2010). Incidental vocabulary acquisition from reading and listening: The effects of task and frequency. *Language Learning*, 60(4), 1043-1070. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9922.2010.00573.x>
- [23] Peters, E., & Pawles, P. (2015). Learning academic formulaic sequences. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2015.04.002>
- [24] Pigada, M., & Schmitt, N. (2006). Vocabulary acquisition from extensive reading: A case study. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 18, 1–28.
- [25] Qian, D. D. (1999). Assessing the roles of depth and breadth of vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 56(2), 282-307.
- [26] Qian, D., & Schedl, M. (2004). Evaluation of an in-depth vocabulary knowledge measure for assessing reading performance. *Language Test*, 21, 28-52. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1191/0265532204lt273oa>
- [27] Rafieyan, V. (2017). Effectiveness of 'focus on form' versus 'focus on forms' instruction on the development of knowledge of formulaic sequences. *Journal of Literature, Languages and Linguistics*, 38, 45-55.
- [28] Rahimpour, M., & Salimi, A. (2010). The impact of explicit instruction on foreign language learners' performance. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2, 1740-1746.
- [29] Schmitt, N. (2008). Instructed second language vocabulary learning. *Language Teaching Research*, 12(3), 329–363. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168808089921>
- [30] Schmitt, N. (2010). *Researching Vocabulary: A Vocabulary Research Manual*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230293977>
- [31] Schmitt, N. (Ed.). (2013). *An introduction to applied linguistics*. Routledge.
- [32] Susoy, Z., & Tanyer, S. (2019). The role of vocabulary vs. syntactic knowledge in L2 reading comprehension. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 5(1), 113–130. Doi: 10.32601/ejal.543787
- [33] Thomson, H. (2016). Presenting lexical bundles for explicit noticing with schematic linguistic representation. *The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language*, 20(2). <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1113902.pdf>
- [34] Webb, S. A. (2007). *The effects of repetition on vocabulary knowledge*. *Applied Linguistics*, 28, 46-65.
- [35] Wood, D. (2010). *Perspectives on Formulaic Language*. Acquisition and Communication. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- [36] Yamamoto, Y. (2014). Multidimensional vocabulary acquisition through deliberate vocabulary list learning. *System*, 42(1), 232-243. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2013.12.005>
- [37] Youngblood, A. (2014). Understanding the Effect of Formulaic Language on ESL Teachers' Perceptions of Advanced L2 Writing: An Application of Corpus-Identified Formulaic Language [Doctoral dissertation, Electronic Theses and Dissertations, University of Central Florida]. Retrieved from <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/etd/4725>