



Kristianstad
University
Sweden

Learning Vocabulary without Tears: A Comparative Study of the Jigsaw and Information Gap Tasks in Vocabulary Acquisition at School

Song Wanlu

Kristianstad University

School of Teacher Education

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Tutor: Jane Mattisson

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Abstract

The primary purpose of the present study is to compare the effectiveness of the jigsaw task and information gap tasks in understanding new words and retaining them. Sixteen pupils aged between eleven and twelve were involved in the study and divided into two groups. They were allocated either a jigsaw task or an information gap task. This study consists of a pre-test, immediate post-test, delayed post-test as well as a questionnaire. The pupils were required to carry out the chosen tasks, tested immediately and then one week later. The results of the questionnaire are also discussed in order to establish the pupils' attitudes towards their allotted tasks.

The results revealed marginally higher scores in the immediate post-test for pupils performing the information gap task in terms of recognizing the meaning of words. However, this advantage disappeared when it came to the depth of vocabulary knowledge and word meaning retention. Pupils performing jigsaw task outperformed group B in productive vocabulary knowledge and their retention. The gain in vocabulary among pupils who performed the jigsaw task is most evident in the delayed post-test. This result is consistent with the pupils' assertion that they enjoyed doing the jigsaw task more than the information gap task. To sum up, the jigsaw task best promotes pupils understanding of words and their retention.

Key words: jigsaw task, information gap task, interaction hypothesis, task-induced involvement load, task characteristics.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1 Aim	2
1.2 Material	2
1.3 Method	3
2.Theoretical Background	5
2.1 Teaching English as A Second Language	5
2.1.1 Behaviorism and Innatism	5
2.1.2 Interactionism	6
2.1.3 Explotic and Implicit Vocabulary Teaching.....	6
2.2 Task-based Language Teaching	7
2.2.1 Definition of "Task"	8
2.2.2 Criteria of Pedagogical Tasks.....	9
2.2.3 Task Types and Their Characteristics.....	10
2.3 Previous Researche on Task-based Language Teaching	11
2.4 Principles of Task-based Language Teaching	12
2.4.1 Interaction Hypothesis and pupils' attitude towards the tasks.....	13
2.4.2 Focus on Form.....	13
2.5 Assessing Vocabulary Knowledge	14
2.5.1 Depth of vocabualry.....	14
2.5.2 Word Meaning Retention and Task-induced Involvement Load.....	15
2.5.3 Previous Research on the Task-induced Involvement Load.....	16
3. Analysis	17
3.1 Comparison between the pre-test and immdiate post-test	17
3.2 Data From the Immediate Post-test	22
3.2.1 Characteristics of the Two Tasks	23
3.2.2 Pupils Performance on Each Question of the Immediate Post-test.....	25
3.3 Word Meaning Retention	28
3.3.1. Comparison of the Two Groups' Performance in Delayed Post-test.....	28
3.3.2. Comparison Between the Immediate and Delayed Post-tests.....	30
3.3.3 Comparison of the Task-induced Involvement Load Between Two Tasks.....	32
3.4. Data from the Questionnaire	34
4. Conclusion	38
References	i
Appendices	iv
Appendix 1	iv
Appendix 2	v
Appendix 3.....	i

1. Introduction

Most people will not give a second thought to the fact that English is a global language. People are strongly motivated to learn English since it functions as an information carrier that put you in contact with more people than any other languages (Crystal, 1997: 3). Among various linguistic items vocabulary has been considered by many¹ as essential in language teaching and learning. However, the question as to how to teach vocabulary is a debatable one. Both most popular teaching approaches, namely behaviourism and innatism, are under challenge. The behaviourist approach has been accused of mechanical and boring (Rahman & Melhim, 2009:43). Similarly, innatism² which has obtained support from many³ has been questioned by some researchers⁴, demonstrating that the method fails to develop learners' complete language knowledge. In attempting to minimize the disadvantages of two methods, others, such as Ellis suggests an idea of combining the two methods. One of the most influential approaches that can cope with the aforementioned drawbacks is task-based language teaching.

Task-based language teaching has enjoyed growing popularity over the past two decades (Kris Van den Branden, 2006: 1). This comment was reflected in the number of publications (Ellis,2004; Nuan 1989; Van den Branden, 2006), concerning task-based language learning and teaching. Task-based teaching is a departure from the traditional rigid and teacher-controlled language instruction, emphasizing the role and needs of language learners. One of the most prominent advantages⁵ of the method lies in its ability to integrate meaning-focused communication with form-focused instructions.

However, although task-based instruction enjoys increasing popularity among other language teaching approaches, it has been criticized for the reasons below: 1) teachers doubt that task-based language teaching is time-consuming, i.e. learners have less exposure to target words than their counterparts who receive form-focused instructions (Rixon, 1991: 33). 2) Most studies on task-based language teaching have focused on intermediate and advanced language learners. Therefore, it was unclear whether the method still works among lower proficiency learners (Duran & Ramaut, 2006: 47). The observations above demonstrate that it is still necessary to conduct study on task-based language teaching.

Although many researchers have discussed task-based language teaching (these are reviewed in the theory section), the present study is important as to the reasons below: 1) many pedagogical tasks are designed to practice grammar, and thus vocabulary acquisition is seldom emphasized in schools' curriculum (Pikulski & Templeton, 2004: 4). The present study investigated task effectiveness on learners' vocabulary acquisition. 2) Most previous research that focused on the connection between tasks and vocabulary acquisition only measured students' mastery of vocabulary knowledge superficially, i.e. whether they can match the word with its meaning. However, knowing words is not an all-or-nothing distinction, so that the present study demonstrated learners' degree of understanding. 3) Few studies concerning task-based language teaching have been conducted in Sweden. However, it is by no means that this method was carried out successfully. Task-based language teaching has been practised in Sweden since the sixties but not all the teachers are willing to adopt the method (Eriksson, 1993: 1-32). The study has aimed to fill in gap, demonstrating what task can best promote Swedish pupils' understanding of words and their retention.

1.1 Aim

Task-based instruction has been widely adopted in English as a Second Language teaching. Pica and Kanagy et al put tasks into six categories: Jigsaw tasks, information gap tasks, problem-solving tasks, decision-making tasks and opinion exchange tasks (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 234). In this study, Jigsaw tasks and information gap tasks are discussed. The aim of the present study is to investigate which of the above two kinds of task best promotes learners' understanding of words and their retention in terms of depth of vocabulary (of which will be defined in theoretical background). At the end of the study, a questionnaire was designed to demonstrate the level of the pupils' positive or negative attitude towards the tasks assigned them.

1.2 Material

The content of my teaching was seven target words that were selected on the basis of a pre-test. The words are *unhappy*, *grape*, *bottle*, *dish*, *fireplace*, *mushroom* and *bathtub*. The pre-test was a word list containing vocabularies with different word classes. Different word classes were chosen

to prevent pupils from being forewarned that the target words were in a specific semantic field. However, since functional and abstract words cannot easily be tested and are difficult to learn in a short period of time, only concrete nouns and adjectives were included in the present investigation (Nation, 1994: 374). One pre-test, two post-tests and a questionnaire were also included in the study (of which discussed in method section).

The participants were sixteen pupils at a secondary school in Kristianstad, Sweden. The participants are both male and female, aged between eleven and twelve. The classes were taught by two Chinese students who are familiar with task-based teaching. Both teachers have met students before the experimental classes, so that students will not feel inhibited in class.

When designing a task, teachers should use different techniques to adjust the tasks' complexity to students' present level, such as providing visual aid (Duran & Ramaut, 2006: 58). The participants in the study were beginners, so that using pictures in tasks reduced the difficulty of the tasks. Pupils did not need especially focus on grammar or written forms while performing tasks, and thus they can concentrate on comprehending word meaning. Furthermore, students will be motivated by the tasks containing pictures (Nunan, 2004: 58).

1.3 Method

In order to establish which of the two tasks, Jigsaw or information gap task (of which more in the theory section) better promotes pupils' vocabulary acquisition and retention, three tests were analyzed: Pre-test, immediate post-test and delayed post-test. Two post-tests' result were analyzed based on the modified Vocabulary Knowledge Scale⁶ (hereafter abbreviated as VKS). The pre-test was administered a week before observing the class. The first post-test was given immediately after both groups finish their tasks. The second was administered one week later, along with the questionnaire. In tests and questionnaire, pupils were given fictional names to protect their identity. After the project, two informal interviews with teachers and pupils were conducted separately, in order to establish other possible reasons influencing the results of the present study.

Hulstijn suggests that a week time lapse will allow the items of pre-test to be forgotten so that pupils will not recognize them when they are encountered in class (Hulstijn, 2003: 351). A week before the experimental class, students were presented with a word list consisting thirty-five words from the book they will use next term, i.e. autumn 2011. This was to ensure that the words were appropriate for the pupils' level of English proficiency. Pupils were required to tick the words they know and give a definition in Swedish. The reason to choose checklist test lied in the fact that it measures more lexical items within limited time (Schmitt, 2010: 164). During the test, they were not allowed to discuss or use a dictionary. The paper was handed in fifteen minutes later, after which the words least familiar⁷ to the participants were selected.

Immediate post-test: Before the class, pupils were informed about the immediate test but not the content of test, so that they were concentrated during lessons. After the treatment, both groups took a vocabulary test covering seven target words.

The delayed post-test: According to the Forgetting Curve⁸, a week marks the bound between short-term memory and relative long-term memory (Baddeley, Eysenck, & Anderson, 2001); the delayed post-test in this research was administrated a week later. Pupils were not informed about delayed post-test. Both groups took the same delayed post-test. The result was compared to show whether they still remember the meaning of the words, and whether the result differs from groups in terms of degree of understanding.

In the present study, there were, as already established, sixteen participants in total, and they were given similar English instructions before. The students were assigned randomly to Groups A and B. Hence, no differences in learning ability were expected between students in two groups. Group A consisted of six pupils and group B ten pupils (of which discussed below).

A task-based language lesson contains three components,⁹ namely, pre-task, while-task and post-task. Among three phases, only while-task phase is obligatory in a task-based language lesson (Ellis, 2006: 20). Furthermore, pre-task functions as a warming-up exercise before carrying out tasks; it brings in various benefits to task-based language teaching, especially for beginners (Kim,

& McDonough, 2011: 183-99). Therefore, the lesson in each group only contained pre-task phase and while-task phase.

Both groups were given a five-minute introduction to the task to explain how to carry out the allotted tasks; target words that may facilitate their task completion were presented on the whiteboard together with their definitions and sample sentences. In Group A, six pupils were put into pairs. Partners played two detectives and had different but incomplete picture describing the scene of crime provided by two witnesses. They should complete their respective picture by listening to their partners' description of his or her picture. When they finished the task they were required to choose one possible scene of crime presented on the whiteboard.

In group B, two pupils were randomly selected as witnesses. The remaining pupils were required to take note on their picture in accordance with two witnesses' descriptions. After finishing the task, each pupil was also asked to choose one possible scene of the crime. Both tasks took twenty minutes. It should be noted that pupils in both groups were required to take three tests. However, the post-tests taken by witnesses in group B were not included in data analysis.

After they had finished the second post-test, pupils were asked to fill in a questionnaire indicating their attitude, positive or negative, towards these tasks. Although it is possible to involve teachers to fill in the same questionnaire as a research¹⁰ did, this study only focused on pupils' attitude due to the fact that task-based language teaching is a student-centred teaching (Tudor, 1996: 7-10).

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Teaching English as a Second Language

Every few years new English as a Second Language (hereafter abbreviated as ESL) teaching approaches are introduced. It is a matter of debate among researchers as to what the most effective teaching approach is for ESL acquisition. There are three important theoretical approaches that are widely accepted in ESL acquisition study, namely, behaviourism, innatism and interactionism.

2.1.1 Behaviorism and Innatism

Behaviourists claim that learning English is a matter of habit formation through imitation, practice, reinforcement (Lightbown & Spada, 1999: 35). This theory was challenged by supporters of innatism, demonstrating that people are born with ability to acquire English, and thus ESL learners need access only to samples of natural English (Lightbown & Spada, 1999: 35). These two theories were connected with two proposals to classroom teaching¹¹, namely, “get it right at the beginning” and “just listen and read”.

2.1.2 Interactionism

The aforementioned theories are located on the two extremes of a continuum, with natural acquisition at one end and intentional learning at the other. However, there are alternatives in between, such as interactionism. Over the past few decades, the attention of ESL instruction has shifted from traditional Grammar-translation to more pragmatic language use within a communicative context. Proponents of interactionism claim that English is acquired through interaction; it provides English learners with access to comprehensible input that is necessary for ESL acquisition (Lightbown & Spada, 1999: 43). This theory differs from both innatism and behaviourism in that it encourages free communication and draw learners’ attention to language itself when the communication broke down. In the ESL classroom setting, interactionism gives insight into task-based language teaching, which strikes a balance between explicit and implicit language teaching. Instead of being spoon-fed by teachers, learners in the task-based classroom setting are motivated to learn language while performing interesting tasks. In order to arouse learners’ interest, various tasks¹² were designed for learners with different characteristics, such as age, gender, language proficiency etc.

2.1.3. Explicit and Implicit Vocabulary Teaching

Although the amount of research on second language vocabulary acquisition has increased in recent years, no agreement has been obtained as to what is the most effective approach to teach vocabulary. Among various teaching methods, explicit and implicit teaching are two important approaches that are adopted in vocabulary teaching (Read, 2000: 38-39). In attempting to make full use of the advantages of two approaches, task-based language teaching (hereafter abbreviated TBLT) provides learners with access to both explicit and implicit learning experience. Target

linguistic items are embedded in interesting activities, so that learners practice target items while completing tasks.

Explicit vocabulary teaching shares some characteristics with traditional language teaching in that teachers introduce target words discretely and intentionally make learners focus on vocabulary items, e.g. reciting word list, making sentences etc. In contrast, implicit vocabulary teaching in TBLT refers to a teaching approach that target words are embedded in a task, so that students will meet and use them incidentally, e.g. reading, listening etc. Both the aforementioned two approaches have their shortcomings,¹³ so that their relation should be considered complementary rather than exclusive. “In any well-structured vocabulary program there needs to be the proper mix of explicit teaching and activities from which incidental learning can occur” (Schmitt, 2000: 145). This comment justifies the adoption of TBLT in teaching vocabulary. The method not only provides learners with opportunities to use vocabulary in meaning-focused communication but incidentally draws their attention to target words when the communication breaks down (of which mentioned in interaction hypothesis).

2. 2. Task-based Language Teaching

TBLT dates back to the 1970s when scholars called for the combination of grammar and meaning in language instruction. TBLT was first supported by Prabhu. He adopted the approach in his language teaching class in Bangalore, India in the 1970s (Gaining Ground in Teaching, 2010). Fifteen year ago, TBLT was still at the initial stage and was rarely carried out in ESL teaching. However, during the past two decades, studies of TBLT have witnessed the increasing popularity of TBLT (of which comes after). It has obtained wide attention from SLA researchers, curriculum developers, educationalists, teacher trainers and language teachers (Branden, 2006: 1). In a recent study on the impact of the emergence of English as a global language on policies and practices in Asia- Pacific region, government informants from all seven countries surveyed claims that TBLT played a central role in their English Language curricula (Nunan, 2004: 13).

Task-based language teaching has been considered a subset of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (quoted in Huang, 2010: 32), and the current interest in tasks stems largely from CLT (Nunan,1989: 12). The connection between TBLT and CLT lies in that they share some

important principles, such as interactionism and focus on form (as discussed above). The communicative approach emphasizes the importance of communicating meaning in language acquisition, demonstrating that linguistic features function only as carriers for communication. It also suggests that linguistic inaccuracy can be considered peripheral as long as both addressers and addressees obtain meaning in their communication. TBLT further elaborated CLT in that task-based instruction also focuses on meaning negotiation in communication, referring to “an approach based on the use of tasks as the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 223). When the purpose of language teaching is vocabulary acquisition, TBLT is also an approach to integrate direct and indirect vocabulary learning in an authentic context.

2.2.1. Definition of tasks

The term ‘task-based language teaching’ implies that tasks are given a central place in this teaching method. This comment was supported by Nunan when he argues that definition of tasks is of crucial component in TBLT assessment (Nunan, 2006: 13). Bygate, Skehan and Swain claims that definitions of tasks are generally ‘context-free’ and this very reason brings about problems (quoted in Ellis, 2000: 195). The interpretations of ‘task’ are not fixed and vary in accordance with the purposes of researches. Tasks are defined as a tool of collecting data when a research aims to investigate the students’ use of vernacular language. Generally, tasks were put in two categories, namely tasks as language learning goals and as language educational activity. They are also referred to as ‘real-life tasks’ and ‘pedagogical tasks’. Decorating your room before Christmas without using target language is a real-life task, whereas from ESL acquisition perspective, drawing a picture with the aid of English instructions belongs to pedagogical task. The present study focused on the latter, in attempting to demonstrate the connection between tasks and English teaching in classroom setting. Some interpretations from different researchers were presented below in chronological order.

Prabhu (1987): ‘task as an activity which required learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought and which allowed teachers to control and regulate that process was regarded as a task’ (Branden, 2006: 7)

Skehan (1996): ‘A activity in which: meaning is primary; there is some sort of relationship to the real world; task completion has some priority; and the assessment of task performance is in terms of task outcome’ (Ellis, 2003: 4)

Ellis (2003): ‘A workplan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. To this end, it requires them to give primary attention to meaning and to make sure of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may predispose them to choose particular forms. A task is intended to result in language use that bears a resemblance direct or indirect, to the way language is used in the real world. Like other language activities, a task can engage productive or receptive and oral or written skill, and also cognitive processes (Ellis, 2003: 4)

From the definitions given at different times, it is evident that they leave more and more room for learners’ creative and personalized learning process. Prabhu implies that tasks are considered a tool of teachers to *control* and *regulate* (my emphasis) the outcome of process of learning. In contrast, Ellis emphasizes learners’ *own* (my emphasis) linguistic resources; These three interpretations also show an increasing emphasis on the pragmatic purpose of language teaching, i.e. establish the connection between pedagogic tasks and real-life tasks; Ellis also furthered previous understanding of tasks in a more specific fashion, e.g. incorporating the genre of tasks, the forms of their outcome and input in his definition. Ellis’ interpretation of tasks demonstrates a holistic view of the task. He suggests that in language teaching context, a task should not only provides learners with access to inter-person communication but intra-person communication, i.e. cognitive process (of which discussed in task-induced involvement). Emphasizing meaning-focused communication and task completion, the concept “task” in the present study refers to an activity that elicits learners to use and recall newly learned vocabularies, in attempting to promote their understanding of word and its retention.

2.2.2. The Criteria of the Pedagogical Tasks

Although different interpretations have been presented with regard to tasks, they were only on the surface. In attempting to promote learners language acquisition in a TBLT classroom setting, teachers, curriculum designers, researchers need to have a clear and more detailed idea of what underlies a task. There were some criteria of a task below. A task is 1) a work plan; 2) involves a primary focus on meaning; 3) involves real-world processes of language use; 4) A task can involve any of the four language skills; 5) engages cognitive processes; 6) and has a clearly defined communicative outcome (quoted in Ellis, 2003: 9-10). Based on other researchers’ interpretations Skehan proposes five key characteristics of a task (Nunan, 2006: 16)

The essential difference between pedagogic tasks and exercises lies in the focus on outcomes. In language exercises, success is determined by whether the given answer is linguistically correct or not, e.g. whether suitable word classes are given; did learners use the correct sentence pattern in their compositions. However, in pedagogical tasks, there is an outcome that transcends language. Successful learning is judged by completion of a task, e.g. whether learners will find the destination with the aid of instruction (Nunan, 2004: 23). Additionally, compared with tasks, exercises are relatively unreal and static, since exercises focus on linguistic knowledge as a goal in itself, leaving it up to the learner to create or generate functional use (Branden, 2006: 80). With the increasing interest in TBLT, various tasks have been adopted in the classroom in an effort to provide learners with a dynamic and more student-centred learning environment.

2.2.3 Task Types and Their Characteristics

In TBLT literature, there are many kinds of task categories since TBLT has been considering a vogue in language teaching field; writers have studied it from different perspectives. The Bangalore project, one of the earliest curricular applications of TBLT, provides three principal task types: information gap, reasoning gap, and opinion gap (Nunan, 2004: 56). Willis proposed six task types termed: listing, ordering, sorting, comparing, problem solving, sharing personal experiences, and creative tasks (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 234). Recently, Richards has proposed five pedagogical tasks, namely, jigsaw tasks; information-gap tasks; problem-solving tasks; decision-making tasks, and opinion exchange tasks (quoted in Nunan, 2004: 58). Compared with the other two groupings listed above, Richard's categories contains following advantages: 1) items in the group are distinct from one another; 2) it is easier to understand the content of tasks based on their names; 3) they covers different characteristics of tasks. Therefore, his definition was used in the present study.

Since tasks have been classified into various categories, it is necessary to know how to compare them. Pica et al propose that tasks are distinct from or connected with regard to the following features: 1) One-way or two-way: whether there is mutual exchange of information among participants when tasks are carried out. 2) Convergent or divergent: whether participants achieve the same goal or different goals. 3) Collaborative or competitive: whether participants carry out a task in a cooperative or competitive fashion. 4) Single or multiple outcomes: whether there is

only one or multiple outcomes are possible. 5) Concrete or abstract language: whether the language used in the task is concrete or abstract. 6) Simple or complex processing: whether it is required a simple or complex cognitive process to complete a task. 7) Simple or complex language: whether task completion requires simple or complex language use. 8) Reality-based or not reality-based: whether the task related to real-life tasks (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 235). These features lead to learners' different performance and various effects towards their language acquisition (of more discussed in analysis section 3.2.1).

2.3. Previous Research on TBLT

“Tasks do not take place in a vacuum; nevertheless, until recently, much of the task-based learning and teaching literature has had a tendency to treat them as if they did. Few studies have been set in intact classes” (Samuda, 2001: 119). Yuan and Ellis carried out a study concerning the influence of time limit of a task on learners' performance in terms of their linguistic complexity and accuracy. The results show that learners who are given unlimited time to perform a narrative task use more complex and accurate language than their counterparts who are required to perform the same task under time pressure (quoted in Ellis, 2006: 27). Joe studied learners' acquisition of target words when they were required to read and retell a text under two conditions: with or without access to the text, demonstrating that learners who have access to the text when they carry out the task use target words more frequently (Joe, 1998: 357-337). However, learners without text produce target words in an original way. Foster & Skehan investigated the influence of task types and task planning on linguistic fluency, accuracy and complexity. They found that planning influences learners' outcome in terms of fluency and complexity, but not on accuracy (Oxford, 2006: 106).

The studies above focused on the external characteristics of tasks with regard to learners' language acquisition, such as time limitation. However, there were other studies demonstrating the connection between task itself and learners' vocabulary acquisition, which are similar to the present study. Ellis and Heimbach investigated the relation between meaning negotiation and comprehension, demonstrating that the task with opportunity to interaction facilitates children's understanding (quoted in Bygate et al, 2001: 59). Ellis et al (1994) investigated the influence of different types of task input on comprehension of directives containing target words. The results

show that learners receiving interactionally modified input outscore their counterpart with simplified input on vocabulary acquisition (Ellis, 2001: 60). Newton went a step further by comparing the effectiveness of different task types on vocabulary acquisition, demonstrating that a split information task results in more vocabulary gain (quoted in Ellis, 2003: 87).

There are some significant similarities between the aforementioned studies and the present one with regard to: 1) the procedure of all mentioned studies contains pre-test, treatment and post-test, which correspond to that of present study; 2) and all of them aim to investigate the effectiveness of tasks on vocabulary understanding. However, they differs from present study in that: 1) most of them choose the same task with different types of input; 2) the nature of post-tests in researches are usually picture matching, and labelling, i.e. they only measures the word meaning superficially. However, “the most exciting area of vocabulary research is likely to be research into quality of vocabulary knowledge” (Nation, 1990: 192). Therefore, the present study aims to demonstrate the relation between different task types and vocabulary acquisition by measuring learners’ depth of word knowledge.

2.4. Principles of Task-based Language Teaching

In the discussion of previous sections of my thesis, it is evident that TBLT and CLT are closely related to one another, and TBLT is considered logical development of CLT. They also share some important principles, such as the interaction hypothesis and a focus on form.

2.4.1. Interaction Hypothesis

Interaction Hypothesis plays a central role in TBLT (Fuente, 2006: 265). The importance of interaction is underlined in interactionist approach. Interaction hypothesis was first proposed by Long demonstrating that comprehensible input is necessary for language acquisition (Ellis, 2003: 80). It is obtained when less competent speakers provide feedback on their difficulty of comprehension, e.g. ask for clarification, paraphrase etc. Accordingly, the addresser will modify his or her speech in order to facilitate understanding. It implies that language understanding and acquisition depend primarily on access to input.

However, the hypothesis has been subsequently developed by Pica who also stresses the importance of output in language acquisition. She suggests that language learners should have access to produce and use their linguistic resources. She claims that while learners use language they also receive feedback from other interlocutors. Language acquisition takes place particularly when meaning communication breakdown and learners are pushed to modify or restructure their speech (Ellis, 2003: 80).

As Pica emphasised that learners should have access to produce and use *their* (my emphasis) linguistic resources, they need to be motivated to generate their own linguistic resources. Another factor which is essential in language acquisition is motivation (Pinter, 2006: 37). There is a correlation between learners' motivation, their attitude towards the chosen methods and performance in learning English. This is supported by a number of researchers,¹⁴ demonstrating that learning a language is easier for learners if they are motivated by the teaching method and enjoy learning.

The correlation between attitude and language learning is also applicable to vocabulary acquisition, demonstrating that words should not merely be taught but be included in vocabulary activities that arouse learners' interest in words (Thornbury, 2002:159). Furthermore, it is easier to remember and retrieve words if learners are interested in them (Pinter, 2006: 25). The importance of learners' attitudes in vocabulary acquisition was demonstrated in the analysis section, where it is made clear that pupils who had a positive attitude towards the allotted tasks outperformed those who did not in terms of understanding words and retaining them .

2.4.2. Focus on Form

“Related to most researches on TBLT is the concept ‘focus on form’ ”(Fuente, 2006: 265).

Although TBLT is closely related to CLT that is primarily focus on meaning, it does not exclude focus on form. Instead, some researchers¹⁵ embrace the combination between meaning-focused and form-focused teaching, and suggest that it is an important feature of TBLT. “Task-based language teaching..... is an attempt to harness the benefits of a focus on meaning and use of focus on form (not forms), to deal with its known shortcomings, particularly incompleteness where grammatical constitutes” (quoted in Branden, 2006: 9). This comment demonstrates the

distinction between focus on form and focus on forms in TBLT, with the emphasis on the former. It also implies the adoption of focus on form on grammar. However, although the distinction between focus on form and focus on forms has been related to grammar, it can be adapted in vocabulary teaching (Laufer, 2006: 150). Unlike the focus on forms which advocates teaching vocabulary in isolation, target words in TBLT are embedded in an authentic task. They are used to facilitate task completion. In doing so vocabularies are considered a tool to cope with task problems; learners practice target words when they endeavor to use them, and thus facilitate their understanding of word meanings; notice them when they seek aid in order to accomplish the task.

2.5. Assessing Vocabulary Knowledge

In attempting to investigate the effectiveness of a vocabulary teaching method, learners' vocabulary gain after attending the class should be accordingly measured. Concerning techniques of vocabulary assessment, many¹⁶ have been developed in accordance with the purpose of tests. The present study aims to measure pupils' vocabulary knowledge in terms of depth of understanding after attending two different lessons.

2.5.1. Depth of Vocabulary Knowledge

The definition of knowing a word consists of various aspects, such as form, position, function, meaning, and association (Nation, 1990: 77). The comment demonstrates that word knowledge contains many different aspects in addition to word meanings. However, the present study only focused on meaning comprehension of the target words. Investigating word meaning acquisition was justified by the fact that it is less likely for the learners to acquire grammatical structures, connotations etc. in the process of a single task (Ellis, 2001: 57).

However, even the quality of understanding word meanings is ranked differently based on : 1) what does the word mean; 2) what word should be used to express this meaning; 3) whether there are other related words; 4) what other words can be used to express the same meaning (Nation, 1990: 31). The ranks above have implications for both vocabulary teaching and testing, demonstrating that understanding word meanings is not merely a correct or wrong distinction

To summarize the discussion above with regard to knowing the meaning of a word, the following need to be emphasized: receptive and productive word knowledge. Distance between receptive and productive should be interpreted as depth of vocabulary knowledge (Melka, 1997: 99). Similarly, Anderson and Lynch point out, comprehension involves degree of understanding. At one extreme there is total non-comprehension and another has precise idea of what words mean. (Ellis, 2001: 55). Therefore, vocabulary teaching should involve receptive as well as productive teaching material, such as listening, speaking etc. Accordingly, vocabulary tests should adopt techniques that can measure not only students' receptive but productive vocabulary knowledge. The post-tests in the present study examined both receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge, aiming to measure learners' degree of understanding.

Although the concepts of receptive and productive knowledge have been examined in many studies, these concepts have been treated discretely. Some studies investigated the receptive and productive size of vocabulary, demonstrating that receptive vocabulary outnumbers productive vocabulary (Lemmouh, 2010: 7-10). Others have examined the relation between teaching techniques and vocabulary gain, demonstrating that teaching techniques that contains productive knowledge result in more productive vocabulary gain (Ellis, 2001: 61). Although the receptive-productive division is a convenient way of characterizing word knowledge (Milton, 2009: 149), the boundary between receptive and productive knowledge is not clear-cut. Therefore, they should not be put in an exclusively opposite position. The present study aimed to integrate these two domains by adopting TBLT and post-tests that demonstrate learners' different degrees of or partial vocabulary knowledge.

One of the advantages of TBLT lies in that it provides learners with access to receptive as well as productive vocabulary. Interaction hypothesis in TBLT (mentioned in the task principles) embraces the notion of integrating receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge by encouraging meaning negotiation. In so doing learners not only have opportunities to receive input but respond to it.

2.5.2 Word Meaning Retention and the Task-Induced Involvement Load

The sections above in the thesis focus on the comprehension of word meanings. However, a learner should not only learn words but retain word knowledge. In fact, since vocabulary acquisition is an accumulating process, it is impossible to keep vocabulary acquisition developing if the newly acquired words cannot be stored in mental lexical, i.e. a word goes in one ear and out the other. Fortunately, various tasks in TBLT provide learners with access to deep process of target words, and thus consolidate words retention.

It is necessary to note that a word cannot be remembered without being occurred subsequently. Forgetting curve demonstrates that most knowledge of newly acquired words begins to decrease soon after the learning section (Schmitt, Ruben et al (eds) 2010:34). Similarly, a researcher¹⁷ proposes that practicing vocabulary in some interesting fashion will add words into long-term memory (Thornbury, 2002: 25). TBLT is an intriguing language teaching approach since it encourages learners to use target words in authentic tasks.

In TBLT study, how long a certain linguistic item is retained is closely related to task-induced involvement. Laufer and Hulstijn propose that task effectiveness is determined by the level of “involvement” in a task. Involvement consists of three components: 1) need: whether learners are required or feel need to use certain structures, linguistic items etc. 2) search: whether learners have access to consult dictionary, authority or other more competent learners when they carry out a task. 3) evaluation: what a learner will do when she/he encounter a linguistic item to establish its formal properties, e.g. whether learners try to choose accurate words that are suitable for a specific context. (Ellis, 2003: 58) These three components play an important role in vocabulary acquisition and its long-term retention. The more involvement a task induces the more words will be remembered and learned, i.e. the deeper the process of words the better a word is learned and remained (Kersten, 2010: 73). There are also other concepts proposing the same argument, such as the degree of elaboration.

2.5.3 Previous Research on the Task-induced Involvement Load

The studies below are empirical evidences with regard to the connection between task-induced involvement and vocabulary acquisition. Y.J. Kim examined the relation between task-induced involvement load hypothesis and vocabulary learning. He compared learners’ performance in an

effort to investigate the effectiveness of three vocabulary tasks with different levels of task-induced involvement. The results show that a higher level of student involvement during the task promotes vocabulary learning and retention (Kim, 2008: 285-300). Similarly, when other factors are the same, words with higher involvement load will be remembered better than words with lower involvement load (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001: 15).

Induced-task involvement theory is also related to interaction hypothesis, demonstrating that “target words negotiated in communicative tasks are learned better than words that are not negotiated” (Keating, 2008: 369). When learners feel the need to use unknown words they will search help from other speakers by asking for explanation etc.; when the communication breakdown they tend to modify their speech, which is connected with evaluation. The components: need, search, evaluate not only provide learners with access to interact with others speaker but also internal interaction, i.e. a cognitive process. Learners should decode received message, modify their speeches in order to complete a task.

3. Analysis

The aim of the study is to compare the jigsaw task and information gap task to establish which is more efficient in promoting pupils’ understanding of words and their retention in terms of depth of vocabulary knowledge. The study consists of a pre-test, immediate-post test, delayed post-test and questionnaire. The analysis is divided into four sections: 1) The comparison between the result of pre-tests and immediate post-tests from two groups. 2) Pupils’ performance in the immediate post-tests from both groups. 3) The results of delayed post-tests from two groups; comparison between immediate and delayed post-test. 4) The comparison of questionnaires that were handed out to pupils from both groups.

3.1 Comparison Between the Pre-test and Immediate Post-test

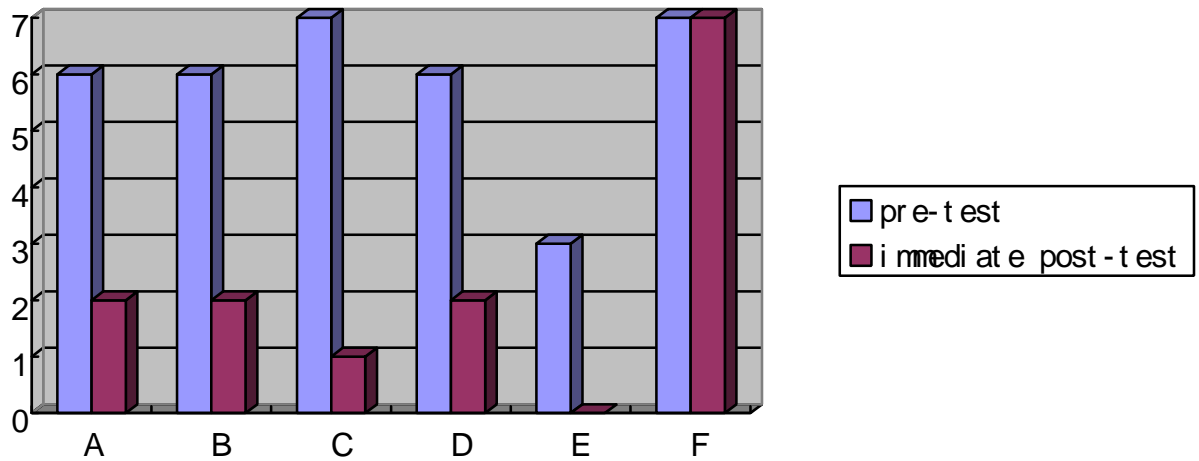


Figure 1.1 Comparison between pre-test and immediate post-test of group A.

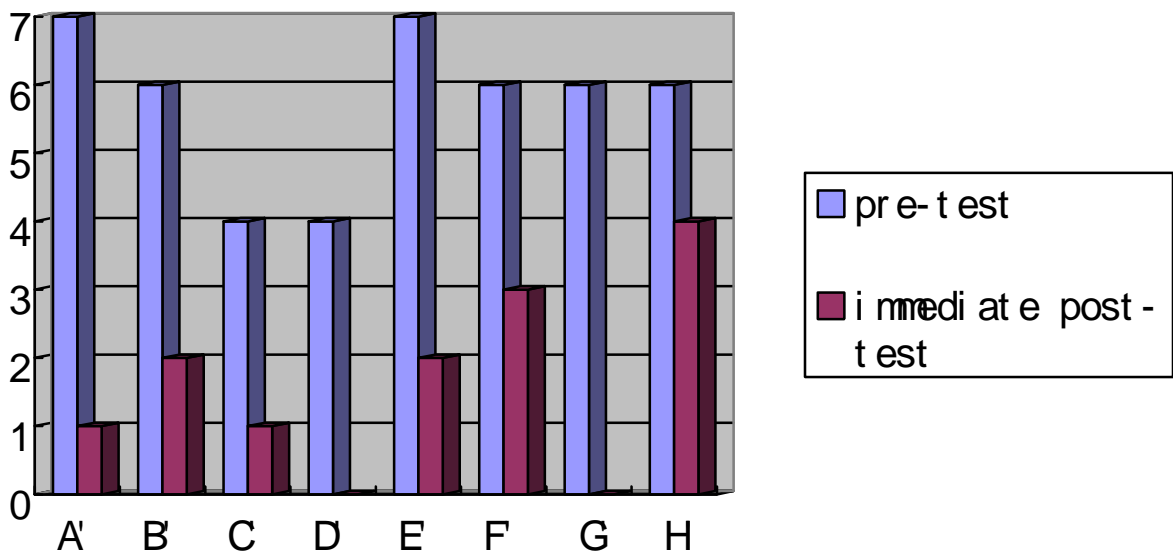


Figure 1.2 Group B Comparison between pre-test and immediate post-test of group B.

The individual pupils were located separately on an X-axis. The Y-axis demonstrates the number of target words that were unknown to the pupils. Generally, figure 1.1 and 1.2 show that the number of unknown words for each individual pupil varies significantly from the pre-test to immediate post-test. It is evident that the number of words that were unknown to pupils drops sharply in immediate post-tests compared with the result of pre-tests. This result shows that pupils in both groups recognized more target words in the immediate post-tests than they did in the pre-tests, demonstrating that both tasks promoted vocabulary acquisition.

The result can be explained as follows: 1) the interaction hypothesis demonstrates that input is an essential element in vocabulary acquisition. Pupils from both groups have access to input both from their teachers and classmates. 2) Both tasks integrate explicit and implicit vocabulary teaching. At the pre-task phase, i.e. the introductions to target words, pupils were offered an opportunity to form-focused instruction from teachers; during task completion, i.e. meaning-focused communication, pupils received target words again from their classmates. 3) the interaction hypothesis also emphasized the notion that tasks offer pupils an access not only to input but output, which is also an important component in learning new words.

In the jigsaw task, pupils were required to describe verbally the layout of room to their partners. Similarly, pupils performing information gap tasks were required to take note and choose one correct picture in accordance with their classmates' description. Therefore, pupils not only passively received target words from the teacher or their classmates but processed the obtained information in order to complete tasks. They need to digest the received information and try to understand word meaning while carrying out the task. Unlike mechanical and artificial exercises, both tasks aim to put target words into a more natural and language use context (as described in task criteria section). They have connections with a real-life situation in that pupils were required to describe things, such as object, directions etc. In so doing, the tasks created an authentic vocabulary learning context in which target words were embedded as a means of arousing the learners' interest.

More specifically, the result of Group A's pre-test showed that six of the target words were "new" to pupil A before lesson. However, after performing the jigsaw task this number dropped to two, i.e. after carrying out jigsaw task, the meaning of another four target words were known to pupil A. Similarly, in group B, although the result of pre-test showed that all the seven target words were unknown to student A', the number dropped significantly to one in the immediate post-test, demonstrating that six of target word meanings were acquired after performing information gap task.

Furthermore, it is also possible that other circumstance discussed below might have influenced the acquisition of new words. 1) Although pupils were not informed about the post-tests, they were told about the following two lessons in present project. Therefore, pupils may assume that the rest lessons have something to do with the pre-test, and thus try to learn target words by themselves before the experimental lessons. 2) The progress in the immediate post-test may due to the effect of representing target words, Pupils perform better since they had access to review them.

Figure 1.1 shows the individual pupils' performance in pre-test and immediate post-test. The differences between the number of words that were unknown to pupils in pre-test and in immediate post-test demonstrate the pupils' vocabulary gain after performing different tasks. In order to investigate which task is more effective in promoting understanding of new words, the average number of individual pupils' new vocabulary acquisition after two tasks was compared in the table below.

vocabulary gain	pupils	Pupil A	Pupil B	Pupil C	Pupil D	Pupil E	Pupil F	
	Newly learned vocabulary	4	4	6	4	3	0	
Average newly leared vocabulary/pupil		3.5						

Table 1.3 vocabulary growth of group A subsequent to task completion.

vocabulary gain	pupils	Pupil A'	Pupil B'	Pupil C'	Pupil D'	Pupil E'	Pupil F'	Pupil G'	Pupil H'

Newly learned vocabulary	6	4	3	4	5	3	6	2
Average newly learned vocabulary/pupil	4.1							

Table 1.4 vocabulary growth of group B subsequent to task completion.

According to table 1.3, on average, each pupil carrying out the jigsaw task acquired 3.5 new words after the exposure. In comparison, table 1.4 demonstrated that after completing the information gap task pupils learned 4.1 target words. The results demonstrated that the information gap task outperformed jigsaw task in promoting the recognition the meaning of new words.

Tables 1.3 and 1.4 show that pupil in both group make pronounced progress before and after completing tasks. Furthermore, the degree of progress varies from group A to group B. The reason for the difference results of two methods in learning new words can be found by comparing the characteristics of two tasks (of which discussed in theoretical background). Concerning the difficulty of tasks, the jigsaw task is more complex than the information gap task. While carrying out the jigsaw task both parties need to consider how to describe the layout of the room, so that his/her partner can complete the missed information in his/her picture. In the information gap task, however, pupils were only required to take notes in accordance with the description given by two witnesses, i.e. they do not need to spend time in considering how to describe the picture in a most clear and efficient way. Giving the same time limitation, pupils performing the information gap task have more time to process word meanings than those who performed the jigsaw task. However, from both figure 1.1 and table 1.3, we can see that pupil F did not learn any word after completing jigsaw task (more discussed in 3.2.2). This suggests that if his/her data were removed, there might not be any differences between the two methods.

The analysis above compares the results of the pre-test and immediate post-test, demonstrating that generally both tasks promote to some degree understand of words. Furthermore, the pre-test only focuses on testing the superficial understanding of word meanings, i.e. whether the correct translation or meaning of a word is given. However, understanding a word involves different stages. Understanding should not only be measured by whether meaning can be recalled when

target words are presented, but whether the words can be used to express an idea in a semantically correct way. Accordingly, a test should not only measure whether but how well a learner understands a word. This comment is supported by some researchers¹⁸, suggesting that comprehension involves degree of understanding from non-comprehension to precise understanding of word meanings. Accordingly, in between these two extremes, our vocabulary knowledge moves from relatively receptive to productive knowledge (as described in the theory section).

The test in the present study aims to measure pupils' degree of understanding in terms of receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge. The first and second questions in the post-tests are relatively easier than the third one because: firstly, they measure receptive vocabulary knowledge. The answer will be counted correct as long as the correct meaning is given; secondly, since pupils were allowed to define the words in Swedish, it is easier than defining the words in English; and thirdly, the question requires pupils to compose a sentence with the target words. In doing so, pupils need not only offer the corresponding word meaning but express this meaning in an English sentence. In order to answer this question, pupils need to retrieve the word meanings from their mental lexicon and produce their own sentence.

3.2 Data from the Immediate Post-test

The analysis in 3.1 discusses the difference of pupils' performance in pre-test and immediate post-test, i.e. the pupils newly acquired vocabulary subsequent to completing the allocated tasks. The newly acquired vocabulary was compared in terms of word meaning recognition, i.e. superficial understanding of word meanings. In this section, focusing on the degree of understanding, the results of two groups' performance in the immediate post-test were compared in the table below.

Group A pupils	Vocabulary items in each score category			Total points	Group B pupils	Vocabulary in each score category			Total points
	0	1	2			0	1	2	
A	0	5	5	15	A'	1	6	6	18

B	0	6	6	18	B'	1	5	5	15
C	0	6	6	18	C'	0	6	6	18
D	2	5	5	15	D'	0	7	7	21
E	0	7	7	21	E'	1	5	5	15
F	3	0	0	0	F'	3	4	4	12
—	—			—	G'	0	7	0	7
—	—			—	H'	0	3	2	7
Average	0.8	4.8	4.8	14.5	Average	0.8	5.3	4.4	14.1

Rating scale: 1. do not understand word (0)

2. the correct Swedish or English definition were given (1)

3. correct definitions were given, and words were used in sentences with semantic accuracy (2)

Table 2.1 Comparison of immediate post-test between group A and group B

In investigating which of the two tasks is more effective in terms of acquiring new vocabulary, the results of the immediate post-test were discussed from three perspectives : 1) the characteristics of two tasks; 2) the average individual pupil's total points and their performance in each question; 3) other possible reasons that may influence the acquisition of new words.

The above table shows that generally, pupils from group A slightly outperformed their counterparts from group B in terms of the total number of test points in the immediate post-test. More specifically, the table also demonstrates that both groups' performance on the first question was identical. (Do I need to mention this if the first question does not make sense? Question 1 was also discussed on page 26) The first question is subjective in that it is phrased as a self report, so that pupils need to judge by themselves whether they understand words or not. In contrast, the second question is objective since pupils were required to offer definitions of target words. Unlike the first two questions, the third one measures pupils' productive vocabulary knowledge, as the pupils were required to use the target words in semantically correct sentences, demonstrating they understand the target words.

3.2.1. Characteristics of the Two Tasks

As already discussed in section 2.2.3, different tasks are put into categories in accordance with their characteristics. The two tasks in the present study were compared as follows: first, the tasks that are cooperative or competitive. The task performed by group A belongs to cooperative category. Pupils in group A were put into pairs and required to complete the task together. Since both partners have different pictures, the task cannot be completed by one person alone. Pairs need to complement their partial information with the help of their partners. In so doing, pupils in each group knew that they will obtain assistance from one another, which makes them relax while carrying out the task. The pupils in group B, however, worked as individuals. They needed to complete their task independently and were also required to report their own answers one by one after completing the task. The pupils in group B thus felt relatively tense in performing the information gap task.

Furthermore, one-way or two-way interaction is another factor that influences learning new words. One-way interaction in this essay refers to a characteristic of the task in which pupils only receive the information passively, without giving feedback. On the contrary, two-way interaction means a free communication where pupils not only receive information but give their response to the input. In group A, pupils were encouraged to turn to their partners when they experience difficulty in understanding word meanings. Accordingly, their partner will modify his/her speech to make the other party understand. Pupils in group B, however, were not allowed to ask questions or communicate with one another while completing their task. They cannot thus gain assistance from other classmates even when they fail to understand words. Therefore, pupils in group B have less access to the comprehensible input that is essential in learning new words.

From a task outcome perspective, tasks have single or multiple outcomes. In group A, each group was required to identify one picture as the correct alternative after completing the task. This was followed by a five-minute discussion. Based on the observation of group A, two pupils in the same pair often have different ideas. They express their ideas by emphasizing the difference between objects that are in their picture and those in pictures presented on the white-board. They need to negotiate and reach a commonly agreed answer. In so doing, pairs have another access to focus on target word itself, and thus consolidate understanding. The pupils in group B pupils, however, worked, as mentioned above, independently. They were responsible for their own

choice, i.e. they do not need to consult others. Even though they missed some information in the witnesses' descriptions, they were not allowed to consult their classmates as did the pupils in group A. Therefore, compared with their counterparts in group A, they have less opportunity to review target words.

The two tasks also differ in that pupils were required to offer different types of output. In group A, pupils needed to communicate verbally in effort to complete the task. Pupils in group B, however, were only required to listen to the instructions and take notes. Accordingly, the third question in the immediate post-test measured whether pupils can offer their own understanding of word meanings, i.e. ability to express words meaning in a semantically corrected way. Since group A pupils have practiced expressing meaning in sentences while communicating with their partner, it is reasonable to assume that pupils in group A will outperform their counterparts in group B on the third question.

3.2.2. Pupils Performance on Each questions of the Immediate Post-test

According to the comparison above, it was predicted that the jigsaw task would be more effective in promoting vocabulary acquisition, since it offers pupils the access to a comprehensible input, and a relaxed learning atmosphere. This argument was confirmed by the fact that the total points of group A was higher than group B's. However, pupils' actual performance in the immediate post-test does not comply with this expectation in that the pupils performing the information gap task demonstrated a better knowledge of new words than those completing the jigsaw task in terms of word meaning recognition.

However, it is need to note that compared with group B, group A performed better on the third question of the test. The table shows that although 5.37 target words were known to group B pupils, one cannot be used corrected in sentences. In group A, however, 4.83 words were recognized by pupil and all of them were correctly used in sentences. This result re-emphasizes the importance of the test measuring degree of understanding. In attempting to elaborate this result, pupils' performance on each question was discussed, together with possible reasons. Meanwhile, it is also important to note that although group A outperformed group B, the difference is minimal. It is possible that the discrepancy between the expectation and test results

is due to other factors. Therefore, it is also necessary to consider other possibilities that may influence word meaning acquisition.

The first question of the immediate post-test is a form of self report, identifying the words with which the pupils were not familiar. Their performance on the second question demonstrates that some pupils tend to overestimate their ability in understanding words. Of the seven target words selected, 0.83 was judged unknown to pupils, i.e. on average, each pupil should be able to offer the correct meaning of the remaining 6.17 target words. However, the number of correct answers on the second question of the test show that pupils in both groups did not meet this requirement, demonstrating that pupils who chose they knew the word meaning failed to give the correct definition.

More specifically, in table 2.1, the number of correct answers to the second question also shows that although the target words have been taught by teachers in the pre-task phase, few pupils can remember their meaning once the allotted tasks have been carried out, demonstrating that learning the meaning of new words is not a one-off experience but an accumulative process. Furthermore, the reason why group A pupils remembered relatively less word meanings lies in that jigsaw task did not achieve its purpose of eliciting pupils to use target words. Although pupils were required to use English while completing the task, some of group A pupils spoke Swedish. Similarly, in stead of using the target words, some pupils pointed at the target words that were presented on the white-board while describing the picture to their partners. In doing so they lost an opportunity to practice English and consolidate their understanding of target words.

As for the second question in the immediate post-test, table 2.1 shows that on average, pupils in group B gave more correct answers than group A pupils. This result can be explained as follows: Firstly, although pupils were put into two groups randomly, English proficiency in the two groups was not equal. The result of the pre-test demonstrates that before performing the two tasks, of seven target words 5.83 words were unknown to group A pupils, whereas the figure was 5.75 in group B. On average, pupils in group B know more target words than group A pupils before exposure, which may also account for the better performance of the group B pupils. This conclusion is confirmed by comparing individual pupils' performance between the immediate

post-test and the pre-test, e.g. pupil C',D', B and E; the pupils who perform well in the immediate post-test usually perform better in the pre-test too.

Another factor that may influence pupils' performance on the immediate post-test lies is that although the instructions for the test were explained to both groups, pupils in group B obtained an oral Swedish translation from their teacher. It is possible that the Swedish instruction helped the group B pupils in understanding how to do the test, and thus obtaining higher scores. This comment was confirmed by an informal interview with their Swedish teacher during which she claimed that in their tests, the pupils usually have Swedish instruction as well. Table 2.1 shows that Pupil F is the only pupil who gain zero in the test. After analyzing the test paper, it became clear that he/she did not understand the instruction, since the wrong definition was put in the brackets, where was supposed to mark "X". Also, in the test instruction, the third question was required to write in English. However, he/she answered it in Swedish.

The above analysis demonstrates that from word meaning recognition's perspective, group B pupils outperformed pupils in group A. Although this result did not fulfill the expectation that was made based on the related theories, it is important to note that, as presented in table 2.1 the group A's superiority in immediate post-test was reversed in that group A outperformed group B on the third question of the test.

As already discussed, in group A, 4.83 target words were given their correct definitions. These correctly defined words were then used in sentences in a semantically corrected way. In group B, however, although 5.37 target words were understood by pupils, only 4.37 were used in sentences, i.e. of seven target words selected, one of them pupils only had partial knowledge. Pupil G' enabled to offer correct meanings of all target words but none of them were used in semantically corrected sentences. Also, three target words were known to pupil H', but only two were used in sentences. This result demonstrates that group A pupils had advantage in expressing word meanings in English sentence with semantic accuracy.

This result can be explained as follows: firstly, the pupils performing jigsaw task had more opportunity to express word meaning in sentences. They were required to describe their pictures

verbally to the other partners. While describing the picture, they need to use the target words in sentences in helping their partners to identify the difference between two pictures. This practice helped group A pupils to answer the third question of subsequent test, since there is a correspondence between their practice in oral communication during task completion and the content of third question of the test.

Furthermore, while analyzing the third question, it is clear that the majority of pupils in group A generated their own sentences; these were different from the sample sentences presented in the pre-task phase. Pupils performing the information gap task, however, mostly recited the sentences presented in pre-task phase, making only minor changes. This can be attributed to the fact that the jigsaw task offered pupils more opportunity to practise their own linguistic output. Although the target words were presented to two groups in the pre-task phase together with their sample sentences, in the jigsaw task, pupils were required to describe the layout of the room to their partners, during which they needed to express the meanings words in their own words. In the information gap task, however, the emphasis was on input rather than the pupils' verbal output, e.g. the task could be completed as long as pupils understood the meaning of the words. In so doing, they recognized the target words but failed to use them correctly in sentences .

3.3 Word Meaning Retention

Focusing on word meanings recognition, the analysis in previous section analyzed pupils' performance on immediate post-test subsequent to two tasks completion. The result demonstrates that the jigsaw tasks better promoted pupils' productive vocabulary knowledge, i.e. relatively deep understanding, whereas the information gap task outperformed the jigsaw task in word meaning recognition. In general, compared with pre-test, the pupils' performance on the immediate post-test varied considerably. However, as already established word meaning acquisition is not a one-off experience. Vocabulary acquisition cannot be improved, and various teaching methods become useless, if the understanding of word meanings is not stored in a mental lexicon. It is thus very important to investigate task effectiveness in word meaning retention.

3.3.1 Comparison of the Two Groups' Performance in Delayed Post-test

In order to demonstrate which of the two tasks is more effective in word meaning retention, the results of the delayed post-test are discussed here, emphasizing the degree of understanding achieved. The data are discussed as follows: firstly, both groups' performance on delayed post-test are analyzed separately and compared with one another. Secondly, the immediate post-test and delayed post-test are compared, in order to demonstrate the difference in pupils' understanding of words one week after performing the two tasks. The table below compares individual pupils as well as their average vocabulary growth in the two groups one week after the initial exposure.

Group A pupils	percentage of vocabulary items in each score category			Total points	Group B	percentage of vocabulary items in each score category			Total points
	0	1	2			0	1	2	
A	0	7	7	21	A'	1	6	6	18
B	1	5	5	15	B'	2	2	2	6
C	0	7	7	21	C'	0	6	6	18
D	1	4	3	10	D'	0	6	6	18
E	0	7	7	21	E'	0	5	5	15
F	4	1	1	3	F'	4	2	2	6
—	—	—	—	—	G'	1	6	6	18
—	—	—	—	—	H'	0	3	3	9
Average	1.00	5.17	5.00	15.2	Average	1.00	4.50	4.50	13.5

Table 3.1 the comparison of delayed post-test between two groups

Section 1.1 demonstrates that group B pupils outperformed group A pupils in the immediate post-test in word meaning recognition. In the delayed post-test, however, the result is reversed.

Generally, the table 3.1 shows that on average, group A pupils obtain 15.2 points, whereas group B pupils 13.5 points. More specifically, of the six pupils in group A, half understood all the target

words. In group B, however, with eight pupils, none understood all the target words. On average, each pupil in group A could offer the correct definition for 5.17 target words, and five could be correctly used in sentences. In contrast, 4.50 target words were recognized by pupils in group B and were correctly used in sentences. The pupils in group A knew 0.67 more words than group B pupils, and 0.50 more target words were used correctly in sentences, demonstrating that the pupils who performed the jigsaw task remembered the meaning of more target words than their counterparts who performed the information gap task.

3.3.2 . Comparison between the Immediate and Delayed Post-tests

Furthermore, since the pupils performing the information gap task outscored pupils performing the jigsaw task in the immediate post-test, i.e. pupils' starting line was different, it is not enough merely compare two groups pupils' performance in the delayed post-test. In order to demonstrate the effect of two tasks in word meaning retention, the gap between the pupils' performance in the immediate post-test and delayed post-test is compared in the table below.

Group A pupils	Percentage of vocabulary items in each score category in Immediate post-test			Total points	Percentage of vocabulary items in each score category in delayed post-test			Total points
	0	1	2		0	1	2	
A	0	5	5	15	0	7	7	21
B	0	6	6	18	1	5	5	15
C	2	6	6	6	0	7	7	21
D	2	5	5	15	1	4	3	10
E	0	7	7	21	0	7	7	21
F	3	0	0	0	4	1	1	3
Average	0.83	4.83	4.83	12.5	1.00	5.16	5.00	15.2

Table 3.2 the comparison between immediate and delayed post-tests of group A.

The table shows that on average, with a lapse of one week between the immediate post-test and the post-test, pupils performing the jigsaw task obtained 0.70 points more than the score gained in the immediate post-test. Also, they understood an additional 0.33 words and 0.17 could be used in sentences. More specifically, three of the pupils performing the jigsaw task made progress in their delayed post-test; pupil E retained his/her understanding of all seven words. On average, the score in the delayed post-test demonstrates that most of the pupils in group A retained their understanding of word and even knew more words one week after completing the task, demonstrating that jigsaw task promote retention of pupils' understanding of words.

In contrast, the pupils performing the information gap task lost the advantage they had shown in the delayed post-test. Their performance between the immediate and delayed post-tests is presented in table 3.3 below.

Group B pupils	Percentage of vocabulary items in each score category in Immediate post-test			Total points	Percentage of vocabulary items in each score category in delayed post-test			Total points
	0	1	2		0	1	2	
A'	1	6	6	18	1	6	6	18
B'	1	5	5	15	2	2	2	6
C'	0	6	6	18	0	6	6	18
D'	0	7	7	21	0	6	6	18
E'	1	5	5	15	0	5	5	15
F'	3	4	4	12	4	2	2	6

G'	0	7	0	7	1	6	6	18
H'	0	3	2	7	0	3	3	9
Average	0.75	5.38	4.38	14.1	1.00	4.50	4.50	13.5

Table 3.3 the comparison between immediate and delayed post-tests of group B

The overview of the above data shows that pupils performing the information gap task performed better in the immediate post test. In the immediate post-test, 5.38 words were identified as familiar by pupils in group B. However, this number dropped to 4.50, i.e. 0.88 target words were forgotten in the space of a week. More specifically, the table demonstrates that of eight pupils in group B, half had forgotten the meaning of words they known a week ago. Also, two pupils, pupil D' and G', understood the meaning of all target words in the immediate post-test. However, one week later, none of the group B pupils could remember the meaning of all the target words.

3.3.3. Comparison of the Task-induced Involvement Load between Two Tasks

The reason why group A made progress in understanding words in one week, whereas group B failed is to be found in the task-induced involvement load theory, that demonstrates that the length of time a word is retained is closely related to the involvement load induced by the tasks set. The more involvement load a task induces, the more words can be learned and retained. Task induced involvement load consists of three components which are essential in word meaning retention, namely, need, search and evaluation (as explained in the theory section). In order to explain the difference between the two groups as regards word meaning retention, the degree of involvement load that the two tasks induced was compared; the results are shown in the table below.

Task	need	search	Evaluation
Jigsaw task	+	+	+
Information gap task	+	—	—

Table 3.4 the involvement loads induced by the two tasks.

The pupils performing the jigsaw task experienced need, search and evaluation. Need in TBLT refers to the target linguistic items necessary to complete the task. In the present study, the target words were embedded in the picture, e.g. they were designed as the objects that were put at the different places in a room. Each pupil in a pair had a different picture, and must pool their information in order to complete the task. They must describe the picture, and use the target words in helping his/her partner to complement the missing information.

Furthermore, since learners feel the need to use the target linguistic items, they may turn to others when they experience difficulty. They need to seek help from another authority or more competent learners while carrying out a task. Pupils in group A worked as pairs in completing the task, and were encouraged to ask their partners when they experienced any difficulty in using the target words. Also, the definitions and sample sentences presented on the white board in the pre-task phase were removed during task completion. In so doing, pupils cannot simply refer to the definitions on the white board but consult their partners. The discussion between partners offered more opportunities to review the target words, and thus consolidate their understanding of words, thereby facilitating retention.

Evaluation refers to language learners' need to choose more accurate expressions while performing a task in a specific context. In the present study, evaluation means the process by which pupils choose more accurate words while completing their task. During observation it becomes clear that in group A, although the target words have been taught to pupils in the pre-task phase, some cannot use them immediately. They described the shape of objects and the general idea of target words. Also, they used different words and expressions in order to make their descriptions understandable. With the help of their partners they finally learned to use accurate words to describe the layout of his/her picture.

Unlike the group A pupils, the pupils performing the information gap task experienced relatively less involvement load in task completion. Firstly, since the target words were introduced in the pre-task phase and also embedded in instructions from two witnesses, pupils needed to comprehend them in order to complete the picture in accordance with the instructions given.

However, due to the fact that they were not allowed to discuss with other classmates or consult teachers, they lost the opportunity to search for assistance. Similarly, pupils in group B only needed to receive the input from two witnesses instead of giving any response, so they did not need to consider how to describe the layout of the picture in a more comprehensible and accurate fashion.

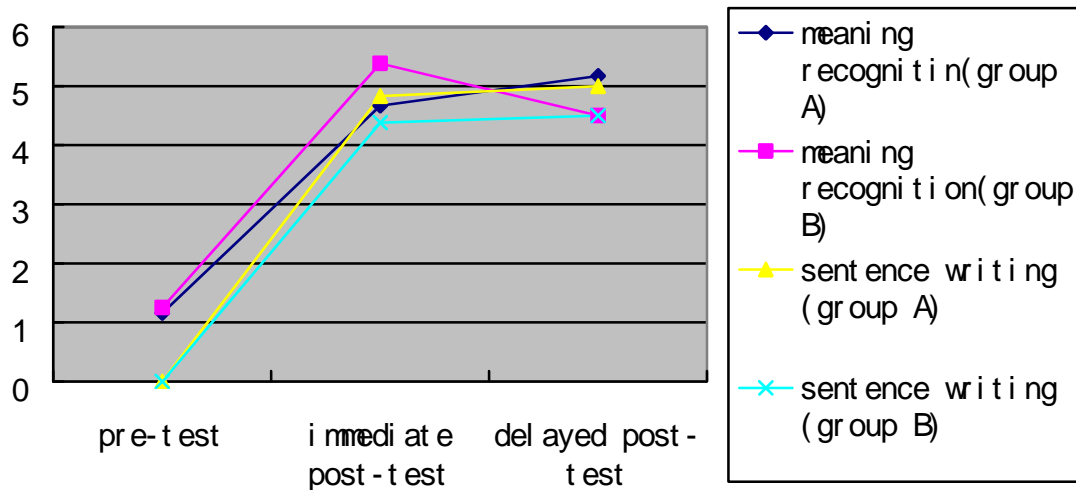


Figure 4.1 the comparison between two groups' performance in three tests, in terms of degree of understanding

The results of the three tests in the present study are summarized in figure 4.1 above. They were located separately on an X-axis, and the Y-axis shows the percentage of target words that were understood by pupils. The table shows that the jigsaw and information gap tasks promote pupils understanding of words. However, a week after completing the information gap task the number of words that were known to pupils dropped from 5.38 to 4.50, whereas pupils performing the jigsaw task remembered more words. Furthermore, from the pupils' productive knowledge perspective, group A pupils also outperformed their counterparts in group B in both the immediate and delayed post-tests. The figure also demonstrates that pupils performing the jigsaw task performed better in writing sentences, i.e. they not only recognized words but could use them correctly in sentences.

3.4. Data from the Questionnaire

The pupils' attitude towards the teaching method plays an essential role in their performance. The first question in the questionnaire (see appendix 3) aimed to establish whether pupils were interested in the two methods and the results were presented in the table below.

pupil \ multipl choic	Agree	Agree in part	Disagree
Group A	5	1	0
Group B	3	5	0

Question 1: The task is interesting and I like it

Table 5.1 pupils' interest towards their respective tasks.

Generally, table 5.1 shows that pupils in both groups liked the two tasks assigned them. More specifically, it is clear that the majority of the pupils, i.e. five in group A viewed the jigsaw task as interesting, accounting for. According to the questionnaire answers, the pupils who chose "agree" claimed that they enjoyed performing the jigsaw task. Of these, two further emphasized that they are more willing to learn words if the task is interesting. The only pupil who chose "agree in part" justified his/her choice by commenting that the task is "a little bit hard". However, the majority of the pupils, i.e. five who performed the information gap task chose "agree in part". They believe that the task is not the most interesting task they have done.

Furthermore, as already discussed, the performance of pupils demonstrates that pupils in group A outperformed group B pupils in terms of degree of understanding of words. The pupils performing the jigsaw task not only recognized word meanings but could express these in sentences semantically correctly. Also, their understanding of words was retained for a week after the initial exposure; such was not the case in group B. The comparison between the post-tests and questionnaire also shows that there is a consistency between pupils' attitudes and their performance, demonstrating that pupils with a positive attitude towards the chosen method obtained a relatively higher score in terms of understanding of word meanings than their counterparts who did not enjoy the chosen task. It is thus clear that learners' interests should be

taken into consideration, where the situation permits, when teachers choose teaching materials and methods.

The second and third questions in the questionnaire were designed to establish pupils’ attitude to the effectiveness of the chosen task in learning new words and retaining their meanings. The results are presented in the table below.

multipl choic pupil	Agree	Agree in part	Disagree
Group A (learning new words)	1	5	0
Group A (meaning retention)	2	0	4
Group B (learning new words)	6	0	2
Group B (meaning retention)	3	5	0

Question 2: The task helps you to learn a new word.

Question 3: After completing the task I found that I could recall the meaning of a word more easily.

Table 5.2 Pupils’ attitude towards task effectiveness in learning new words and retention of meanings.

Table 5.2 shows that the majority of pupils performing the jigsaw task chose the alternative “agree in part” in relation to how the task helped them to learn new words; only one pupil completely agrees that they learned new words while carrying out the jigsaw task. In group B, however, six of the pupils commented that the information gap task is useful in learning new vocabulary. Furthermore, the above table shows that in terms of word meaning retention, the majority of the pupils in group A did not think they obtained any benefit from performing the jigsaw task, whereas in group B all the pupils stated that to some extent the information gap task had helped them to recall word meanings.

However, it is important to note that the pupils' attitude towards the effectiveness of the tasks in promoting understanding of word and its retention was not consistent with their performance in the post-tests. The pupils who claimed that they did not benefit from the task outscored those who argued that they did. The immediate post-test shows that although group B marginally outscored group A in terms of word meaning recognition, the pupils in group A not only knew the word meaning but could use the word correctly in a sentence demonstrating that they understood the meaning. The advantage of the jigsaw task over the information gap task becomes clearer when the results of the delayed post-test are taken into consideration. The conclusion is that the jigsaw task better promotes pupils' understanding of word meanings and its retention than the information one.

The reason for the discrepancy between the pupils' performance and their opinion of the tasks' effectiveness becomes clear while analyzing pupils' explanations for their choices. Concerning task effectiveness in learning new words, for example, five in group A chose "agree in part" since they did not learn all the target words. Also, some pupils in group B who did not think the task helped them to learn new words specified the following reasons: 1) It was hard to learn every word; and 2) they already knew some words. Similarly, pupils who believed the task was useless in terms of remembering new words claimed that 1) not all words can be recalled; 2) they did not think they make pronounced progress in delayed post-test.

To sum up, pupils were not used to categorizing their choices. Also, the alternative "agree in part" was interpreted rather differently. This was established in an informal talk with pupils after the tests were carried out and the results analyzed. During this discussion they explained that they chose the option "agree" only if they felt they knew every word after performing the task. Some pupils claimed that the alternative "agree in part" can be selected when you cannot make decision. Furthermore, as to be expected, the pupils' awareness of various learning strategies is not fully developed at the age of eleven to twelve. Although the pupils' knowledge of the words developed as they completed the task, they were unaware of this. This comment is established by the comparison between result of pre-test and post-tests of the present study, demonstrating that pupils in both groups made marked progress in understanding of new words subsequent to task completion. More specifically, the post-tests also show that pupils who performed the jigsaw task

could not only recognize word meanings but use them in sentences semantically correctly, whereas their counterparts performing information gap task failed. Furthermore, the pupils in group not only retained their understanding of word but make progress in a week lapse. In contrast, majority pupils in group B obtained fewer points in delayed post-test than the immediate one. This result demonstrates that jigsaw task is more effective in promoting understanding of words and its retention, in terms of degree of vocabulary knowledge.

4. Conclusion

Experts predict that three billion people in the world will speak English as a second language by 2016 (English globalization, 2007). Accordingly, research on all aspects of ESL teaching is increasing rapidly, as is demonstrated by the large number of books on the subject to be found in well-stocked bookshops. Vocabulary is crucial in language teaching. Recent studies of ESL acquisition suggest a heavy concentration on vocabulary acquisition, especially in the early stages of learning, demonstrating that vocabulary is a prerequisite for later proficiency in the language (Thornbury, 2002: 160). The present study discusses TBLT in a Swedish context, as already mentioned, due to the fact that although TBLT practiced in Sweden in sixties, not all of teachers adopt this method. Therefore, there is a need to investigate what tasks best promote Swedish pupils' vocabulary learning.

As evidenced in the theory section of the present study, TBLT has enjoyed considerable popularity in different parts of the world during the past two decades. A series of studies of TBLT has been conducted and various articles and thesis are published (see section 2.3). Many of these studies discuss the influence of external factors on language acquisition, e.g. learners' vocabulary acquisition under two conditions: with or without access to the text; the influence of a time limit in set tasks. The present study discusses the connection between two different language tasks and pupils' understanding of words and their retention. Concerning the measurement of vocabulary gain, as already mentioned, understanding has been emphasized, since the majority of studies in TBLT measure learners' vocabulary gain in terms of word meaning recognition.

The degree of understanding of a word is ranked from recognition to generation, i.e. receptive to productive vocabulary knowledge. The aim of the present study is to establish which of the two

tasks, jigsaw or information gap, best promotes pupils' understanding of words and its retention in terms of depth of vocabulary knowledge. The discussion is divided into four sections: firstly, the study compares the effectiveness of two tasks in recognizing word meanings subsequent to task completion. The results demonstrate that pupils in both groups offered more correct definitions of the target words than they did in the pre-test, demonstrating that both tasks promote pupils' recognition of word meanings. Secondly, the immediate post-test is discussed in detail, emphasizing the difference in pupils' performance in terms of productive knowledge.

The results demonstrate that although pupils performing the information gap task outperformed their counterparts who performed the jigsaw task in terms of meaning recognition, they lost the advantage when it came to explaining meanings in sentences. Thirdly, the pupils' performance in the immediate and delayed post-tests is also compared, demonstrating that pupils performing the jigsaw task retained the meanings of words better than those performing the information gap task in terms of both receptive and productive knowledge. Finally, pupils' attitude towards their respective task is discussed, demonstrating that pupils who enjoyed their tasks outperformed those who did not. From the above analysis it is evident that the jigsaw task better promotes pupils' understanding of words and their retention in terms of degree of understanding.

With the increasing popularity of the TBLT method, further research is called for. It would be possible, for example, to compare the effectiveness of other types of tasks in vocabulary learning, among pupils with different cultural backgrounds, and different levels of English proficiency. While the number of target words in the present study is limited, the results are consistent. In a more comprehensive study, it would be possible to add more target words and pupils. It should also be noted that the gain in terms of vocabulary acquisition was greater in group A than in the group performing the information gap task. This is promising and highlights the need for continued study in this important area of ESL teaching.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 (the pre-test)

NAME: _____

Please mark “√” if you know the word and explain its meaning in Swedish. If you do not know the word, mark “?” in the brackets.

Example: empathy (?) or enemy (√) fiende

invent ():	fireplace ():	shy ():
flower ():	lousy ():	spoon ():
strawberry ():	enormous ():	defend ():
capture ():	carrot ():	glittering ():
lonely ():	knife ():	mushroom ():
juice ():	small ():	run ():
unhappy ():	peace ():	maybe ():
cut ():	bathtub ():	lazy ():
yellow ():	open ():	bottle ():
dish ():	nothing ():	parrot ():
grape ():	safe ():	shoe ():
rabbit ():	pink ():	

Appendix 2 (the immediate and delayed post-tests)

Name: _____

Instruction: Please explain the words below. **Question 1:** If you do not know the word meaning please marks “X” in the brackets, if you know its meaning skip the first question and answer question two and three. **Question 2:** explain the word either in Swedish or English. **Question 3:** Using the word to compose a sentence (in English). **N.B.** (If you do the third question please complete the second one.) 15 minutes.

Grape:

1. I have seen this word but I have forgotten the meaning ()
2. I know the word, it means _____ (in Swedish or English)
3. I know the meaning of this word and I can use it in a sentence (please write a sentence below) _____

Mushroom:

1. I have seen this word but I have forgotten the meaning ()
2. I know the word, it means _____ (in Swedish or English)
3. I know the meaning of this word and I can use it in a sentence (please write a sentence below) _____

Unhappy:

1. I have seen this word but I have forgotten the meaning ()
2. I know the word, it means _____ (in Swedish or English)
3. I know the meaning of this word and I can use it in a sentence (please write a sentence below) _____

Bottle:

1. I have seen this word but I have forgotten the meaning ()

2. I know the word, it means _____ (in Swedish or English)
 3. I know the meaning of this word and I can use it in a sentence (please write a sentence below) _____
-

dish:

1. I have seen this word but I have forgotten the meaning ()
 2. I know the word, it means _____ (in Swedish or English)
 3. I know the meaning of this word and I can use it in a sentence (please write a sentence below) _____
-

Fireplace:

1. I have seen this word but I have forgotten the meaning ()
 2. I know the word, it means _____ (in Swedish or English)
 3. I know the meaning of this word and I can use it in a sentence (please write a sentence below) _____
-

Bathtub:

1. I have seen this word but I have forgotten the meaning ()
 2. I know the word, it means _____ (in Swedish or English)
 3. I know the meaning of this word and I can use it in a sentence (please write a sentence below) _____
-

Appendix 3 (The Questionnaire)

Name: _____

Please choose the answer that best describes your attitude towards the following questions.

1. The task is interesting, and I like it.

A. agree B. agree in part C. disagree

I choose () because: _____

2. The task helps you to learn a new word.

A. agree B. agree in part C. disagree

I choose () because: _____

3. After completing the task I found that I could recall the meaning of a word more easily.

A. agree B. agree in part C. disagree

I choose () because: _____

¹ Gass and Selinker claim that vocabulary is the most important element for language learners, of which discussed in Gass, Susan. M. & Larry Selinker (2008), *Second Language Acquisition: an introductory course*, p. 449; Lewis (1993) argues that very little can be conveyed without grammar but nothing can be conveyed without vocabulary, more detail in, *The Lexical Approach*, p.89

² Innatism demonstrates that language learners are endowed with language learning ability, and thus they can acquire languages as long as the language input is available, see Lightbown & Spada (1999), *How Languages are learned*, p.p. 36-7

³ Chomsky embraced the concept of Universal Grammar, Krashen proposed “monitor model”, see Lightbown & Spada (1999), *How Languages are learned*, p.p.38-9

⁴ Martha Trahey and Lydia White carried out a study, investigating the relation between “input flood” and language acquisition in classroom setting. Readers interested in this study are referred to Lightbown & Spada (1999), *How Languages are Learned*, p.p. 131-32

⁵ Communicative language teaching contains many advantages in classroom language instruction, of which discussed in Littlewood (1981), *Communicative Language Teaching*, p.p.93-4

⁶ The VKS was designed to measure the depth of vocabulary knowledge. The test was modified as to the reasons below: 1) to make sure that the test was appropriate for pupils’ English proficiency. 2) some of the questions in the original VKS is meaningless in this study, e.g. pupils will not choose they never seen the words when they are presented on the whiteboard. Post-tests in this study are referred to appendix 2. Readers interested in the original VKS please see Schmitt (2010), *Researching Vocabulary: A Vocabulary Research Manual*, p.219.

⁷ It is hard to select target words that are completely “new” to every participants, so that the words that are unknown to 80% of participants were selected. Similar way to select target words was discussed in Bygate et al (2001), *Researching Pedagogic Tasks Second Language Learning, Teaching and Testing*, p.71

⁸ Forgetting curve was discovered by a German Philosopher called Hermann Ebbinghaus, readers interested in this term are referred to Youjin Kim (2008), “The Role of Task-induced Involvement and Learner Proficiency in L2 Vocabulary Acquisition”, p.p. 34-36

⁹ Pre-task refers to an introduction or instruction to tasks, e.g. providing students with target words that may facilitate their task completion. While-task is a period of time when students are engaged in carrying out tasks. Post-task emphasizes the feedback from both teachers and other students on the task outcome.

¹⁰ Gülden, Jülide & Hülya (2007) “Teachers’ and Learners’ Perceptions of Tasks: Objectives and Outcomes”, *Journal of Theory and Practice in Education*.vol.3, p.p. 60-8

¹¹ There are five proposals for the best way to learn a second language in the classroom. Readers interested in this please are referred to Patsy M. Lightbown and Nina Spada (1999), *How Languages are Learned*, pp 118-153

¹² Readers interested in tasks that were designed for learners are referred to Phillips (1993), *Young Learners*

¹³ More detailed information on disadvantages of explicit and implicit vocabulary teaching and learning please see Nation (2001), *Learning Vocabulary in another language*, p.232. Schmitt (2000), *Vocabulary in Language Teaching* p.120.

¹⁴ Pinter claims that young children want to learn English because they enjoy the process of learning, see Annamaria Pinter (2006), *Teaching Young Language Learner*, p 37. Willis discusses how to motivate learners to learn English, see Jane Willis (1996), *A Framework for Task-Based Learning* p.118

¹⁵ Readers interested in focus on form in task-based language teaching are referred to Skenhan, P. (1998), *A Cognitive Approach to Language Learning*. Long, M & Norris, J. (2000). *Task-based Teaching and Assessment*, edited by M. Byram, *Encyclopedia of Language Teaching* PP.597-603. London: Routledge.

¹⁶ Meara et al proposed checklist tests to measure learners’ vocabulary size; Wesche and Paribakht developed a depth of vocabulary knowledge scale, aiming to measure learners’ quality of vocabulary knowledge. Readers interested in vocabulary assessment are referred to Schmitt (2010), *Researching Vocabulary: A Vocabulary Research Manual*, p.p.173-256

¹⁷ Scott Thornbury summarized methods in word memorizing. Readers interested in these methods are referred to Scott Thornbury(2002), *How to Teach Vocabulary*, p.p. 23-6

¹⁸ Melka, Anderson and Lynch