AN ETHNOGRAPHY AND ANALYSIS OF THE LEARNING AND TEACHING OF ACADEMIC WORD LIST VOCABULARY IN THE ESL CLASSROOM

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Within the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), research into vocabulary acquisition has attained great prominence in recent years. A great emphasis has been placed on the need to measure vocabulary knowledge of second language learners in terms of both depth and breadth. Corpora, such as the British National Corpus (BNC) and the Academic Word List (AWL), have been used to determine which words learners must attain knowledge of for their specific needs. English as a second language (ESL) programs must determine whether learners have knowledge of these words or facilitate their learning. Researchers have utilized quantitative methods to measure both breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge. Fewer studies have taken an ethnographic approach to provide information about how words are learned. Ethnographic methods can provide an insight into the learning and teaching of vocabulary which quantitative methods alone cannot account for. This thesis employs qualitative methods to examine the implementation of a rigorous vocabulary curriculum as well as student and teacher perceptions of the implementation. 50 AWL words were taught across the curriculum over the course of a three-month term to full-time ESL students in an intensive ESL program. Data was collected through classroom observations, questionnaires, and interviews. In addition, initial learning outcomes were measured by a pretest and posttest, though this was not the focus of the study. The findings show that an average of more than 2 hours a week was spent explicitly teaching the weekly AWL words. Writing original sentences appeared to be the most common exercise type. The students were generally satisfied with the curriculum, though they expressed the need for

skill-specific activities with the core words. The teachers generally thought the curriculum had potential but felt that better coordination was needed. The pretest and posttest revealed that the majority of the students were able to write a syntactically and semantically accurate sentence for a slight majority of the 50 words. These results suggest that learning and teaching vocabulary is much more difficult than one would expect.

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PREFACE

This thesis has been a long and arduous process, but one for which I am truly grateful. I would

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for listening.

1.0   **INTRODUCTION**

Within the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), research into vocabulary acquisition

has attained great prominence in recent years. In applied linguistics, researchers have examined

all facets of vocabulary teaching and learning, from strategy use to the efficacy of task type (e.g.

Fan, 2003; Folse, 2006; Green & Oxford, 1995; Hulstijn, Hollander, & Greidanus, 1996;

Paribakht & Wesche, 1997; Rubin, 1975; Sanaoui, 1995; Tseng, Dornyei & Schmitt, 2006), in an

attempt to determine the most efficient ways to learn and retain the great number of English

words necessary for academic study or personal use. Many studies begin with defining what it

means to know a word, a complex theoretical issue with roots in phonology, morpho-syntax, and

semantics (e.g. Burns & deSilva Joyce, 2001; Corrigan, 2007; Liu & Shaw, 2001; Schmitt,

1998). Some studies are interested in measuring vocabulary depth (e.g. Schmitt 1998), while

others focus on measuring vocabulary breadth, or size (e.g. Laufer et al., 2004). One of the key

issues under investigation is how many words second language (L2) learners need to know to use

the language for specific needs. Nation (2001, 2006) has been at the fore in this investigation,

utilizing computer corpora to determine vocabulary size and the particular word families needed

for comprehension and expression in various contexts, including academic study.

Considering the worldwide demand for instruction of English for academic purposes

(EAP), numerous studies have attempted to address the need for swift acquisition of the most

frequent words. Since Krashen's (1985) claims of the futility of explicit instruction in the

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ultimate acquisition of an L2, researchers have been investigating the value of instruction in general and whether explicit or implicit approaches are more effective. While these investigations have focused primarily on the acquisition of L2 grammatical forms (e.g. Doughty, 2004; Long, 1988; Long & Robinson, 1998; Swain, 1985), their findings have influenced the subdiscipline of second language vocabulary acquisition (SLVA). Specifically, Doughty proclaimed that instruction of the right kind can make a difference (Doughty, 2004). The question remains, which is the most effective? Researchers have proposed various hypotheses in answer to this question. In reaction to Krashen, Swain (1985) put forward the Output hypothesis, claiming a need for comprehensible output, in addition to rich input, in meaningful interaction. In keeping with the Interaction hypothesis (Long, 1996), Long (Long & Robinson, 1998) champions the instructional type focus on form, as a way to draw the learners' attention to problematic linguistic features which arise incidentally in the communicative classroom with minimal obtrusiveness. What these theories share is a need for rich input, productive output, and attention to form. Concerning SLVA, research has centered on inducing acquisition and long-term retention of lexical items through the promotion of deep processing, frequent encounters, and noticing of target words in both explicit and implicit learning.

While studies have employed a range of quantitative measures to assess acquisition, some measuring smaller increments of learning, few studies have taken an ethnographic approach to establish a more complete picture of the vocabulary learning process (Schmitt, 1998). Ethnography has long been a method used in the classroom to gather qualitative data related to acquisition of grammatical forms, cultural awareness, strategy use, and the like (e.g. Atkinson & Ramanathan, 1995; Block, 1994; Borg, 1998; Duff, 1995, 2002). Its efficacy can be extended to measuring vocabulary learning.

It is generally given that vocabulary learning is a long-term process which occurs in increments (see e.g. Schmitt, 1998). Quantitative data obtained in experiments by the explicit measures of pretests and posttests alone fail to provide information concerning how words are learned and how deeply they are known by the learner. It is simply not feasible to measure a learner's complete knowledge of all possible syntactic, semantic, and morphological aspects of one word, let alone all L2 knowledge stored in the lexicon. Liu and Shaw (2001) attempted to chronicle advanced L2 learners' deep knowledge of the verb 'make' through the analysis of corpora. They were only able to examine one word and their methods did not allow for an insight into the learning process. When more than one word is assessed, at best, most quantitative measurements with a written component can only determine whether a learner can produce an accurate sentence in one context. It remains unclear whether learners could generate numerous accurate exemplars in a wide variety of contexts. In fact, no one study would be able to measure one learner's vocabulary size in terms of complete depth of knowledge.

Taking an ethnographic approach, however, the researcher gains a clearer understanding of what the learners know, when they know it and how they know it by gathering data from several perspectives. Instances of spontaneous use of target words can be documented through classroom observation, as well as types of behavior exhibited in the vocabulary learning process. Frequency of exposure to words, noticing of spoken and written forms, self-speech, teacher feedback, perceptions of vocabulary learning, and many more aspects involved in the learning and teaching of vocabulary are recorded in an ethnographic study. While such data might not qualify as definitive evidence of knowledge, what it shows is that knowledge is not instantaneous but gradual. This insight coupled with questionnaires and interviews creates a data triangulation to ensure a more complete picture of the learning process. There is a gap in the research in this

regard. To the researcher's knowledge, no other study has employed an ethnographic approach to investigate the implementation of a rigorous vocabulary curriculum and track the learning and teaching of 50 Academic Word List (AWL) (Coxhead, 2000) words over the course of a three-month term.

The present study attempts to fill the gap in SLVA research by providing an overall view of the vocabulary learning and teaching process in a real life context. In line with ethnographic studies in the field of SLA, particularly those of Duff (1995, 2002), the researcher will provide both an etic and emic perspective of classroom practices and behavior through classroom observations. The roles of both the teachers and students will be examined, with particular attention to their competing demands in a full program of study. The researcher will also draw heavily upon the perceptions of both teachers and students involved in the learning process by means of interviews and questionnaires. Finally, results of a pretest and posttest will measure initial gains in vocabulary knowledge.

2.0   RESEARCH ON SECOND LANGUAGE VOCABULARY ACQUISITION

2.1   RESEARCH ON VOCABULARY LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Researchers in the field of SLA and L2 learners alike are acutely aware of the importance of vocabulary acquisition in acquiring a second language. In recent years, a great emphasis has been placed on the need to measure vocabulary knowledge of second and foreign language learners in terms of both depth and breadth. Numerous studies have put forth a range of methodologies designed to address this task (e.g. Folse, 2006; Laufer et al., 2004). The starting point for many of these studies, naturally, is defining what knowing a word actually involves. Understanding lexical knowledge should inform decisions about teaching and learning vocabulary. The next step is to determine which words learners should acquire knowledge of for their specific needs and how well the learners are expected to know the words. Once this has been established, the question remains how best to facilitate the acquisition of the greatest number of words in the shortest amount of time. Studies have examined the effects of frequency, exposure, depth of processing, and noticing in fostering knowledge of new words. The following sections provide an overview of the state of second language vocabulary learning. First, the complexity of word knowledge will be discussed. The debate of which words need to be acquired will follow, informed by corpora analyses and studies. Following the presentation of

theoretical underpinnings in vocabulary acquisition, application in the classroom will be examined. Finally, vocabulary assessment is discussed.

2.1.1 **What it means to know a word**

Researchers in SLA are fully aware of the complexity of lexical knowledge. Jiang (2002) explains that the mapping of lexical form to meaning is fundamental in vocabulary acquisition. Based on Levelt's (1989) model of lexical representation, Jiang describes the lexicon as consisting of two parts, the lemma and the lexeme. Semantic and syntactic information is stored in the lemma, while morphological and form information is stored in the lexeme. Jiang explains that the form of an L2 word is initially mapped to the meaning of the corresponding L1 word. Specifically, the L2 form is not mapped with L1 meaning directly, but rather, it is mapped to a translation of the L1 word. In other words, form and meaning is not acquired concurrently. Furthermore, Jiang holds that once this semantic meaning of the L1 translation is mapped to the L2 lexical item, this information remains there, making it difficult to establish a direct link between L2 form and semantic meaning. This theory explains errors which occur when there is only one word in the L2 but two distinct words in the L1. Jiang provides such an example taken from Zughoul (1991) whereby a native speaker of Arabic mistakenly employs the word 'oven' for 'bakery', as in Arabic these distinct semantic meanings share one form.

Not all theorists are as pessimistic as Jiang. Juffs (2009) posits that the Levelt model should be refined to include distinction between grammatical categories. Juffs (1996) holds that following significant exposure, advanced learners have shown acquisition of conceptual structure of causativity and state changes in verbs. Further research should explore the complexity of form-meaning/concept mapping as it relates to grammatical category.

In applied linguistics, researchers have focused more on defining depth of knowledge (e.g. Coady, 1993; Nation, 2001). In this way, researchers and L2 instructors can gain a better understanding of how well a word is known. Nation (2001) presents a detailed account of what is involved in knowing a word. He begins by making a distinction between receptive and productive knowledge. Generally, in line with traditional understanding of these concepts, receptive knowledge involves the ability to recognize the form of a word, phonological or graphic, and retrieve its meaning, typically in the skills of reading and listening. Productive knowledge is typically displayed through the skills of speaking and writing, where knowledge of meaning and how to produce the form, oral or written, is needed. Nation expands upon the basic categories of knowledge: form, meaning, and use. Knowledge of the form of a word is broken into: spoken, written, and word parts. For example, receptive knowledge of the spoken form allows for aural recognition of a word, while the ability to pronounce a word with accurate stress marking shows productive knowledge. Knowledge of the written form includes knowing what it looks like (receptive) and knowing how to spell it (productive). Receptive knowledge of word parts involves recognition while productive knowledge means producing the necessary parts to express the meaning. Meaning is broken down into: form and meaning, concepts and referents, and associations. Use involves: grammatical functions, collocations, and constraints on use (register, frequency, etc) (see Juffs 2009 for examples of each facet of receptive and productive knowledge). Clearly, to attain such depth of knowledge would require great exposure to the L2.

2.1.2 **Corpora Studies**

In light of the fact that vocabulary learning is a complex and ongoing process, researchers have compiled corpora to determine the most frequently occurring words in written and spoken English. It is these words which learners should devote greater time to in order to cope in a variety of contexts. West's (1953) *General Service List of English Words* (GSL) has long been regarded as a classic. The 2,000 most frequent word families consist of a head word, inflected forms, and closely derived forms. According to data collected by Nation (2001), approximately 80% of typical academic texts are comprised of the 2,000 GSL words. Nation determined that in addition to the 2,000 GSL words, students pursuing higher education in English need to know the 570 headwords on the *Academic Word List* (AWL) (Coxhead, 2000). The 570 AWL words families do not appear on the GSL; however, they do occur frequently in a wide range of academic texts from the humanities to science. The 570 words are grouped into 10 sub-lists by frequency. Knowledge of the AWL words adds an additional 8.5% coverage of academic texts. Technical words and low-frequency words, at 5% each, make up the final 10% of the running words in an academic text. Of note is the fact that learning the third 1,000 most frequent words only adds 4.3% coverage of academic texts. In other words, learning the AWL words is time well spent.

The fact that the GSL includes derivative forms in the word families has spawned debate. Schmitt and Zimmerman (2002), however, have shown that college ESL learners possess only partial knowledge of derivations of stem words. In fact, it is widely accepted that derivational forms of stem words should be considered separate lexical entries. This being the case, knowledge of the 2,000 most frequent word families on the GSL may involve knowing twice, if not more, that many lexical entries. This finding has great pedagogical implications for institutes

preparing students for academic study. In other words, the words to be learned may be greatly underestimated.

Similarly, Lui and Shaw (2001) examined how well students knew the common verb *make* through analysis of several written corpora compiled from Chinese-speaking learners of English and Native speakers of English. They narrowed their scope to track all occurrences of expressions with 'make'. What they found is that L2 learners' knowledge of syntactical and semantic potential of such common expressions like 'make' is greatly lacking. In other words, even advanced learners do not have deep knowledge of some of the most frequent words in English. They recommend that common verbs be taught explicitly.

Currently, the British National Corpus (BNC) (2001) is the most widely accepted corpus in vocabulary research. It is a 100 million-token corpus comprised of mainly formal, written British texts (90%). Words are grouped into 1,000-word sublists. While there is some overlap between the 2,000 most frequent words of the GSL and BNC, the BNC contains more formal, academic words which can also be found on the AWL. Nation (2006) employed the BNC to determine the number of words necessary for reading and listening. In reference to the number of word families needed to comprehend a newspaper, equated with academic reading, Nation found that the 2,000 most frequent words from the BNC accounted for 83% of the running text. Knowledge of 4,000 words provided 95% coverage, and 8,000 words covered 98% of the running words. In an earlier study, Nation (2001) reported that text coverage of 98% is needed for adequate comprehension of most texts. At 95% coverage, Nation noted that only a minority of learners are able to comprehend a text, while at 80% coverage comprehension is virtually impossible. Consequently, knowledge of the 2,000 most frequent words on the BNC falls short of the necessary level for academic study.

2.1.3   **Incidental and explicit vocabulary learning-frequency, depth of processing, and noticing**

Numerous studies have examined incidental and explicit learning of vocabulary. Nation (2001) contends that the 2,000 high-frequency words, in addition to the specialized vocabulary from the AWL, should be explicitly taught. Low-frequency words, he claims, are more suitable for implicit learning through reading. This section will present some of the key research findings on both types of vocabulary learning, including some of the more effective ways to promote acquisition and long-term retention.

A number of studies have investigated the role of reading in incidental vocabulary acquisition through the use of dictionaries, different types of marginal glosses and inference. Hulstijn, Hollander, and Greidanus (1996) define incidental learning as "accidental learning of information without the intention of remembering that information" (p. 327). As it is not feasible to teach low-frequency words explicitly, it is essential that learners develop efficient reading skills to acquire these words on their own. Students can be aided in this goal by making target vocabulary more salient. Many of these studies have included input enhancement (Smith, 1993) in the form of highlighting or underlining the target words to induce noticing. Additionally, studies have placed emphasis on the importance of repetition or multiple exposures to new words in a text to promote long-term retention (Cobb, Spada, & Zahar, 2001). Finally, researchers have suggested that depth of processing is a factor in the retention of new lexical items, with the deeper, more meaningful encounters leading to sustained acquisition (Hulstijn & Laufer, 2001). Rott (2005) compared the use of single-translation glosses (STG) and multiple choice glosses (MCG) by 10 native speakers of English learning German as a foreign language. The findings show that MCGs produced long-term retention of the target vocabulary on a

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delayed posttest 4 weeks later, whereas STGs showed considerable deterioration of learning after 4 weeks. Based on Hulstijn and Laufer's load hypothesis (2001), Rott explains that the MCG group processed the words 'elaboratively' in that they used more mental energy in accessing background knowledge of the language and textual cues to infer the meanings of new words. While this may not be the swiftest way to comprehend a text, MCGs may be an effective alternative to explicit instruction.

Whether the goal is to enhance incidental or explicit vocabulary learning, it is widely held that L2 learners need multiple exposures to new words in a variety of contexts to facilitate long-term retention and subsequent acquisition of words. To promote generative processing, Nation (2001) emphasizes the need to encounter previously met words in a range of contexts with different collocations. Nation explains that "when words are met in reading and listening or used in speaking and writing, the generativeness of the context will influence learning" (p. 80). Nunan (2004) adds that language items are acquired gradually or 'organically', so it is necessary that learners have the opportunity to encounter target items numerous times in a variety of contexts.

In terms of productive knowledge, writing original sentences with target words has long been considered to promote deep processing and lead to greater retention than performing tasks such as fill-in-the-gap (Hulstijn & Laufer 2001). Folse (2006), however, provides evidence that multiple encounters with target items leads to better acquisition and retention than writing an original sentence. In his study, completing 3 five-sentence gap filling exercises resulted in 50% better retention than writing five sentences or completing only one five-sentence gap filling exercise. Gap filling exercises are not only easy for an instructor to create and correct, but they can provide the learner with a variety of contexts in which a word occurs. Furthermore, learners

must consider both semantic and syntactic appropriateness to fill the gap. He is not advocating doing away with more creative and productive activities. Rather, if time is lacking for writing stories or the like, repetition and time on task is the key.

According to Hulstijn and Laufer's (2001) involvement index, fill-in-the-blank exercises, such as the ones Folse employed, would be undervalued and perhaps avoided in favor of more time consuming, though apparently less effective, writing exercises. While writing original sentences has its place in vocabulary learning, what Folse's study showed is the need to provide learners with more opportunities to encounter new words in different contexts. Considering the complexity of knowing a word and the many degrees of knowing, learners cannot be expected to gain this knowledge of the most frequent words through context alone or one simple writing assignment. Consequently, an approach designed to meet this need to expose students to the new vocabulary multiple times and require multiple retrievals may yield better results in long-term acquisition.

Ellis (2002) also emphasizes the significant role of input frequency in language processing. He does allow, however, that frequency is not the only determinant of acquisition. He stresses the effects that salience, semantic complexity, morphophonological regularity, and syntactic category have on the acquisition of new words. Churchill (2007) adds that some words require deeper knowledge in order to master all the syntactic and semantic complexities involved. Liu and Shaw's (2001) study with 'make' is a perfect example of the complexity of even frequent verbs. Hence, even long-term exposure to a word in a multitude of contexts may still not result in deep knowledge for L2 learners.

A final aspect of vocabulary acquisition which has been hotly debated is the role of attention and noticing. Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt and Frota, 1986) posits that

conscious "noticing is the necessary and sufficient condition for the conversion of input to intake for learning" (1994, p. 17). In other words, a learner must first notice a gap in his knowledge. Through interaction, the learner notices that his interlanguage differs from the input of the L2. As a result, the learner begins to reformulate his understanding of the target form. In the L2 classroom, a learner might notice his imperfect knowledge, or lack of prior knowledge, of a target word upon hearing or seeing the word in context. Multiple exposures to new words can lead to noticing this gap in knowledge, thereby promoting acquisition. While numerous studies cite noticing as a vital step in acquisition, debate centers around how to measure noticing (see Mackey, 2006 for example). Mackey recommends using a triangulation of methods to measure noticing to ensure a more reliable picture of the process.

In sum, SLA researchers investigating both incidental and explicit vocabulary learning consider frequency, depth of processing and noticing to be key factors in ultimate acquisition and retention. Low-frequency words can be acquired implicitly through reading, while high-frequency words should be taught explicitly. The following section will present an overview of vocabulary knowledge assessment tools.

2.1.4 **Vocabulary assessment**

Various instruments of assessing vocabulary knowledge have been developed to measure both breadth and depth of knowledge (see Read, 2000, 2004 for an overview). The appropriate test to employ depends on the type of study undertaken and the knowledge one wishes to measure. When measuring vocabulary breadth, researchers have utilized Nation's (2001) Vocabulary Levels Test, which involves matching words and definitions.

In measuring depth of knowledge, several assessment tools have been developed. Read (2000) developed a word associates (WA) format to test a learner's knowledge of words which are semantically associated with the target word. Schoonen and Verhallen (2008) employed Read's WA format to test the deep knowledge of primary school children. They found the test to be not only valid but easy to administer and score. Zareva (2007) used a combination of a WA test and a word familiarity scale (Paribakht & Wesche, 1997) in comparing native speakers' and advanced and intermediate L2 learners' mental lexicons. Her test required participants to provide the words they associated with the target word, a more productive task than that required on Read's WA.

Paribakht and Wesche (1997) pioneered another well-established test format, the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS), as a means of assessing increases in degrees of receptive and productive knowledge of vocabulary. Their scale contains five categories of knowledge from "I do not remember having seen this word before" to "I can use this word in a sentence". Students are asked to self-report their knowledge in the first two categories, while the last three categories require evidence of knowledge in the form of a synonym or sentence. A modified version of the VKS was implemented by Folse (2006) to assess productive knowledge only. On his scale, students are required to provide evidence of knowledge with a synonym and a sentence.

Schmitt (1998) points out that such scales simply "attempt to measure stages of knowledge in vocabulary acquisition, but defining the stage boundaries may be problematic if acquisition is in fact a continuum" (p. 284). He argues that in order to gain a clearer insight into how words are acquired, progress of individual learners over a long period of time needs to be charted. Ultimate native-speaker knowledge of a word requires that the learner have full

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mastery over all derivational forms of the word, in addition to all semantic meanings of the word. Schmitt explains that most studies ignore these deeper levels of knowledge, concluding that a learner has acquired a word when they produce an accurate graphic form used in an appropriate semantic context with syntactical accuracy. He proposes incorporating a dimension approach, which measures both receptive and productive knowledge of the detailed categories laid out by Nation (2001). Admittedly, this type of measurement is so comprehensive that only a few words can be measured in this manner. Hence, a VKS is best suited for most studies measuring a relatively small number of words.

2.2 ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

Ethnographic research methods have long been a means of analyzing classroom behavior, teacher-student interaction, self regulation, and the multitude of other aspects of learning and social interaction that quantitative measures fail to capture. In SLA, studies employing explicit tests to measure gains can only provide information about ultimate output of a target form. Quantitative measures can help explain what went into the learning process which led to that production, including the effects of social interaction, cultural identity, and perceptions. Watson-Gegeo (1988) explains that "the ethnographer's goal is to provide a description and interpretive-explanatory account of what people do in a setting, the outcome of their interactions, and the way they understand what they are doing" (p. 576). She also points out that ethnographic studies are holistic in that any aspect of behavior or interaction should be interpreted within the context of the lesson as a whole, or the course or school as a whole. Watson-Gegeo further states that ethnography examines language learning as a process of socialization rather than acquisition.

The following studies have employed ethnographic methods to analyze interaction and perception.

Duff (1995, 2002) has been instrumental in bringing the method of ethnography of communication (EC) to the forefront of ethnographic research. In her 2002 study, Duff employed EC to analyze the classroom discourse and interaction patterns in a multi-cultural high school class in Canada. Classroom observations combined with interviews afforded Duff an insight into communication problems in the multi-cultural classroom from a number of perspectives.

Atkinson & Ramanathan (1995) adopted ethnographic methods to examine a disjunction between two writing programs. In their study, ESL students who had completed a writing program in the English Language Program (ELP) matriculated into the University Composition Program (UCP). Discovering that the ESL students were faring poorly in the UCP classes, an investigation was undertaken to see if the two writing programs' approaches to teaching writing conflicted. Using classroom observation, interviews, and collection of written data, the researchers determined that in fact the two programs had quite different conceptions of academic writing. Based on these findings, a recommendation was made for better communication between the two programs in clearly articulating their expectations.

Block (1994) provides the interesting perspectives of students, teachers, and an outsider, the researcher, on the purpose assigned to tasks in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom. He examined one lesson and then interviewed students and the teacher concerning the purpose of the classroom tasks that day and their perceptions of what they learned. Block found that the students placed greater importance on an activity which the teacher mentioned only in passing, while activities the teacher had spent a great amount of time on were not highly

praised by the students. In other words, Block found that teachers and students do not necessarily assign the same purpose or importance to a task. This is an important finding, as it is often taken for granted that students will learn what the teacher expects them to learn. This is apparently not the case.

Other studies have employed ethnographic methods to examine teacher perceptions (Borg, 1998) and student perceptions (Barkhuizen, 1998). Borg (1998) employed ethnographic methods to explore the personal pedagogical systems of one EFL teacher in the instruction of L2 grammar. In his study, Borg presented the emic viewpoint of an experienced EFL instructor, who through extensive interviews presented his rationale for his methods to present and focus on grammar. During the course of the study, Borg discovered that the teacher's pedagogical systems had been greatly influenced by his initial training, but his experience as a language teacher and learner also shaped the decisions he made during the lesson. Borg highlights that studies giving this perspective are important, as they reveal what teaching grammar actually involves. They afford an insight into not only how teachers are teaching grammar, but also why they make certain decisions in their methods of teaching. Barkhuizen (1998) examined students' perceptions of language learning activities. What he found was that teachers are not always able to intuit how their students perceive certain activities. In fact, teachers may consider one activity to be not of great use, while their students may hold that activity in high regard. He suggests a number of ways to elicit students' feelings about their learning experience, such as having students keep a journal or asking the students if they enjoyed an activity or felt they learned from it. Barkhuizen suggests that students and teachers work together to decide on activities to incorporate into the lessons. This in turn could lead to better motivation and improved learning outcomes.

What all of these studies have shown is that there are many factors affecting learning which need to be taken into consideration when analyzing outcomes. Descriptive data provide valuable insights into the language learning and teaching process.

2.3   CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

2.3.1   The English Language Institute (ELI) at the University of Pittsburgh

The participants in the present study were students at the English Language Institute (ELI) at the University of Pittsburgh. The ELI offers non-credit courses designed primarily for adult students considering tertiary education at an American university or those studying for various professional or personal reasons. The majority of the students come from Asian and Middle Eastern countries, including Korea, Japan, Taiwan, China, Saudi Arabia, and Libya. There are also students from Latin American countries and a few students from European and African countries. During the present study, a large majority of the students were from Korea and Libya.

There are three levels in the ELI, level 3 (Low-Intermediate), level 4 (High-Intermediate), and level 5 (Advanced). Upon arrival, all students take a placement test, the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP), in addition to a writing and listening test. Based on their scores, students may be placed in split levels to best suit their needs. As a result, a student may be placed in speaking and listening 3, but take grammar, reading and writing 4. Returning students move to the next skill level following successful completion of the previous level course. To advance, students must receive a grade 'C' or higher or take the MTELP again with a sufficient score for higher placement.

Full-time students are enrolled in 5 courses per term: reading, writing, listening, speaking, and grammar. Some students are enrolled part-time, taking 1, 2 or 3 classes. Students are randomly assigned to one of two or three sections of a level. Class sizes average between 12 to 15 students. Classes meet four times a week for 50 minutes for 13 weeks. Typically, students have a different teacher for each course.

The ELI follows the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Emphasis is placed on activities requiring negotiation of meaning through meaningful communicative tasks. Hence, a majority of the activities involve pair or group work. In addition to textbooks, and authentic materials, CALL programs supplement the reading and speaking curricula. In all speaking classes, students record 3 recorded-speaking activities (RSA) in the language lab over the course of the term. RSAs are 2-minute semi-spontaneous speeches on topics familiar to the students. These activities are designed to enhance the students' abilities to speak more spontaneously in addition to improving their self-correction skills. Teachers listen to the recordings and provide oral feedback which the students utilize to record corrections to their speeches. In level 4 and 5 reading classes, students go to the language media center to read on-line texts once a week for 40 minutes. A CALL program called Reader Specific Practice (REAP) (Brown & Eskenazi, 2004; Collins-Thompson & Callan, 2004) (see http://reap.cs.cmu.edu/) was designed to facilitate and track the learning of AWL items the students had revealed they did not know on a pretest. Students encounter these words while reading documents which REAP culls from the Internet. In addition to facilitating the learning of vocabulary, REAP provides the students with vital practice of reading skills necessary for academic study.

2.3.2 **The Pittsburgh Science of Learning Center (PSLC) Research Framework.**

The current study was born partly out of the findings of several years of Pittsburgh Science of

Learning Center (PSLC) (see http://www.learnlab.org/) research. Namely, studies on second

language vocabulary acquisition have shown that students lack sufficient command of AWL

vocabulary essential for study in American university contexts. The REAP program has been

used to track the learning of AWL items. While findings on posttests have shown some modest

gains, it has come to light that students are still well behind in their advancement of vocabulary

learning (Juffs et al., 2008, Pelletreau, 2006). Consequently, the decision was made to provide

explicit instruction of a subset of AWL words across all the skills in the curriculum. It is

intended that robust learning of the 50 core words will result from this explicit instruction

coupled with ample opportunities to encounter the words in REAP texts.

2.4 **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The starting point for this study was a perceived problem. Previous research at the present

institute (e.g. Juffs et al., 2008) has exposed the students' lack of receptive and productive

knowledge of AWL and high frequency BNC vocabulary. To address this deficit, the institute

has employed a CALL component to the reading curriculum, providing individualized readings

designed to promote explicit learning of AWL words which a pretest revealed they did not know.

While some gains have been made, the findings show that students are not using the tool in the

manner expected by the instructors. As a result, robust learning of AWL words, essential for

academic study, is not being achieved at satisfactory levels. Nation (2001) holds that higher

frequency words should be taught explicitly by an instructor. With this in mind, the institute

decided to implement an experimental approach to explicitly teaching 50 AWL words across all

courses in the curriculum. It was determined that 50 AWL words, primarily from the first 6 sub-

lists, would be taught over the course of the 3-month term. Tables 1-6 break down the 50 words

by AWL sub-list and provide their corresponding BNC sub-list. One word, "compatible" was

taken from the 9th sub-list of the AWL. Beginning the second week of the term, 5 words per

week were explicitly taught in each of the 5 skill classes: reading, writing, listening, speaking,

and grammar. The minimum requirement was to write the 5 weekly words on the board at the

start of each lesson. Supervisors of the different sub-skills placed different requirements on the

teachers concerning the types of activities to employ to provide productive practice with the core

words. Output of the core words was tested weekly in the forms of dictations, fill-in-the-gap

quizzes and written homework.

Table 1. Sublist 1 AWL words and BNC sublist

AWL Word	BNC Frequency List
Assess	2,000
Concept	2,000
Distribute	2,000
Establish	2,000
Evident	4,000
Factor	2,000
Indicate	2,000
Method	2,000
Principle	2,000

Table 2. Sublist 2 AWL words and BNC sublist

AWL Word	BNC Frequency List
Achieve	1,000

Acquire	4,000
Affect	1,000
Aspect	2,000
Category	2,000
Complex	2,000
Consequent	3,000
Distinct	2,000
Equate	6,000
Evaluate	5,000
Feature	2,000
Impact	2,000
Perceive	4,000
Potential	2,000
Previous	1,000
Range	1,000
Region	1,000
Regulate	2,000
Relevant	2,000
Resource	1,000
Restrict	2,000
Secure	1,000

Table 3. Sublist 3 AWL words and BNC sublist

AWL Word	BNC Frequency List
Alternative	2,000
Considerable	2,000
Constant	2,000
Correspond	3,000
Demonstrate	2,000
Exclude	2,000
Illustrate	3,000
Initial	2,000
Rely (on)	2,000
Valid	2,000

Table 4. Sublist 4 AWL words and BNC sublist

AWL Word	BNC Frequency List
Approximate	3,000

Imply	4,000
Obvious	1,000

Table 5. Sublist 5 AWL words and BNC sublist

AWL Word	BNC Frequency List
Modify	4,000
Perspective	4,000
Target	2,000

Table 6. Sublist 6 AWL words and BNC sublist

AWL Word	BNC Frequency List
Cooperate	4,000
Incorporate	3,000

This study aims to describe specifically how this implementation works. From gathering data concerning specific instruction of the words in all classes (including activities which were used to opportunities for noticing the words in a variety of contexts) to revealing both teachers' and students' perceptions of the efficacy of the curriculum, the researcher aims to draw a picture of the vocabulary learning and teaching process. While a pretest and posttest will reveal whether any gains were made in vocabulary learning, analysis of production data is not the goal of this study. Future studies should employ quantitative measures to make more verifiable claims about learning outcomes.

A gap exists in SLVA research, as few studies have employed ethnographic methods to chart vocabulary learning in the classroom. Studies have measured vocabulary size or how many words students have learned upon completing a particular exercise. What these explicit

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measurements fail to capture is how well the students know the words and what other factors

played a role in the learning process. Specifically, on the micro level, what were the teachers

doing with the words, how were the students using them, did any noticing or private speech

(students repeating the words to themselves) (see for example Ohta, 2001) occur which affected

the learning process? These questions cannot be answered by quantitative data. At the same

time, what is happening in the classroom which might inhibit learning, or what is not happening

in the classroom that should be in order to facilitate vocabulary learning? Is the classroom time

spent explicitly learning the core words of the curriculum effective or are modifications needed

in presentation or practice? In order to enhance the curriculum and design effective courses, it is

essential to discover what deficits exist in the students' knowledge of vocabulary. In addition,

any Intensive English Program (IEP) would benefit from gaining a better insight into students'

language learning behavior in the classroom and observing other factors in the classroom which

may have an influence on their acquisition of specific words. With these goals in mind, the

present study aims to answer the following questions:

1) How is the ELI curriculum of the 50 core AWL words being implemented?

2) What are the level four students' perceptions of the implementation of AWL vocabulary?

3) What are the level four instructors' perceptions of the implementation of AWL vocabulary?

4) What initial gains have been made in the learning of AWL vocabulary in level four?

Table 7 presents the instruments used in this study, the research question they addressed,

and the data they provided. By providing the students', teachers' and the researcher's

perspectives, a triangulation, or gathering of data from three angles, is meant to ensure reliability

of the data collected.   As the quantitative data obtained from the pretest and posttest would not

provide information concerning perceptions of the implementation of the curriculum as well as

vocabulary learning behavior, the qualitative measures of interview, questionnaire and

observation were included.

Table 7. Data Collection Instruments and Questions They Address

Instrument	Research Question	Data Provided
Researcher's notes	1) How is the curriculum being implemented?	Classroom observations with checklist of behavior
Student-Student Interviews	1) How is the curriculum being implemented? 2) What are the students' perceptions of the implementation?	Student perceptions of vocabulary learning and the implementation of the AWL curriculum
Student Survey and 2 Questionnaires	2) What are the students' perceptions of the implementation?	Student perceptions of vocabulary learning and the implementation of the AWL curriculum
Individual Teacher Interviews	1) How is the curriculum being implemented? 3) What are the instructors' perceptions of the implementation?	Teachers' perceptions of implementation of the curriculum and their perceptions of students' perceptions and gains
Vocabulary Pre- and Post-tests	4) What initial gains have been made in the learning of AWL vocabulary?	productive acquisition of AWL vocabulary

In order to answer the first research question, it was necessary to determine exactly what

was occurring in the classroom, from the methodologies teachers used to present the AWL

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words, to the types of activities they employed to provide practice with the words. Implementation also included aspects of pronunciation, meaning, usage, and time on task. While the curriculum supervisors provided basic guidelines that the teachers should follow in their instruction, it is another thing to discover whether in fact the teachers had understood these instructions and employed them in practice. In other words, would a disconnect exist between the supervisors' expectations and those interpreted by the teachers?

The answers to these questions might in fact be closely related to questions 2), 3), and 4). Specifically, how the curriculum was being employed could be a direct reflection of the teachers' perception of it. Furthermore, how the words were taught could directly affect the students' perceptions of the efficacy of such a curriculum. In addition, both the students' and teachers' perceptions could have an effect on ultimate vocabulary learning.

Regarding question 2), the researcher aimed to discover whether students had generally positive or negative feelings about the curriculum. These perceptions could be shaped by the words themselves, teachers, other classmates, or the students' personal motivation to complete tasks involving the words.

Considering the possible implications of students' perceptions on vocabulary learning, it was important that the research reveal this information. Classroom observations would provide the researcher's perspective, while student interviews and questionnaires would uncover the students' own perceptions. Additionally, it was important to determine how the teachers thought the students felt about the curriculum.

The same kind of triangulation was necessary to gain the teachers' perspectives of the curriculum. How the teachers regard the new approach could greatly affect how they employed it. In answering question 3), the researcher was particularly interested in determining how the

teachers felt about the guidance they received and whether this had any effect on how they implemented the curriculum. It was important to establish the teachers' perceptions, as this could have an impact on the answer to question 4), namely, were the students acquiring any knowledge of the core words and how well did they know the words?

The answer to question 4) was of secondary concern. Admittedly, the VKS employed by the researcher could hardly claim to get at deep knowledge of the 50 words. To repeat Schmitt's (1998) assertion, production of a single meaning sense only demonstrates partial knowledge at best. With these qualifications, the results of the pretest and posttest can only provide evidence that some learning has taken place.

As this was an experimental implementation of a rigorous approach to teaching AWL vocabulary, the researcher could not be certain of the perceptions of the curriculum and the results it would yield. It was hoped that the answers to the research questions would provide insights into the teaching and learning of vocabulary which could be used to refine the learning process. It was also hoped that these findings might be generalizable to other ESL programs with an AWL component.

3.0   METHOD

3.1   PARTICIPANTS

3.1.1 Students

The participants were adult learners of English as a second language enrolled in an intensive

English course in the English Language Institute (ELI) at the University of Pittsburgh. In the

summer term of 2008, 43 students began the term in at least one level 4 (intermediate) class. Of

those students, 25 were full-time level 4 students, meaning they were taking reading, writing,

listening, speaking, and grammar. The remaining 18 students were either part-time students

(taking 1,2 , or 3 course) or were enrolled in split levels. The participants either placed into the

level through their performance on the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency

(MTELP) or were promoted from level 3 upon successful completion of each course. There were

three sections of level 4, in which students were randomly assigned.   The present study includes

observation of all level 4 students in all skills and sections. A survey and 2 questionnaires were

administered to the 43 students in level 4 speaking classes, with 30 being returned. Pretest and

posttest results of only full-time level 4 students were examined. Of the 25 full-time level 4

students, 19 took both the pretest and posttest.

Of the 25 full-time level 4 students, 10 were Korean, 8 Libyan, 4 Taiwanese, with one student from Japan, Italy, and Saudi Arabia respectively. The students ranged in age between 18 and 55, with the majority of the students between the ages of 18 to 25. The majority of the students had been studying English in a school, college or university for more than 4 years, with 15 claiming to have studied English more than 7 years.

Table 8. Level 4 Student Survey Results

Nationality

Section	Korea	Taiwan	Libya	Saudi	Japan	China	Thailand	India	Mong	Italy
3	3	2	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-
2	4	3	1	-	1	1	-	-	1	1
Total	10	6	4	2	2	2	1	1	1	1

Age

Section	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	+55
3	5	1	2		
1	4	5	1		
2	5	3	3	1	
Total	14	9	6	1	0

How long have you studied English in a school, college or university?

Section	never	1-3yrs	4-6yrs	7-10yrs	+10 yrs
3	1		2	3	2
1		1	2	3	2
2	4		3	4	1
Total	5	1	7	10	5

3.1.2 **Teachers**

Of the 10 instructors I interviewed on a voluntary basis, at least one from each of the five skills (grammar, reading, writing, speaking and listening) was represented. All of the instructors held either a master's degree in Linguistics, TESOL or other relevant disciplines, or were enrolled in

the master's degree program in the Linguistics' department of the present university. They ranged in ESL experience from 2 to 30+ years, with most having taught both abroad in EFL programs and at least one year in the present institute. The majority of the instructors reported having received their training in ESL in the ELI or in the TESOL program at the University of Pittsburgh. Three reported that they had received some training in undergraduate programs, as well.

3.2   PROCEDURES

3.2.1   Prior to the Study

The study was conducted over a three-month period corresponding to the summer term of 2008. In the preceding term, several steps were taken which had an impact on the current study. In order to gain a clearer picture of the proceedings of a level four speaking class, the researcher observed the class of the curriculum supervisor. A partial checklist of anticipated behavior related to vocabulary learning was scripted prior to the observation. During the course of the class, the researcher checked off behavior exhibited and added other types of behavior the students and teacher displayed. Subsequently, a refined list of behaviors was drafted for use during the study. Additionally, detailed notes were taken and later reviewed. Following the observation, the researcher discussed the class with the supervisor, during which time she revealed her rationale for the various activities and methods employed. At this time, it became

clear to the researcher that it was the supervisor's intention that these methods, in addition to others, be employed by all instructors when teaching vocabulary.

3.2.2 **The Curriculum**

The curriculum involving a new approach to vocabulary learning took form during the spring term of 2008. A subcommittee, of which the level four curriculum supervisor was a major part, devised three lists of 50 words, one for each of the three levels in the ELI. The words were selected from the ten sublists of the Academic Word List (AWL) (Coxhead, 1998), with more words from the less frequent sublists chosen for the higher levels. The list for level four comprised words from sublists 1 through 6, with one additional word from sublist 9 (compatible) (see Appendix A). The words were then divided into ten groups of five, with one group of five to be taught each week over the course of ten weeks. This aspect of the curriculum was to begin the second week of classes.

The researcher coordinated the procedures of the study with the level four speaking, writing and listening supervisor prior to the beginning of the term. In addition to a letter distributed to all level four instructors detailing the steps of the intended study, the supervisor addressed how the study would impact level four during the course of the term. Furthermore, she relayed the initial instructions regarding the pretest. As an ethnographic study, it was the researcher's intention to cause as little disruption as possible to the curricula and classroom environment and great care was taken in this regard.

At the end-of-the-term faculty meeting, the new curriculum implementing the AWL vocabulary across all the skills was introduced. Instructors were given a brief preview of what would follow in the summer term.

Before the beginning of the summer term, a description of the vocabulary implementation and level lists was distributed at the faculty meeting (see Appendix B.1). More detailed information concerning what was expected in each skill was to be supplied during meetings with curriculum supervisors the same day. Each supervisor included a section in the curriculum notes regarding the core vocabulary. Some required the bare minimum of the daily word wall (all words were to be written on the board at the beginning of every class by the teacher or students), while others gave a more detailed account of how to employ the words over the course of the week (see Appendix B.2 – B.6).

As an additional measure to ensure the teachers were comfortable teaching the curriculum, an informal workshop was held a month into the term. 11 teachers were present at the Brown Bag Workshop on 6/12/08 addressing how to teach the core AWL vocabulary. It was delivered by the level 4 speaking, writing and listening supervisor. In the 35-minute workshop, the supervisor briefly introduced what it means to know a word and what the current institute's expectations were concerning the instruction of the core vocabulary. Following this, she demonstrated how to teach the words over the course of a week, encouraging the teachers to play the role of their students. At the end of the workshop, questions were raised concerning the overlap of the same activities, especially after receiving these ideas during the workshop. This issue was not resolved at that time.

3.2.3 **Pretest**

The pretest was administered to all three sections of level four speaking on the Monday of the third week of the term, May 19, 2008. This date was chosen to allow for class rosters to be completed. The test consisted of all fifty core AWL words (see Appendix A). Based on a

similar modified VKS test used by Folse (2006), students checked 'yes' if they knew the word and 'no' if they did not. If they answered 'yes', they were to give a synonym for the word. Only if they gave a synonym should they write a sentence with the word which demonstrated that they knew its meaning (for the complete test see Appendix C). Figure 1 shows an example question.

Word	Meaning		
	No	Yes	
option		X	Synonym: choice
	sentence		I had the option of going to college or finding a job.
rigid	X		Synonym:
	sentence		

Figure 1. Sample of Pretest Question

The researcher gave the instructors explicit instructions in the form of a letter outlining how to administer the test. It was vital that the conditions remain the same in all three sections for the sake of validity.   First, the instructors were told not to announce the pretest in advance to eliminate any chance that students might study for the test. Second, before handing out the test, the instructors were to explain the purpose of the test, namely that it was meant to assess where the students were with their knowledge of the core words. The instructors informed the students that the test would not be part of their grade. Upon passing out the test, the instructor was to read through the instructions and examples with the students. They should highlight that students only supply a sentence for the word if first they give a synonym for the word. The instructors were to allow 45 minutes for the test and were advised not give the students any help with their answers. It should be noted that the students had already been exposed to the vocabulary list for week two (achieve, assess, concept, cooperate, establish), starting one week prior to the pretest. Consequently, it might be expected that students perform better on these five words.

Furthermore, students had been introduced to the words for week 3 (acquire, initial, obvious, relevant, target) the morning of the test, which might have affected their scores.

The pretests were graded by the researcher according to the scoring criteria laid out by Folse (2006). Each vocabulary item was awarded 0, 1, or 2 points using a strict interpretation. If students supplied an appropriate synonym, they received one point. A good example sentence in addition to the synonym yielded another point. Sentences given without first supplying a synonym were not awarded any points. As time on task was significant and the purpose of the curriculum was to promote deeper learning, the researcher was interested in measuring greater gains in knowledge displayed by the ability to form an accurate sentence, both syntactically and semantically. Hence, this study used only a strict interpretation and not a lenient interpretation as in Folse's study.

3.2.4 Classroom Observations

The researcher conducted classroom observations of all level four classes, except grammar (the researcher taught at this time), over a three-week period. In sum, twelve 50-minute classes were observed. These observations occurred in the middle of the term from weeks seven through nine of the 13-week term. These times were decided upon in order to allow for students and teachers in get into a rhythm with the curriculum. A level of comfort between the students and teachers should also have been established. Additionally, both peer and formal observations would have taken place by this time, making the presence of another observer less intrusive or unusual. Each week was devoted to one section of level four so as to gain the perspective of a typical week for the students. During week 7 and week 9, the researcher observed three classes on the same day to further clarify what a typical day consisted of for the students. The observation schedule

appears in Table 9. Each of the three sections was coded with a number from 1-3 to protect

identity. The instructors were informed in advance that the researcher would be visiting the class

and were encouraged to run their lessons as they normally would. In the case that a lengthy test

was scheduled or the instructor was being observed by a supervisor, the observation time was

negotiated. Each section was coded with a number to protect identity.

Using a refined checklist of behaviors associated with vocabulary learning, the researcher

recorded all mention of the core words. This included instances of the words written on the

board, handouts, in student notebooks or occurring in textbooks or the weekly newsletter called

the ELI News. The ELI News was compiled by the activities coordinator of the institute and

included short articles about local events, cultural information, as well as articles written by

students. The activities coordinator made every attempt to include all the core AWL words for

the week in the ELI News. All spoken instances of the words were noted, including focus on

pronunciation, stress, and self speech. Distinctions were made between core words used

spontaneous by the teacher or students, or when forced. For example, forced usage was when

the teacher explicitly asked the students to use the core word in discussion or writing.

Spontaneous usage was when a student used a core word when not asked to do so. Likewise, a

teacher exhibited spontaneous usage of core words when the words were not the focus of the

activity. This could have occurred when giving general classroom instructions or during

discussion of a text or listening passage unrelated to the AWL curriculum. The researcher made

additional note of whether the words were from the current week's list or from previous weeks.

The researcher also paid close attention to signs of noticing, whether it were a laugh, nod of the

head or an explicit question from the teacher about which core words the students noticed or

heard their classmates or teacher use. All activities with the core words were described and any

test or quiz, including dictation, was collected.

Table 9. Classroom Observations Schedule

Observation Date and Time	Class and Section	Teacher Code
1. Monday June 16, 2008 10am	Writing 1	2
2. Thursday June 19, 2008 11am	Reading 1	7
3. Thursday June 19, 2008 1pm	Speaking 1	4
4. Thursday June 19, 2008 2pm	Listening 1	11

Observation Date and Time	Class and Section	Teacher Code
5. Monday June 23, 2008 10am	Reading 2	9
6. Tuesday June 24, 2008 1pm	Listening 2	12
7. Tuesday June 24, 2008 2 pm	Speaking 2	1
8. Thursday June 26, 2008 11am	Writing 2	10

Observation Date and Time	Class and Section	Teacher Code
9. Monday June 30, 2008 11am	Reading 3	6
10. Tuesday July 1, 2008 10am	Writing 3	8
11. Tuesday July 1, 2008 1pm	Listening 3	1
12. Tuesday July 1, 2008 2pm	Speaking 3	7

3.2.5 **Student Survey and Questionnaires**

The Monday following the three weeks of observations, the researcher visited all three sections

of level four speaking to distribute a survey and two questionnaires (see Appendix D). The first

questionnaire contained 10 Likert-scale statements that students could agree or disagree with,

while the second questionnaire comprised five open-ended questions. The main purpose of the

questionnaires was to ascertain the students' perceptions of the importance of learning

vocabulary and their perceptions of which techniques they believed were more useful in learning

and teaching vocabulary. Additional questions were aimed at uncovering the students'

perception of this approach and its usefulness. The distribution of the questionnaires was

delayed until two-thirds through the term so as to allow the students sufficient exposure to the

rigorous approach to teaching vocabulary in the institute. Furthermore, after having seen the

researcher in all their classes for several weeks, the students might be more likely to complete

the forms.

Students were requested to complete these documents on a voluntary basis outside of

class and return them to their teacher or the researcher by the end of the week. The researcher

visited the classes periodically during the week to collect the questionnaires and distribute them

to students who had been absent. Of the 43 questionnaires distributed, 30 were completed and

returned. During these classroom visits, the researcher took this opportunity to recruit volunteers

for group interviews.

3.2.6 **Group Interviews**

Upon collection of the questionnaires, the researcher was able to tailor the semi-scripted

questions for the student-student interviews to follow up on interesting comments they made.

These interviews took place over three days from Friday, July 18 to Tuesday, July 22, during the

students' lunch period or directed following afternoon classes. Eleven students from the three

sections sign up on a voluntary basis and nine of those were present for the interviews. Three

group interviews of three students each were conducted, each lasting approximately 25 minutes.

They were recorded on an mp3 player and fully transcribed by the interviewer (see Appendix E).

The students were coded with a number from 1 to 9 to protect their identity. Of the nine

students, three were Korean, three Taiwanese, one Libyan, one Chinese, and one Ecuadorian. Six were full-time level four students, with the other three enrolled in four of the five level 4 classes and one level 5 class. At least one student from the three sections of level four was represented.

The students were given a list of questions regarding the learning of the core words. The researcher then led the interviews by asking the questions and follow-up questions, encouraging the students to respond to each other. The questions were designed to prompt students to discuss their perceptions of the vocabulary implementation, from why they thought those particular words were chosen, to which activities they thought were more useful, to the advantages and disadvantages of the curriculum.

3.2.7 Teacher Interviews

In order to gain the teachers' perspectives, all level four teachers were requested to attend an informal, individual interview with the researcher. Of the 13 instructors teaching level four classes, 10 attended an interview. These interviews took place over two and half weeks and were scheduled at times convenient for the teachers. The interviews were semi-scripted and lasted about 15 to 30 minutes each. They were not recorded, but detailed notes were taken. The teachers were assigned a number from 1 to 10 to protect their identity.

As an integral part of the learning process, the teachers have a great effect on what their students learn as well as on creating interest and motivation to learn. Therefore, their perceptions and opinions of the curriculum should be gleaned to provide yet another perspective on the implementation and learning of the AWL vocabulary. The teachers were questioned on the guidance they received specific to teaching the core words, positive and negative experiences

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they had teaching the words, classroom activities they used, and their estimations of the effectiveness of the implementation, as well as their perceptions of how the students felt about this aspect of the curriculum. They were reassured of complete anonymity and that their comments could help bring about improvements to the curriculum.

3.2.8 **Posttest**

An identical test to the pretest was administered to all three sections of level 4 speaking on the Monday of the final week of classes, July 28, 2008. As with the pretest, the instructors were told not to inform their students of the test in advance. The students were taking their listening final exam the same day, so the researcher felt there was a better chance a majority of the students would be present. The same procedure as the pretest was followed except that the researcher distributed the tests, gave instructions and collected the tests at the end of the 50-minute class. All tests were marked by the researcher according to the same strict scale as the pretest. Results of the pre and posttests were returned to the students the same week. The test score was not a part of their grade in the course. 19 full-time level 4 students completed both the pretest and posttest. These students were coded to protect their identity.

4.0   RESULTS

The results of the data collected during the study will be discussed in the order in which they were received, starting with the qualitative data and ending with the quantitative results. As vocabulary learning is an on-going process, so too is the formation of attitudes and perceptions. The researcher wishes to present a picture of the evolving culture of vocabulary learning over the term. Additionally, the qualitative results inform the quantitative outcomes. The first section presents the data from the classroom observations. The next two sections present the results from the student questionnaires and comments from the student group interviews. The students' comments are more relevant following observation of their vocabulary learning behavior. Results from the teacher interviews follow those of the students. Finally, results from the pretest and posttest are reported.

4.1   CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

While questionnaires, interviews and tests provided some of the answers to the researchers' questions, actual classroom observations give the perspective that those involved in the learning process do not have. For instance, teachers were often surprised to hear how many core words they, as well as their students, managed to use in a lesson. As both an instructor in the ELI and an observer, the researcher was afforded both an emic and etic view of the classroom. In

addition to recording all the activities used with the core words during the lessons, the researcher focused on the students' noticing of core words in both spoken and written form, spontaneous use of core words by the teachers and students, deliberate use of core words in activities, and accuracy of production of the words. Several themes emerged which may have had an effect on learning, including noticing, writing sentences, and the teacher's spontaneous use of core words.

To begin with, the core words were written on the board (daily word wall) in every class the researcher observed, apart from one class held in the Language Media Center. In five cases, the instructor wrote the words at the beginning of the lesson, while in seven cases students were asked to write the words. Generally, the teacher would write the words on Mondays and ask different students to write the words other days. Students were encouraged to ask their classmates for help in remembering and spelling the words, but they were not allowed to bring their vocabulary list with them to the board. In some cases, the teacher or classmates also corrected pronunciation of the words. In all but three classes, group and individual choral drilling proceeded. The instructor often made word stress salient by using either intonation or actually marking the stress on the board. Typically, teachers focused on meaning, synonyms and collocations on Mondays, and employed a range of other activities on the following days. Concerning meaning, teachers did not teach only one semantic meaning of a word. Rather, polysemes as well as homographs were discussed by individual teachers or by different teachers.

In addition to presentation techniques, the researcher observed a range of activities used to provide practice with the core words (Table 10). The activities ranged from crossword puzzles to replacing synonyms with core words. Tests, including dictations and fill-in-the-gap sentences, were also employed to foster studying of the words. The most popular activity employed across all the skills, however, was writing original sentences. Not only did students

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write sentences in class, both individually and in pairs, but also they were required to write sentences for homework. This issue was raised by students in the group interviews. Possible effects of this overlap will be examined in the discussion section.

Table 10. Activities Employed to Practice the Core AWL Words

Class and Section	Activity Type
Writing 1	Writing sentences
Reading 1	Scanning for core words
Speaking 1	Synonym substitution, Writing sentences for homework
Listening 1	Dictation, Writing sentences
Reading 2	Quiz fill-in-the-gap, Using core words to discuss text
Listening 2	Crossword puzzle
Speaking 2	Giving definitions
Writing 2	None
Reading 3	Writing sentences, Writing definitions
Writing 3	Use core words in paragraph for homework
Listening 3	Dictation
Speaking 3	Using core words in speeches

Time on task was also recorded in each lesson. Table 11 shows how much time the teachers spent explicitly focusing on the core words during the one 50-minute lesson observed. This does not include those instances when core words occurred spontaneously during the lesson, which did occur frequently. Therefore, these time estimates are modest at best. It should be noted that the teachers reported spending on average 30 minutes a week on the core words. It

may be a safe assumption that their estimates were modest, as well. The real question is whether

this significant time on task resulted in deeper knowledge and retention of the words. Deep

knowledge in this study is displayed by writing one semantically and syntactically accurate

sentence with the word. It does not take into account knowledge of all meanings of the word,

nor does it measure knowledge of all syntactic possibilities of the word.

Table 11. Time Spent Explicitly Learning the Core AWL Words in the one Lesson Observed

Class and Section	Minutes
Writing 1	5
Reading 1	10
Speaking 1	15
Listening 1	18
Reading 2	20
Listening 2	1
Speaking 2	18
Writing 2	0
Reading 3	23
Writing 3	5
Listening 3	14
Speaking 3	8

As Schmidt (1986, 1990) has noted, noticing is a key factor in acquiring a second

language, so the researcher was curious to see how perceptive the students were in this regard. It

must be pointed out that it is difficult to know with certainty whether instances of noticing were

in fact occurring. The researcher interpreted "noticing" as overt signs including head nodding or

laughter after core words were used. Teachers also explicited asked the students whether they

noticed oral or written occurrences of core words. Other instances of noticing might have

occurred, but this aspect of learning is difficult to document without think-aloud data. As it

turned out, noticing was much more common in all the classes of one of the sections due in large

part to the instructor's bringing this skill to the fore. In fact, in section 3, laughter frequently

accompanied instances of students noticing their teacher or other classmates use core words. In both the writing and listening class, two interesting exchanges occurred whereby a core word was used, noticed and a virtual game of 'use another core word' ensued. In the speaking class, the teacher asked which core words their classmates had used in speeches. These words were written on the board and that student was awarded great applause by his classmates. Noticing was occurring in the other sections, as well, though perhaps not as overtly as in section 3. There might be a correlation between noticing and acquisition, but there are too many confounding variables to make this assertion.

During the teacher interviews, several teachers proclaimed that a natural talent was needed to use the core words spontaneously during a lesson. They found it not only difficult to keep the words in mind but also use them naturally. The researcher noticed this 'natural talent' when observing the level 4 speaking supervisor, who seamlessly found ways to incorporate both current and recycled vocabulary. This same ability was exhibited by three of the teachers, one from section 2 and two from section 3. In some instances the teachers made the core words more salient by stressing them in speech. At other times, the words fit in naturally with the topic they were discussing. It was unclear whether the students noticed the words when they were not highlighted, but there were visible signs of noticing, from laughter to a nod of the head, when they were made salient. This might be evidence of the "halo effect", whereby the students were responding positively to a teacher they liked.   It would be hasty, however, to claim that this skill of using the words had a definable effect on learner outcomes. At the very least, however, if the students were noticing these words being used, they were receiving one more exposure to the word which might help lead to ultimate acquisition.

One final noteworthy observation was revealed. After following two of the three sections around for a day, the researcher expected to see signs of boredom with the core words. On the contrary, the students seemed to take these words very seriously and want to know more about them. They were still making both syntactic and semantic errors in production with a few of the words, however. This point was evident in the learning of the core words 'aspect' and 'feature'. Following discussion of the differences between these two words in both the speaking and listening class of section 1, it appears that students may have been getting different information from their teachers, which may have led to confusion. In the speaking class, the students completed a task in pairs which required them to substitute core words with synonyms in a sentence. The words to be paraphrased were underlined. The following paraphrases for both 'feature' and 'aspect' were presented:

1) The ongoing research into language teaching is one distinct quality that attracts students to the ELI.

2) From your perspective, which part of the war in Iraq bothers you the most?

After discussion in pairs, students provided answers by rephrasing the sentence with the core word. Following this, a student asked what the difference between 'aspect' and 'feature' was. 'Feature' was said to be 'distinctive', while 'aspect' was described as a 'component' and 'just one part'. Following the speaking lesson, students in section 1 went to listening class. After choral drilling of the core words, the teacher asked what the difference between 'aspect' and 'feature' was. One student answered that 'aspect' is a 'part'. The teacher explained that 'feature' can be a 'part', too. The teacher explained that the meanings overlapped, but that 'aspect' was a way of looking at something, whereas 'feature' was a characteristic. The teacher

put the students in pairs and asked half the pairs to write a sentence with 'aspect' and the other half a sentence with 'feature'. The following are some of the sentences the students wrote:

a) Another aspect that filmmakers requires to produce movies is budget.

b) People often have different perspective of one thing. Part of the reason is that they observe things from one aspect.

c) ELI features many professional teachers.

d) You should explain a prominent feature of the suspect.

While it is clear the students have grasped 'feature', imperfect use of 'aspect' is still occurring. Concerning the use of 'feature' as a verb, the teacher asked the students whether the students who wrote that sentence were using 'feature' correctly. Most students thought it was fine, but a few were unsure. The teacher proceeded by giving other examples of 'feature', both as a verb and noun.

It must be noted that teachers often took definitions from the Longman Dictionary of American English, in which definitions are simplified for L2 learners. In the process, some of the fine-grained meaning is lost. This may contribute to some of the confusion students have understanding subtle differences between words with similar meanings. The researcher questions whether students make a decision concerning which teacher to trust when information appears to conflict. After all the explicit instruction on 'aspect' and 'feature', some students were still having trouble using the words accurately. This could be due to the greater learning burden (Nation, 2001) of 'aspect' as a more abstract concept than 'feature'.

In sum, the classroom observations revealed several interesting findings. First, on average each section of level 4 receives two hours of class time a week explicitly learning the core words for that week. The daily word wall and focus on pronunciation is typically a part of

every lesson across the skills. Teachers employ a range of activities focusing on recognition and

productive use of the core words, though writing sentences is common to most skills. Teachers

provide a range of different contexts in which the words are used, and sometimes different

semantic meanings are focused on by different teachers. Polysemes and homographs are also

taught. Finally, noticing is encouraged and enhanced by some teachers more than others.

Additionally, some teachers have a knack for spontaneously using core words, while others

strive to attain this skill.

4.2   **STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES**

The purpose of the two questionnaires completed by students was twofold. First, the researcher

aimed to discover the importance students attached to vocabulary learning and which methods

they felt were more useful towards that goal than others. Of equal importance were the students'

perceptions of vocabulary instruction in the ELI and whether this met their vocabulary learning

expectations. It has been shown in previous studies at the institute that there is a correlation

between students' perceived sense of usefulness of an exercise and their motivation to carry the

exercise out to their fullest potential (Juffs et al, 2008). In other words, if the students deemed

the institute's implementation of vocabulary learning to be boring, ineffective or otherwise

useless, this might have an effect on their desire and ultimate capacity to learn these words.

According to the first questionnaire, the majority of the students displayed similar

feelings concerning vocabulary learning and instruction (see Table 12). Most students (27 out of

30) agreed that using new vocabulary when speaking to others is important, as well as in writing

assignments (27 out of 30). This clearly indicates that the students believed they should make an

effort to employ new vocabulary in speech as well as in writing. In the speaking and writing

classes, the instructors were informed that they should encourage their students to use the AWL

vocabulary in speeches and essays alike. Perhaps this sense of importance was instilled in the

students throughout the course of the term.

A slim majority of the students also agreed that most vocabulary words were learned

through reading (17 out of 30) and that increasing their English vocabulary would help them to

read better (29 out of 30). The REAP program has been focusing on the implicit/explicit

learning of vocabulary as a means to increasing students' knowledge of AWL vocabulary.

Reading teachers explained that the core words appeared frequently in the texts students read

during the REAP program. In this sense, words which were being taught explicitly were further

reinforced while reading.

Concerning the ELI's approach to teaching vocabulary in the classroom, the majority of

the students were either content with the amount of focus on vocabulary or felt there should be

an even greater focus on vocabulary (27 out of 30). None of the students agreed that there

should be less focus on vocabulary. Furthermore, 28 out of 30 students agreed that reviewing

new vocabulary in class is important. 19 of the 30 students agreed that taking tests on new

words is the best way to learn them. These results suggest that overall students maintained a

positive perception of the incorporation of vocabulary into the curriculum. Table 12 displays the

results of Questionnaire 1.

Table 12. Results of Student Questionnaire 1

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Most vocabulary words in English are learned through reading.	0	8	5	15	2

2. A dictionary should be used to learn the meanings of new English words.	3	2	4	13	7
3. Memorizing lists of words is a useful way to learn words in English.	1	3	5	17	4
4. Taking tests on new words is the best way to learn them.	1	5	5	15	4
5. Using new vocabulary in writing assignments is important.	0	1	2	15	12
6. Using new vocabulary when speaking to others is important.	0	0	3	18	9
7. The ELI should focus more on vocabulary.	0	3	8	9	10
8. The ELI should focus less on vocabulary.	6	17	7	0	0
9. Increasing my English vocabulary will help me to read better.	1	0	0	10	19
10. Reviewing new vocabulary in class is important.	0	0	2	16	12

The second questionnaire allowed the students to expand on some of their responses in the first questionnaire. On the whole, the results closely mirrored those of the first. Students cited reading various texts as the way they attempted to learn new words (17 out of 30). Furthermore, 11 students said using new words in writing was the best way to learn new words, while 10 mentioned reading and 6 suggested using new words in conversation. Although students indicated in the first questionnaire that they were generally content with the amount of focus on vocabulary in the ELI, they had a great many suggestions for how new words should be taught. Six students suggested that more than five words should be taught each week. There

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were similar findings in the group interviews. The most surprising inconsistency between the two questionnaires, however, was the importance of memorizing words. While 21 out of 30 students agreed that memorizing lists of words is a useful way to learn new words, on the second questionnaire, 13 claimed that memorizing lists is the worst way to learn new words. An additional 9 students felt that the words should be put into productive use, which goes against the technique of memorizing lists. Apparently, though the ELI's focus on vocabulary has made some impact on the importance of productive use of new words, students still maintain their old practices of memorizing lists.

Concerning the students' perceptions of why the five words are on the board at the beginning of every lesson, 21 students answered that this was an attempt to help the students remember the words better. A follow-up question based on these responses was asked during the group interviews. It was believed that the students were unclear as to what these words actually were and from where they came. Responses in the interviews confirmed the researcher's suspicion.

4.3   GROUP INTERVIEWS

Group interviews were conducted to expand on the answers given on the questionnaires. Several themes emerged in each of the three grouped interviews: the perceived usefulness of the core words, advantages and disadvantages of the across-the-curriculum approach, helpfulness of activities, and the appropriate number of words to be taught. See Appendix E for full transcriptions of the interviews and Appendix F for a list of the interview questions.

4.3.1   **Perceived Usefulness of the Core Vocabulary**

First of all, the researcher asked the students why they thought these particular words were

chosen. As mentioned earlier, the researcher suspected that the students were unaware that these

words were selected from the AWL, and that in fact was the case. None of the nine students

interviewed knew the source of the words. Three students believed the words had been culled

from their textbooks or the articles from the REAP computer program. Student 7 from Taiwan

states, "I think they are from reading article, the online reading article. The people are reading

first and the it's [sic] of vocabulary" (Interview between students 7,8, and 9, 7/22/08).

Evidently, this student has noticed that the REAP program was in fact focusing on some of the

same AWL items and these words were being reinforced by the level 4 reading instructors.

Several other students also mentioned noticing the core words in contexts outside of class,

especially in written texts. Student 4 from Korea asserts, "Actually, actually after this word, I

learned this word and I heard, hear more clearly in the broadcast and in the newspaper and more

I can more recog, I can more clearly understand the meaning in the sentence" (Interview between

students 4,5, and 6 7/21/08). This is evidence of the important stage in learning which Schmidt

(e.g. 1994) referred to as 'noticing'.

Despite not knowing the source of the words, students did have an intuition that the

words were frequent, though academic. Student 3 from Ecuador declared:

I think that those five words are, uh, helpful, yeah, in the, in the subjects, in the different

matters. And is helpful in the common life, yeah, and I think sometimes is very helpful,

when you, because you are in a academic course, yeah, and some words , eh eh, are used

in academic writtens, eh, in academic say, yeah, so, I think most of us, they are, they are

universe, we have university studies and our vocabulary is, uh, yeah, is uh, is very close, eh, when we need to explain something, yeah, especially in academic environment, you know. (Interview between students 1,2,and 3, 7/18/08)

Most of the students agreed with this statement and were quick to assert that they thought the words were useful in academic contexts, but several students followed this assertion with a desire to be taught more common language used in informal contexts. Two students, one Korean and one Taiwanese, had the following exchange:

6: Yeah, actually I don't know why the teach, the ELI educational system choose, choose these words, but I think I can guess that uh just [sic] we can use these words very widespread, very widespread. Sometimes uh just personally these words are so very academically, just personally in my opinion.

5: Me too.

6: I want to, yeah I want to make a conversation it's not just, we can say small, small talk, not academically. Yeah.

A more animated discussion on the need for more spoken English occurred in the first interview group between students from Ecuador, China, and Taiwan:

3: So, uh, the, my, my opinion is uh is uh that we must have, uh, two kinds of vocabulary words, yeah: One for your academic life and another for uh you know the real the real life, yeah….But, uh, you know, in in our in social interaction, yeah, sometimes it's not helpful this this words, yeah….For example *imply*, yeah, I never say *imply*… you you are teacher, give us uh one list for for academic, yeah, another list for for usual, common words, yeah.

2: Yeah, I think maybe you can provide some words more like like phrase or something that can help us like we talk to each other or maybe we watch some comedy and we can know like *freak out* or something like that. I think that will more help than you know just learn academic words….But maybe different level maybe if the ELI can provide two kind of this like just *freak out* or [sic] the more daily life words or academic words separate. And we can use because yeah we can't use academic words in our daily lives. We can't go to a Starbucks and say uh I want to…

3: have many factors in this (laugh)

Clearly, from this exchange, the students are admitting that the core words are necessary, but they would truly like to fit in socially and academic words are not fulfilling their needs. It is apparent that the students' perceptions of the frequency of the AWL words in our daily lives are inaccurate as evidenced by the frequency of these words in the BNC. The students are indeed learning some of the core words, as evidenced by their usage in this exchange (*factor, imply*), but it almost feels as if they are mocking the words, as well. Laughter frequently accompanied the use and noticing of core words. This point will be further explored in the discussion section.

So far, the students have expressed their beliefs that the core words are useful and frequent, albeit mostly in academic contexts. Most of them have articulated a need for both academic and spoken, or more social, English in the curriculum. Next, the students debate the advantages and disadvantages of the across-the-curriculum approach the teaching the AWL vocabulary.

4.3.2   **Advantages and Disadvantages of the Across-the-Board Curriculum**

During the classroom observations, the researcher hoped to uncover how the students felt about the across-the-curriculum approach to learning vocabulary. Having followed two sections around for a day, what the researcher noticed was that students did not appear to be bored by the repetition of the five words from class to class. On the contrary, students were taking what they learned in one class and trying to employ it in the next. Furthermore, information culled from the questionnaires highlighted the fact that students believed the ELI should focus more on vocabulary and many agreed with the ELI's approach to teaching vocabulary. The interviews both support this view and refute it. In fact, students were able to clearly articulate how the approach could be adapted to make it more effective in their point of view. Several common themes emerged in the students' comments and are highlighted below.

An overwhelming majority of the students commented on the advantages of being taught the core words in all the skills. Student 1 from China said, "It's a good way to emphasize the vocabularies in different classes especially they are they are the same. It's a good way. And eh we can try to speak, try to write, we try to make sentence, so I think it's a very good way" (Interview between students 1,2, and 3, 7/18/08). Student 9 from Korea points out the virtues of gaining different perspectives and examples from all the teachers: "Because every native speaker use same word but differently, and so it was helpful" (Interview between students 7, 8, and 9, 7/22/08). The students in the second group exclaimed that the core words were more useful than other words they were learning in their reading class:

    6: But I think these words uh is might be not useful than focus words,

        because we always, we always learned about the focus words so we can use

        everything that we want to try to say. But just other vocabulary just scat, scat,

scattered? The teacher is just scatter in words, so we just, at the time we can, we could

remember, but after the class, as time go by, yeah, know what I mean.

4: I agree with him, because I think the the it is more target, target word is more useful

from other word, because we learn the other word in the class, but this is just one time,

and then if I am I didn't write down I forgot immediately. But target word is repeat

and repeat during for one week, so I can remember more easily.

5: Yeah me too, because sometimes in the board, vocabulary in the board some teacher

will push, push us to use it.

It is clear that these students felt they were benefiting from the multiple exposures of the

core words (or target words as they are called by student 4). The last comment made by student

5 from Taiwan, however, raises the issue of potential negative effects of being forced to use the

core words. Despite the salience of the words, two students complained that they had trouble

remembering the words, especially when giving speeches in speaking class. Student 4 from

Korea admits, "When when you speak, when you speak in front of my classmate uh they are

sometimes very embarrassed and nervous, so they forgot the target, target word" (Interview

between students 4,5, and 6, 7/21/08). Student 6 expresses similar feelings: "And especially

while we are taking the test during the speaking class uh the teacher encourage the students to

use use these focus words. I never take advantage of these words. Yeah, just just give a speech

in front of the people I got too [sic]. I get nervous. Yeah. It's hard for the students to always

use these words" (Interview between students 4,5, and 6, 7/21/08). Their nerves may be

compounded by the fact that they were being graded on whether they used core words or not, as

student 5 from Taiwan explained: "Yeah, but we could a grade. If you didn't use the word, you

take, you did a bad grade. Yeah. So, if you use more, you will remember…" (Interview

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between students 4,5, and 6, 7/21/08). For this student, the requirement to use the words in

speeches was helpful, but this obviously was not the case for all students. Student 8 from Libya

pointed out another negative aspect of the words being forced: "Because the teachers are,

teachers force us to use them. And sometimes some of us try to use them just for the show off"

(Interview between students 7, 8, and 9, 7/22/08). Evidently, this student did not agree that the

words should be used as frequently as possible. This sensitive issue will be weighed further in

the discussion section.

One final disadvantage reported by several students was followed by suggestions for

improvement. During the classroom observations, the researcher was curious to see whether the

same activities were being repeated class after class. If this were the case, the researcher

expected to find the students bored or disinterested. In all of the observations, none of the same

activities were repeated apart from the daily word wall and attention to pronunciation and

meaning. Student 7 from Taiwan generally highlighted the advantages of the curriculum, but

revealed that activities were being repeated and this was a disadvantage. The following

exchange between students 7 and 8 discusses this issue:

7: But sometimes different classes have the same activity, so we do that two times or

three times, just make a sentence. So I think it's waste of time, yeah.

8: I agree with her. That's the only disadvantages, however the advantages weigh more

than the disadvantages. So, repeat the meaning and definition of the words are useful,

or just waste of time. It's the only disadvantage.

8: Sometimes we spend more than three minutes for definitions, three minutes for each

class. That means fifteen minutes overall for just five words. And however if each

teacher goes straight on these vocabulary in his specific for in his uh part of his topic

like writing goes straight to these vocabulary and how to write them and how to

attempt in essay or something. And the reading how to know the definition from the

whole sentence. As you know there some English words has meaning more than one

meaning, so how can how do you know this vocabulary has the meaning of this one

and not the other one. (Interview between students 7,8, and 9, 7/22/08)

One point this student raises is the issue of polysemy and his perception that similar

meanings of each word should be explicitly taught. This student is also suggesting that each skill

focus on different aspects of the word to avoid overlap. Student 3 has the same suggestion:

I think it's the vocabulary words are very, very useful, you know. The problem that I see

is is that sometimes there are not a unity between vocabulary words and different

subjects, you know. For example, in reading class, in writing class, reading class, in

writing class, is is sometimes is difficult use the vocabulary words, you know. So, er, or

speaking class or listening class, yeah, I think that uh you must work um, uh uh such as a

team, you know, okay, take together all the subjects, yeah, and emphasize you use this

vocabulary words, yeah, bec.. uh, and another another another idea is that okay when

you when you are learning grammar uh or or or writing or speaking any anything, yeah,

the teachers have different goals, yeah. My suggestion is that some goals they are

sharing, you know, yeah. One word maybe can be used in the speech, in the grammar

exercise for example or in speaking anything, uh, this vocabulary words all the time.

(Interview between students 1, 2, and 3, 7/18/08)

In sum, students report that the advantages of the curriculum outweigh the disadvantages,

especially concerning the effectiveness of the repetition. However, some students felt that

certain activities, namely writing a sentence, were being repeated and this was not the most

efficient use of their time. Suggestions were made for skill-specific activities designed to focus on different aspects of the word relevant to the skill. This same observation was made by teachers during the teacher interviews. Finally, the issue of forced output caused concern for some students. In the next section, students discuss the usefulness of specific activities for learning vocabulary.

4.3.3 **Perceived Usefulness of Activities**

Both the classroom observations and questionnaires provided data of explicit methods used in learning vocabulary. The classroom observations gave the researcher an insight into which activities were actually being employed, while the questionnaires supplied information about which activities and strategies the students perceived as the best way to learn vocabulary. Again, the addition of qualitative data from the interviews served to support the other measures, as well provide yet another perspective.

On the questionnaire, a minority of the students,11 out of 30, stated explicitly that writing sentences with new words is the best way to learn them. The same view was expressed during the interviews by four students. The following statements were taken from the three interviews:

1: For me the most effective way in learning vocabulary is to make sentence use these words, especially our writing teacher always ask us to write sentence on board and then modify it. So, with this kinds of training we know uh uh how to use this vocabulary in a sentence. I think that's the best way to name it, to master it. Just uh on the other hand, just to know its meaning is meaning sometimes, cause you don't know how use it. (Interview between students 1, 2, and 3, 7/18/08)

6: Of course I write the sentences [sic] dictionary.

5: Me too. Uh whenever we make up uh new sentence use the list word, we more

understand, know how to use it. Because sometimes the word he need, need a special,

specific [sic], so when we, when we just know the word but we can't, we can't know

how to use it, it's not useful. (Interview between students 4, 5, and 6, 7/21/08).

9: And I think writing, uh we practice writing using vocabulary is helpful for me.

Because even though we know that vocabulary, if I, if we use that incorrectly, it's no

use. So, I think it was helpful. (Interview between students 7,8, and 9).

While students mention the need to write accurate sentences, taking into account data

from the observations and teacher interviews, it appears students are doing a great deal of

practice towards this goal. Not only are students writing sentences in writing class, but the

researcher observed this same activity in listening class as well as in a speaking class, where the

teacher asked the students to write five original sentences for homework. Furthermore, as part of

the curriculum for reading class, students look the words up in the dictionary and write original

sentences with them. As noted above, one student from Taiwan remarked that this repetition of

writing sentences was a waste of time and the student from Libya agreed with her. In some cases

the students were provided no context in which to write the words. In other words, they were

told to write 5 sentences, not related to any particular topic or for any particular purpose other

than to write the sentences.   In writing classes, however, a topic was almost always provided and

students were asked to incorporate 2 or 3 core words into this assignment. This point will be

carefully considered in the discussion section.

Another activity receiving positive responses was taking tests, as mentioned by the

majority of the students (n=19) on the questionnaire, as well. The follow exchange was taken

from the second group:

5: And the test, the test is very useful. (laugh)

6: (laugh)

4: (laugh) Yeah, because they, whether they like or not, they they should study the vocabulary meaning.

Dictations were also reported by two students as effective in helping the students learn the core words. Focusing on word formation, pronunciation and learning synonyms were other activities mentioned. Surprisingly, only one student, student 3 from Ecuador, thought playing games with words was effective. In fact, student 9 from Korea explicitly stated that playing games is less useful.

One final activity worth mentioning was correcting the sentence. Student 2 from Taiwan provided more insightful comments about the merits of this exercise:

Like if you use the vocabulary like in speaking class our teacher provides some activity like he make like ten, five sentence use these five vocabulary, but some of them, most of them they have something wrong. Like position or something or the meaning is wrong. So, we can discuss with our partner and find find out a problem. I think this one is useful, because if we just make sentence by ourself, yeah we can submit to our teacher and we can got a correct answer but we, I think that the help is not very much because we just know in this situation and we don't know in other situation. Yeah, but if like the sentence we can discuss with our classmate or something, and teacher can also provide other thinking like this word should used behind something or combine with some words or conjunction or something, I think that will be more helpful. (Interview between students 1,2, and 3, 7/18/08)

It is encouraging to discover that students are perhaps being trained to identify which strategies are more effective in promoting deeper knowledge of words.

Without this valuable data obtained from the interviews, teachers might mistakenly believe their students would prefer to play games all the time. It is often the case that teachers have the wrong perceptions of their students' feelings towards particular activities (see Barkhuizen, 1998). Students groan before tests, but evidently this is something they feel is necessary. The final theme emerging from the interviews addresses the number of words taught each week, as well as previous knowledge of the 50 core words.

4.3.4 **Number of Words**

The researcher has discovered that the majority of students think the core words are useful to know. Four students, however, claimed that they were already familiar with many of the core words before the term began. Pretest results reveal that in fact learners only displayed partial knowledge of fewer than half of the 50 words. It should be pointed out that the students' definition of knowledge appears to fall short of Nation's (2001) detailed definition of deep word knowledge. In fact, the students may equate receptive knowledge with full knowledge. As a result of their understanding of what it means to know a word, many of the students expressed a strong desire to be taught more than five words per week. They had clearly grasped the importance of expanding their range of vocabulary and wished the ELI would help them towards this goal.

The following quotations were taken from the three interviews:

1: I think in my opinion, the number, the total amount of those vocabulary is uh limited, is limited, is uh less, is less than we need, eh especially when we want to write a beautiful essays, essay, the vocabulary is not enough.

3: Maybe, it is possible that level three take four or five, level four take five or six, level five six or seven words you know to increasing and to uh to improve more. Maybe not only the same five words every each level, yeah. Maybe level three one number, in next level more, a little more, one or two more, in next level one or two more.

1: To some students maybe five vocabulary is too more too much, for other students it's too few, so maybe we can make a make a list for those ambitious students, okay, but the basical requirement is five vocabulary. If you have more energy, okay, you can, you can have twenty. That's my suggestion.

5: For me, I think uh because I in both level five and level four, so they are different words. For example in level four, almost words I, I knew it, I understand it, but in level five *I think almost words I can, I can, I just, I just um know their meaning but I can't use it. I don't know how to use it.* So, if the word I feel difficulty, maybe I think it's useful for me. I didn't know it. But if some word I have know it, I have knew it, that is not useful for me.

8: All the vocabulary I faced in the level four are familiar with them before I came to the ELI. And now if I do the Michigan exam again, I can't guarantee let's say eighty percent that I did the same mark, so there's no purpose.

7: Yeah, but I think most of vocabulary I learned before, but I don't use that a lot. But now I can when we talk we will try to use the vocabulary. But most of them, I learned that before.

Not all students were in favor of expanding the list, however. Student 6 from Korea made the astute point that they are not only learning one form of the word, so to learn five words a week is more ambitious than it appears. The following exchange followed:

6: If if if the number of the words we are going to learn is more, if we if we if we do if we do maybe it might very or give us a chance to take advantage of these words. Just five words and we can we can learn to how to like adjective form and a lot of forms. There are a lot of forms in one words. So, yeah.

5: Yeah, because in my reading and writing classes the teacher he will give, not not not these five, he have sometimes some family group

6: Ah.

5: …consider or something that [sic] adjective [sic], so you can learn a lot of same family. You can remember [sic].

4: Or different same meaning but different part of speech.

5: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Then he he will told us how to use this, yeah. Consequent, consequently or something like this.

4: Yeah.

6: And also we all learn about like a synonym like or British words or something like that. (Interview between students 4,5, and 6, 7/21/08).

These students were partially aware of what it means to know a word, which is an encouraging finding to come out of this ethnography. It appears that students who were in split levels had a better knowledge of a greater number of the core words from the beginning. This issue will be addressed in the discussion section. An analysis of the pretests should inform the ELI which words to eliminate from the curriculum due to prior knowledge. Otherwise, a

solution to the number of words to include in the curriculum could be the suggestion of student 1

from China, namely provide those ambitious students with the entire AWL to study on their own.

After all, one of the goals of the institute is to aide students in becoming autonomous learners.

In sum, students had a positive attitude towards the vocabulary curriculum. They felt that

they were benefiting from the multiple exposures to the words in all the subskill classes. Some,

however, were dismayed by the same activities being repeated by different teachers, namely

sentence writing. They also noted the need for skill-specific focus on the words. Concerning the

number of words to be taught each week, some of the students would like to learn more than 5

words per week. Several students did point out that there are many aspects of lexical knowledge,

so 5 words was sufficient for them. Several students also reported that they had previous

knowledge of a majority of the words. Their understanding of "knowledge", however evidently

does not correspond to Nation's (2001) detailed list of what it means to know a word. None of

the students interviewed displayed both syntactic and semantic knowledge of even half of the

words on the pretest. Finally, it appears that students were not aware of the source of the words,

but they did have the impression that these words are useful in academic contexts. On this note,

they expressed the desire for an informal English component to the vocabulary curriculum.

4.4   **TEACHER INTERVIEWS**

In line with the students' perceptions, several themes emerged from the individual interviews

with the instructors. In addition to reporting the kind of training specific to vocabulary

instruction and the time spend on teaching the core words, this section will report the teachers'

perceptions of the guidance they received specific to teaching the core words, positive and

negative experiences they had teaching the words, and their estimations of the effectiveness of the implementation, as well as their perceptions of how the students felt about this aspect of the curriculum. See Appendix G for a list of the interview questions.

4.4.1 Training Specific to Vocabulary Instruction

In terms of specific training in vocabulary instruction, most asserted they had had little formal instruction. Six reported that they encountered some strategies in the TESOL certificate courses, though they emphasized that specific instruction in this area had been minimal. Two mentioned that they received explicit instructions for teaching vocabulary in their curriculum notes for level 4 classes. In addition, two noted that a brown bag workshop led by a supervisor in the institute the prior term had provided them with concrete methods with which to teach vocabulary. Three instructors reported that the brown bag workshop led by the speaking 4 supervisor had been helpful. Upon initial questioning, four in fact suggested they had received no formal instruction on how to teach vocabulary. Upon further prompting, however, they determined that they had received some input from the various sources mentioned above

The researcher believes their admissions to training were modest. A majority of the instructors had attended a webinar by Paul Nation the prior spring term. Furthermore, 13 instructors participated in the Brown Bag Workshop led by the speaking 4 supervisor on 6/12/08, and only three mentioned this fact. Perhaps the instructors did not feel these learning experiences qualified as formal training. Their definition of training appeared to require a whole graduate level or certification course. This is evidence that the institute cannot assume that the teachers maintain an awareness of how vocabulary should be taught and of the theory which informs the methodology. This knowledge needs to be reactivated.

4.4.2   **Time Spent on Teaching the AWL Vocabulary**

The instructors were asked, on average, how much class-time per week they devoted to teaching the core AWL vocabulary. The averages ranged from zero to sixty minutes per week, with four instructors reporting 30 minutes per week. Breaking down the time spent by skill area reveals that much less time was spent on vocabulary in grammar classes, as should be expected. No clear pattern emerges, however, with the other skill areas. Table 13 presents these averages.

Table 13. Average Class Time Per Week Spent Explicitly On AWL Words

	Section 1	Section 2	Section 3	Average
Grammar	X	5	5	
Writing	0	15-20	30-35	
Reading	30	30-50	30	
Speaking	30	20-40	30	
Listening	X	X	40-60	

The teachers reported their perceived weekly time on task. It must be noted, however, that these estimates are perceptions and cannot be mistaken for actual time on task. Additionally, three teachers did not report their perceived weekly averages, so assumptions about how much time students actually spent explicitly learning the core vocabulary cannot be made with any certainty. As table 13 shows, one teacher reported spending no time on the words. The writing instructor from section 1 qualified the number of 0 by stating that students already had a firm grasp of the words when entering the instructor's class at the beginning of the week. The instructor did require the students to include the core words in their writing assignments for homework. The researcher suspects that perhaps instructors underestimated the amount of time spent on the core words. Students took vocabulary tests on these words during class or were asked to use them in speeches or writing in class. The instructor might not have felt these were activities which focused on the core vocabulary, and in turn, they might not have factored this

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time into their estimates. Classroom observations support this assumption by the researcher, as in the lessons observed, an average of 12 minutes was spent focusing on the core words in each class (see Table 11). Instructors noted that some days they spent more time on the words than others, but it appeared that in some cases they might not have been factoring in time spent on tests or dictations. Furthermore, these estimations might have varied depending on the point in the term. For instance, the teachers might have devoted more class time to the core vocabulary before midterm tests and final exams. Alternatively, less time might have been spent on the core vocabulary due to the fulfillment of other requirements in the course curricula. To reiterate, these time estimations must be considered as perceptions, so no firm claims about the correlation between time on task and learning outcomes can be asserted.

4.4.3 Guidance Received Specific to Implementing the AWL Vocabulary

When questioned about the kind of guidance they received specific to teaching the core vocabulary, it appeared that the instructors had varying perceptions of what guidance entailed. Mostly, instructors noted the curriculum notes or suggestions at the curriculum meetings at the beginning of the term as sources of guidance. Their comments fall into two camps, positive and negative.

Four of the teachers detailed specific guidance they received, which aided them in teaching the core words. Surprisingly, three of those four teachers taught one of the reading 4 classes. They cited specific activities with which the curriculum supervisor had supplied them, as well as activities shared by other instructors. The reading teachers coordinated the vocabulary quizzes they administered every other week. These same teachers, as well as several others, remarked how much they enjoyed the freedom afforded them in this implementation. Teacher 9

declared that it was this freedom which made the implementation work. She explained that she

did not feel forced to follow a curriculum which did not match the needs of her students or with

which she did not feel comfortable herself. The freedom allowed her to incorporate the core

words naturally, and therefore, effectively, in her mind. Teacher 5 went further to declare that

the vocabulary curriculum was so 'unELIlike", in that it seemed so haphazard compared with the

regimented curricula of the individual skills. She remarked that positively, students were

receiving instruction of the words from varying viewpoints. On the other hand, this teacher was

not sure what the ultimate goal was and whether she was fulfilling her part.

While a few teachers mentioned the positive guidance they had received or freedom in

implementing the curriculum, it was clear that perceived lack of guidance was a concern for

most. The majority of teachers explained that the guidance they received was either not helpful

enough or appropriate for the skill. Two teachers were concerned about the appropriateness of

the suggestions curriculum supervisors provided. Teacher 1 singled out a specific activity the

supervisor had suggested they use, namely *Taboo*. This teacher had not used the game in class,

feeling that it was not appropriate for the level and served to reinforce imperfect understanding

of the words. Teacher 2 commented that the suggestions made by the supervisor did not seem

appropriate for the skill being taught, and hence, did not employ any of those suggestions.

Several teachers reported that the amount of guidance was insufficient. Teacher 4

revealed that the supervisor directed the teachers' attention to activities to use in the curriculum

notes but did not discuss them at that time or at any time during the term. This teacher felt that

more guidance had been provided the previous term regarding the implementation of vocabulary.

She suggested that the supervisors supply the part of speech and definition they wished the

teachers to focus on. This suggestion was born out of a concern that students were being told

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different things by different teachers, leading to misunderstanding. This sentiment was echoed by teacher 1, who added that the students could become confused when they are learning more than one form or meaning of a word. Teacher 8 also held this concern and stated that she had been given 4 or 5 activities to use, but more suggestions would be helpful. Teacher 10 explained that they had not been told how much time to spend on the words each week. This teacher confessed that it was difficult to continue creating new activities with the words and was concerned that other teachers might be using the same activities. This leads to the issue of communication and structure of the implementation.

It was revealed that some teachers felt better communication was needed between the teachers and the supervisors. Teachers expressed concern that they might be repeating an activity with the core words that another teacher had used, thereby leading to overlap. Recall that there are three sections of level 4 in the institute. Each section had a different teacher for each language skill. Additionally, for each language skill, there was a different teacher for each section (i.e. 3 reading teachers, 3 writing teachers, etc.). It was apparent that some of the language skill teachers, especially the reading teachers, were coordinating tests and activities. As they taught different sections, overlap was not an issue. For teachers of the same section, however, such coordination was not occurring between the different language skills. This point was raised during the brown bag workshop on teaching the core words. One teacher asserted that the activities they had been shown were excellent, but what if all the teachers used those same ideas in their classes? This issue was not resolved. Table 10 reports the activities the researcher noted during classroom observations. The teachers reported additional activities they employed towards the learning of the core words. Though some overlap of activities is mentioned, teachers appeared to include a wide range of productive practice with the core words.

Despite this range, an overwhelming majority of the teachers expressed the need for language skill-specific activities to teach the core words. This expression was mirrored by the students during the interviews. Teacher 10 suggested that they record passages with the core words for listening classes. Teacher 5 proposed having different guidelines for each skill. She clarified, however, that the words should be focused on in reading and writing and perhaps only included in speaking when the words fit in with the textbook.

4.4.4 Positive and Negative Experiences Teaching the AWL Vocabulary

In order to gain a clearer idea of the teachers' perceptions of the curriculum itself, the researcher asked the teachers to talk about any positive or negative experiences they had while teaching the core words. While many of the negative experiences repeat comments about the lack of guidance or the inability to incorporate the words naturally into lessons, the positive experiences centered on the students. Numerous comments were made about the fact that students were making a concerted effort to include the words in both written and spoken contexts, even when they were not required to do so. Teacher 8 commented that three of her students included 5 or 6 core words in each of their writing assignments when only 1 or 2 were expected. Teacher 1 was thrilled to hear students using core words on the summer school trip to Philadelphia. Furthermore, this teacher remarked on the students smiling when they noticed core words being used by the teacher or other classmates. The researcher noted this positive behavior in both classroom observations and during the group interviews. Teacher 9 highlighted the fact that on the curriculum evaluations, students cited the instruction of the core words as their favorite part of the course. These positive perceptions carried over to the teachers' overall perceptions of the students' reactions to the curriculum, as well as the perceived effectiveness.

4.4.5 Perceptions of the Implementation

With respect to the teachers' perceptions of the students' reaction to the AWL curriculum, the overall sentiment was that the students enjoyed it. Teachers reported that the students did not appear bored with the repetition, but rather were interested to gaining deeper knowledge of the words. In fact, teacher 6 said that the students would often stay after class to ask further questions about vocabulary. Teacher 2 exclaimed that the students did not seem overwhelmed by the number of words as they had been in previous terms.

Concerning the teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the implementation, some teachers believed the students had learned the words, while others were not as quick to declare that all students had gained sufficient knowledge of the words. Effectiveness equated to output for some teachers, while others translated this in terms of the curriculum. Teacher 1 asserted that the students had learned the words but wondered whether it was worth the perceived great amount of time spent learning them. Teacher 2 stated that the implementation would definitely lead to long-term retention. Teacher 10 indicated that only some of the students were trying to use the core words, others not at all. Teacher 4 remarked that students had not used the words in RSAs, the only concrete measure to which the teacher could refer. Finally, teacher 6 could not speak about the effectiveness but believed the implementation was helpful. This teacher raised a concern about how deeply the students were expected to know the words. If deep knowledge was the goal, then only 3 words should be taught each week.

4.4.6   Summation of the Teachers' Suggestions

In sum, the teachers reported that they would like more guidance in teaching the core words, including more skill-related activities, a list of definitions, and better communication with the supervisors, as well as coordination between the supervisors. Teachers also raised concerns about trying to incorporate the words naturally into the curriculum. Finally, several teachers remarked how time-consuming they felt it was to incorporate the words into each lesson. One teacher suggested altering the speaking curriculum to allow more time for the core words.

4.5   PRE AND POST TESTS

As mentioned previously, the vocabulary pretest was administered in the third week and the posttest in the final week of the 13-week term. They were identical paper-and- pencil tests, which were taken in the intact classrooms of the three sections of level four speaking. The students were informed that the test was not part of their grade. They had 45 minutes to write a synonym and sentence for each of the 50 core AWL items. Each item was awarded a total of two points, one for an appropriate synonym and one for an accurate sentence which demonstrated that the student understood the meaning of the word. The tests were graded by the researcher according to a strict interpretation as detailed by Folse (2006).

The following examples for the word "achieve" demonstrate the awarding of points: a synonym of "goal" received 0 points, while "accomplish" received 1 point. The sentence "I achieve to improve my English skills" received 0 points, while "I hope to achieve my goal this semester" received one point. Though it is evident the student acquired some knowledge of the

word "achieve" by supplying "goal" as s synonym, it is not clear the student has achieved deep

knowledge of the word, as required on a strict scale. Similarly, the inaccurate example sentence

demonstrates imperfect learning of both syntactic and semantic knowledge of the core word.

While these responses would receive some acknowledgement on more incremental versions of a

VKS, due to the great long-term and overarching exposure to the words being measured, a test

was needed to reveal whether deep, accurate knowledge had occurred. 0 points were also

awarded if the space was left blank, a sentence was provided without first writing an appropriate

synonym, or if the core word was not used in the sentence.

It should be noted that these results should be considered with regard to several factors.

First, as the students were aware that these tests would not count as part of their grade, they may

not have completed the tests as carefully as they might otherwise have. Second, this was a

lengthy test. Some students did not complete the test in the time allotted. Third, the posttest was

administered on the same afternoon as the students' listening final exam. There is the possibility

that students who had just taken the exam were tired, or those who had the exam following

speaking class might have been preoccupied thinking about the exam. Finally, students had

perhaps received greater, as well as longer, exposure to words from the first few weeks of the

list. It might be expected that the greater time allowed for processing resulted in better learning.

On the other hand, if the words were not recycled from the beginning of the term on a consistent

basis, students might have forgotten them by the end of the term. In other words, any number of

variables could have affected outcomes. As a result, while these results may be interesting, great

weight should not be placed on them. The purpose of this ethnographic study was mainly to

describe how the instruction of the 50 words was implemented, as well as how this

implementation was perceived. Production data was of secondary concern. This is an area for future research to analyze.

With these qualifications in mind, several interesting facts emerged from an analysis of the results: words already known by a majority of the students on the pretest, words acquired by a majority of the students over the course of the term, words not acquired by a majority of the students, words acquired by nationality and by section, and number of words gained over the term. The following sections will present these results in detail.

4.5.1 Words Already Known

It is important to discover of which words the students already had knowledge prior to entering the ELI, as this informs the administration about which words to consider eliminating from the lists in future. Furthermore, it sheds light on what was happening in the classroom with specific words. For example, the researcher observed three lessons of one section in which students were using the core word "alternative" repeatedly with great accuracy. As it turned out, examination of the pretests revealed that a majority of the students (10 out of 19 full-time level 4) already knew this word before the term began. This means that not only did they have semantic knowledge of the word, but they were able to produce a syntactically accurate sentence with appropriate collocations, as well.

The researcher identified words of which more than a quarter of the students, or at least 5 out of 19, had previous knowledge. A few caveats must be made, however. As this test was administered at the beginning of the third week of the term, students had already spent one full week on the first 5 words from the vocabulary list (achieve, assess, concept, cooperate, establish). Specifically, taking into account the perceived averages provided by the instructors,

this correlates to approximately 2 hours of explicit classroom instruction and practice. Additionally, the pretest was taken in the afternoon on the first day of week 3. In the morning lessons, reading, writing and grammar, students had been presented the next 5 words on the vocabulary list (acquire, initial, obvious, relevant, target). At the bare minimum, the teachers in those classes had put the words on the board for the length of the lesson and had modeled and elicited pronunciation. As learned from classroom observations and the reports of the teachers, reading classes typically presented definitions, synonyms, collocations, word forms and example sentences on Mondays. Armed with this knowledge, it is expected that the students might display some evidence of learning of these words on the pretest.

The tables below present the results of the pretest broken down into words from week 2 (Table 14), week 3 (Table 15) (words which had already been provided to the students), and additional words of which 5 or more students had deep knowledge (Table 16). Putting aside weeks 2 and 3, at least a quarter of the students had prior knowledge of 11 of the 50 words. In particular, "method" was known by 13 out of 19, and "alternative", "region", and "secure" by nearly half of the students. Taking a closer look at where these words fall on the BNC frequency sublists, eight of the words are among the 2,000 most frequent (1,000 = affect, previous, region, secure, 2,000= alternative, exclude, method, reply) and the other 3 fall within the 3, 4 and 5,000 most frequent (3,000= illustrate, 4,000= modify, 5,000=evaluate).

As might be expected, more than half the students displayed deeper knowledge of 3 words from week 2, namely "achieve", "cooperate", and "establish". Only 4 out of 19 students received full points for both "assess" and "concept". Interestingly, an examination of the posttest results reveals that knowledge of "establish" was not sustained by all 10 of those students over

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the course of the term, nor was it acquired by any additional students. This point will be explored further in the discussion section.

Concerning week-3 words, "target" was known by 15 out of 19 students, "obvious" by 12 and "acquire" by 9. Of course, one possibility for such a great majority of students knowing these words is that students simply internalized a model sentence provided by a teacher the same morning of the test. A closer examination of the pretests reveals a variety of sentences, a good indication that students either had prior knowledge of this word or had truly acquired a good understanding of this word from the little exposure they had had that morning. In addition to being the name of a popular store, "target" is on the BNC list of the 2,000 most frequent words, which is also why it could have been known by a majority of the students. It must also be noted that as an adjective, "obvious" has a wide range of usage, not requiring a set number of collocations or specific syntactic knowledge of usage as verbs have. Additionally, "obvious" is among the 1,000 most frequent words on the BNC.

Surprisingly, analysis of the posttest results reveals a decrease in the number of students (from 15 to 11 out of 19) who acquired deep knowledge of "target". Upon closer examination, it appears that students did not have sufficient time to complete the test. As the words were presented alphabetically, "target" occurred at the end. Several students marked that they knew the word and even provided an appropriate synonym. The sentence space was left blank, as was the case for several words at the end of the test. Therefore, it should not be concluded that students did not retain knowledge of "target" over the course of the term. It is important to note, however, all of the students who wrote a sentence with "target" used it as a noun. Knowledge that "target" is also a verb was evidently not acquired.

The next two sections present the complete findings of the posttest, including words which were acquired and those which were not.

Table 14. AWL Words Week 2 Already Known by Full-time Level 4 Students

AWL Core Word	Number of Students/19
achieve	13
assess	4
concept	4
cooperate	10
establish	10

Table 15. AWL Words Week 3 Already Known by Full-time Level 4 Students

AWL Core Word	Number of Students/19
acquire	9
initial	5
obvious	12
relevant	2
target	15

Table 16. Additional AWL Words Already Known by 5+ Full-time Level 4 Students

AWL Core Word	Number of Students/19
affect	7
alternative	9
evaluate	6
exclude	6
illustrate	6
method	13
modify	6
previous	5
region	8
rely (on)	7
secure	8

4.5.2   **Words Acquired**

The scope of this study does not allow for careful examination of the words acquired. Future

studies could look at the relative learning burden of those words which students showed some

knowledge of compared with words students did not acquire. Analysis of grammatical category

might also provide enlightening information about the difficulty of the vocabulary learning

process. For the purposes of the present study, the researcher will only highlight the relatively

low number of words acquired. Factoring out words from week 2 which received explicit

instruction before the pretest, the majority of the students were able to write accurate sentences

for only 23 out of 45 words. In other words, students had mastered at least one semantic

meaning and syntactic use of these words. Claims about deep knowledge cannot be made,

however, due to the limited scope of the VKS. Table 17 shows the AWL acquired by a majority

of the students. Table 18 shows the AWL acquired from weeks 2 and 3, while Table 19 shows

the AWL words acquired from week 11. For a complete list of all 50 AWL, see Appendix H.

Table 17. AWL Words Acquired by the Majority of Full-time Level 4 Students from Pretest to

Posttest Excluding Week 2 Words

AWL Core Word	Number of Students Pretest/19	Number of Students Posttest/19
affect	7	11
alternative	4	14
category	1	12
complex	2	15
constant	0	11
demonstrate	2	14
distinct	1	11
distribute	3	13
evaluate	6	11
evident	3	10
exclude	6	12
feature	3	10

illustrate	6	12
method	13	15
modify	6	13
perspective	0	12
previous	5	10
region	8	14
rely (on)	7	15
secure	8	13

Table 18. AWL Words Weeks 2 and 3 Acquired by Full-time Level 4 Students from Pretest to Posttest

AWL Core Word	Number of Students Pretest/19	Number of Students Posttest/19
achieve	13	13
acquire	9	14
assess	4	14
concept	4	11
cooperate	10	12
establish	**10**	**8**
initial	5	7
obvious	12	13
relevant	2	4
target	**15**	**11**

Table 19. AWL Words Week 11 Acquired by Full-time Level 4 Students from Pretest to Posttest

AWL Core Word	Number of Students Pretest/19	Number of Students Posttest/19
considerable	1	6
illustrate	6	12
impact	1	9
perceive	0	6
regulate	1	8

The acquisition, or regression, of one word, "establish", is worth noting. This word was

taught in the second week of the term, prior to the pretest. While 10 out of 19 students provided

an appropriate synonym and sentence with the word, it was those students who provided an

inaccurate synonym or sentence that are worth examining. Concerning the question whether students continue to increase their knowledge of a word over the course of a term, some students wrote the exact same inaccurate synonym and sentence on the posttest. In other words, they had not refined their knowledge of this word. Others, however, wrote an accurate synonym and sentence on the posttest, evidence that learning had continued despite the fact that the word was not receiving great focus in class anymore. As noted above, a similar situation occurred with "target", though it appears that some students simply ran out of time and could not complete the words at the end of the test.

It must be pointed out that some words on the AWL and BNC occur frequently as classroom language. For instance, 'evaluate' is a word frequently encountered in the classroom when students complete course and teacher evaluations. The fact that this word appears on the 5,000 level of the BNC is deceiving, and students are more likely to know this word than other lower frequency words. As researchers, it is important to keep in mind the kind of vocabulary students encounter in the classroom, a fact which written corpora do not capture. In other words, frequency levels on corpora are not always accurate indications of the words students need to know and so should be used with care.

4.5.3   **Words not Acquired**

The posttest results reveal that more than half the students could not provide either accurate synonyms and/or sentences for 23 of the 50 core AWL words (see Table 20). That is not to say that increments of learning had not occurred. On the contrary, students often provided an appropriate synonym, but whether due to lack of time or insufficient knowledge, they could not

supply an appropriate sentence. The main focus, to reiterate, was to measure deep knowledge, and that is what these results have perhaps measured. An analysis of specific words presents a clearer picture.

Of the 19 full-time level four students who took both the pretest and posttest, 10 of them still did not acquire sufficient knowledge of "aspect" to use it appropriately in a sentence (only 5 students wrote an accurate synonym and sentence). In fact, one student had written an accurate sentence with 'aspect' on the pretest, but on failed to supply either a synonym or a sentence on the posttest (student 24). Still others could provide an appropriate synonym but left the sentence blank. It is worth noting that the Libyan students appeared to gain a better understanding of this word. Many had written inaccurate sentences on the pretest, but accurate ones on the posttest.

Another interesting finding was that some students who provided a synonym and sentence on the pretest did not change either of these on the posttest. In other words, they gave the exact same synonym and sentence, neither completely accurate. This could indicate that some students who felt they knew certain AWL items before the term did not add to their understanding of these words. On the other hand, it could also indicate that they have fixed chunks of knowledge with certain words. At any rate, they did not display any new knowledge on the posttest. This may be due to their attitude about being taught words they felt they already knew. In the group interviews, some students expressed their mild dismay that class time was being wasted on words they already knew. Perhaps they did not feel it necessary to pay close attention when these words were discussed. This point will be further explored in the discussion section.

Future studies could examine the semantic complexity of the words which were not acquired by a majority of the students. Such an analysis may reveal that the form-

meaning/concept mapping is more complex for certain grammatical categories. This could

explain why certain words require longer processing time and greater exposure. One final aspect

to report is the overall number of words gained by nationality. The next section presents the

findings.

Table 20. AWL Words not Acquired by Full-time Level 4 Student

AWL Core Word	Number of Students/19
Aspect	14
Compatible	14
Consequent	13
Considerable	13
Correspond	16
Establish	11
Equate	13
Factor	13
Feature	9
Impact	10
Imply	10
Incorporate	14
Indicate	11
Initial	12
Perceive	13
Potential	10
Principle	12
Range	12
Regulate	11
Relevant	15
Resource	10
Restrict	12
Valid	15

4.5.4 **Number of Words Gained by Nationality**

Students, regardless of their nationality, showed similar improvement over the course of the term. On average, out of the 100 possible points for providing an accurate synonym and sentence for the 50 core AWL words, students improved their scores by 32 points. Table 21 displays the individual results grouped by nationality. Of the three main nationalities represented, Korean (n=10), Libyan (n=4), and Taiwanese (n=3), the Libyan students had the best performance overall, averaging 41 points on the pretest and 75.5 on the posttest. Overall, they improved an average 34.5 points. The Korean students began with lower pretest scores, average 27.8, but they too expanded their knowledge over the term, achieving an average 60.8 on the posttest (an improvement of an average 33 points). Finally, the Taiwanese students started the term with a significantly lower average pretest score of 19.33. They made the greatest improvement, however, scoring an average 55 on the posttest (an improvement of an average 35.67 points). It must be noted that with such small numbers, there was great variation within each nationality group. In conclusion, what should be gleaned from these findings is that students from the 3 major nationalities represented in the current institute come into the program with varying levels of vocabulary knowledge. This is a point for the administration to consider.

Another point for consideration is whether a correlation obtains between the words gained and the class section. Any number of reasons could account for any significant findings in this regard, and far too many confounding variables cannot be accounted for to make such findings of any value.

Table 21. Pretest/Posttest Results of Full-time Level 4 Students by Nationality

Student Code	Nationality	Pretest	Posttest	Improved
6	Korean	9	58	49

10	Korean	17	60	43
4	Korean	22	46	24
9	Korean	39	80	41
11	Korean	26	57	31
12	Korean	13	42	29
13	Korean	29	50	21
14	Korean	41	63	22
15	Korean	38	74	36
16	Korean	44	78	34
Mean		27.8	60.8	33
		(SD=12.46)	(SD=13.15)	(SD=13.73)

Student Code	Nationality	Pretest	Posttest	Improved
17	Libyan	53	96	43
18	Libyan	46	77	31
19	Libyan	28	44	16
20	Libyan	37	85	48
Mean		41	75.5	34.5
		(SD=10.86)	(SD=22.40)	(SD=14.25)

Student Code	Nationality	Pretest	Posttest	Improved
21	Taiwanese	7	35	28
7	Taiwanese	34	76	42
22	Taiwanese	17	54	37
Mean		19.33	55	35.67
		(SD=13.65)	(SD=20.52)	(SD=7.09)

Student Code	Nationality	Pretest	Posttest	Improved
23	Japanese	16	36	20
24	Italian	49	59	10

Means

Nationality	Pretest	Posttest	Improved	Full-time Level 4
Korean	27.8	60.8	33	10
Libyan	41	75.5	34.5	4

Taiwanese	19.33	55	35.67	3
Mean	29.37	63.77	34.39	17
	(SD=10.92)	(SD=10.57)	(SD=1.34)	

In sum, it is important that the findings on the learning outcomes be considered with regard to the numerous caveats mentioned above. Specifically, accurate estimations of time on task cannot be made, as these estimations were the perceptions of the teachers not actual measurements. Additionally, the point in the term when the individual words were taught might have affected the outcomes. For example, students might have had greater exposure to words taught earlier in the term thereby improving their chances of acquisition. Along the same lines, there is no way of knowing how much time was spent explicitly teaching each word, as well as how often these words occurred in texts. Students could have had more forced production with certain words. Finally, the VKS tests were only designed to provide evidence of the learning of one semantic meaning in one syntactic context. With these caveats in mind, the majority of the students were able to produce an accurate for slightly more than half the core words of the curriculum. L1 appeared to be only a factor concerning how many words they already had knowledge of at the beginning of the term. Regardless of L1, students made similar gains in knowledge of the core words over the course of the term.

5.0   DISCUSSION

5.1   THE MEANING OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

At the beginning of the study, the researcher posed four questions to be answered through the

analysis of qualitative and quantitative measures. In this section, the researcher will return to

those questions in an attempt to provide answers to each one in turn. The research questions

were:

1) How is the ELI curriculum of the 50 core AWL words being implemented?

2) What are the level four students' perceptions of the implementation of AWL

vocabulary?

3) What are the level four instructors' perceptions of the implementation of AWL

vocabulary?

4) What initial gains have been made in the learning of AWL vocabulary in level four?

In response to question 1), teachers generally employed similar methods in presenting the

core words at the beginning of the week and eliciting the words at the beginning of the lesson on

all other days. Most teachers either wrote the week's 5 words on the board themselves or asked

a student to do so (daily word wall). One teacher (writing) admitted to doing no more than the

daily word wall. Most teachers would then typically review the pronunciation of each word

through choral and individual drilling. Reading teachers typically spent more time presenting form, meaning, and use than the other skill teachers. The teachers employed a range of activities Tuesday through Friday, with some of the skill teachers sharing the same activities (see Tables 10 and 14 for a complete list of exercise types). Every other week, the reading teachers administered a gap-filling test on the core words. Listening teachers gave weekly dictations using the core words. Writing teachers required that 2 or 3 words be used in paragraph and essay assignments, as well as on in-class writing tests and the final exam. Speaking teachers encouraged their students to use the core words in in-class and recorded speeches. One speaking teacher admitted awarding extra points for greater usage of the core words. Grammar teachers had no requirements for the core words, though occasionally the words appeared on exercises which focused on grammatical structures. Homework assignments in all reading and writing classes included writing original sentences with the core words. Occasionally, this task was completed for one of the speaking sections. One additional practice which occurred with greater frequency as the term progressed was the inclusion of some of the core words in the weekly ELI News, written by one of the ELI instructors and activity coordinator. The reading teachers frequently asked their students to scan the document for occurrences of the weekly core words.

Additional measures taken in the classroom involved noticing. Several teachers repeatedly drew their students' attention to spontaneous use of current and recycled core words. These practices spawned a culture of noticing, particularly in section 3, whereby students began to notice spontaneous use of core words without being prompted to do so.

As to whether the students were producing the words, the researcher can attest to production during observations. There was a great deal of forced production, both spoken and written, when the words were being explicitly focused on. With regard to spontaneous usage,

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students were using core words to some degree, especially in section 3. During the teacher interviews, the writing teachers mentioned that most of their students tried to use at least one core word in homework assignments when required. Others went beyond expectations and used 5 or more core words in individual assignments (Teacher 8). One of the speaking teachers (Teacher 4) was disappointed not to hear more occurrences of core words during recorded speeches (RSA) in the language lab. The scope of this study does not include analysis of production data extracted from online assignments. Hence, the researcher cannot verify accounts of production data. A future study is needed to examine such data.

In regard to question 2), overall the students had favorable perceptions of the AWL curriculum. A majority of the students reported that they liked the way the institute taught vocabulary. Many students, however, expressed the need for more words to be taught each week, as well as perhaps some more "advanced" words to replace those they already knew. They thought writing sentences with the core words was the best way to learn them and welcomed tests which forced them to study the words. During the student interviews, a few students revealed that activities were being repeated across the skills, which they felt was a waste of time. Particularly, students cited writing original sentences as a common activity. It is interesting that students would claim this activity to be the most useful on the questionnaires, but when prompted to expand on this, some students felt there should be a limit to this. Furthermore, students suggested incorporating skill-specific focus so as to eliminate the issue of overlap.

Some of the answers to question 3) mirror those of question 2). Namely, teachers held similar notions about the implementation of the curriculum, particularly regarding the range of activities used in each skill area. Clearly, both the teachers and the students were concerned about the overlap of activities and suggested implementing skill-specific activities. As

evidenced by the number of times students were required to write an original sentence with the core words, overlap was indeed occurring. They raised their concern about the apparent lack of guidance provided by the curriculum supervisors, as well as an apparent lack of coordination between the supervisors regarding which aspects of the words should be focused on in each of the skills. Teachers expressed a desire for more ideas for activities to use in addition to the provision of the relevant definition to teach. Two teachers revealed that they were not sure what the overall goal of the curriculum was, namely how well the students were expected to learn the words. Evidently, these goals had not been clearly articulated to them, or perhaps not overtly or frequently enough. Overall, the teachers seemed to think the across-the-curriculum approach had merit, however, the implementation lacked focus and coordination.

Recall that results of production data was not the focus of this study. Nevertheless, the findings from the pretest and posttest were intriguing. The overall results reveal that a majority of the students did not acquire deep knowledge of 23 of the 50 words. Given the perceived amount of time on task, the researcher expected to see greater gains. The results must be qualified, however, as the researcher was more interested in measuring deep knowledge as opposed to smaller increments of knowledge. The goal of the curriculum was to facilitate accurate, productive use of the 50 core words. It was not expected that students would gain true deep knowledge of all semantic meanings and syntactic combinations of each word. In part, this goal served to inform the current institute of exactly what the students know and how well they know it. Often, in similar EAP institutes, it is taken for granted that students scoring a particular number on a placement test (in this case the MTELP) have productive knowledge of the 2,000 most frequent words on the BNC. The current research has discovered that this in fact was not the case. As a result, a measurement of what the students knew was necessary. Furthermore,

this measurement could then inform the curriculum. Consequently, a more suitable curriculum could then be designed to meet the needs of the current student body.

To return to the current study, it is important that accuracy is examined when determining which of the 50 AWL words the students acquired. It is easy to maintain that students must know the words because they are using them. What needs to be considered is whether they are acquiring accurate knowledge of not only syntactic features of the words, but semantic knowledge as well. It is evident from the original sentences gathered from the posttests that a majority of the students had only imperfect knowledge of a majority of the words. For instance, a great amount of time was spent discussing the differences between *aspect* and *feature*. Despite this exposure to various aspects of these words, an overwhelming majority of the students were unable to produce semantically accurate sentences for either of them. This could be a result of the lack of coordination between the skill classes in each section. If teachers are told to focus on one meaning of each word, confusion may not occur. On the other hand, explicit goals concerning learner outcome must be established first. If the goal is to expose the students to different forms and meanings of the words, perhaps the outcome expectations should be lowered accordingly. Namely, deep knowledge as outlined by Nation (2001) would not be the goal, but rather some productive knowledge, albeit still imperfect, might be the goal. It is widely known that students learn at different rates and learning is a process which occurs diachronically in increments (see for example Schmitt, 1998). A longer term study would reveal whether deeper learning was occurring and whether it was just taking longer to process the words than anticipated.

5.2   PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This ethnography has attempted to describe the rigorous implementation of a curriculum focusing on 50 AWL words. Upon careful analysis of observations, interviews and questionnaires, the researcher has discovered a disconnect between some of the expectations of the administration and perceptions of the instructors and the students. There appeared to be a lack of intersubjectivity between the teachers and their supervisors. While teachers generally like their freedom, it appears that they have come to expect a certain level of coordination and guidance. When this appears to be lacking, the teachers are more likely to become critical. Furthermore, the specific goals of the institute need to be clearly articulated to the instructors to improve morale and establish a level of trust between the two tiers. Additionally, as Nunan (1995) found in his study on learner-centeredness, students appreciate the opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process regarding their curriculum. When students are included, or made to feel included in this decision making process, they tend to perform better. If students are better informed about the goals of the curriculum, perhaps they will make a greater effort to achieve these goals.

A majority of the students (10 or more out of 19) acquired only 27 out of the 50 AWL words taught over the course of a term. Despite the estimated two-hours of explicit learning in class for each weekly group of 5 words, it appears that the implementation might not have been as effective as expected or hoped. Consequently, the overall goals of the curriculum should be clearly articulated to both teachers and students alike. Rather than expecting the students to gain deep knowledge of several semantic meanings of each word, goals could be set for deep knowledge of one semantic meaning. Better coordination at the supervisor level could ensure that activities are not repeated and that skill-specific exercises are employed. Additionally,

better or more systematic communication between the teachers of each section, as well as between specific skill teachers, could lead to more effective use of classroom time. The creation of activities could be shared to reduce preparation time. Additionally, teachers and supervisors should meet to discuss which activities appeared to be more effective, as well as to which activities the students responded well. There is no verifiable evidence, however, that certain activities were more effective in facilitating learning than others. A great cause for concern remains the fact that despite the perception of significant time on task, deep knowledge of at least one semantic meaning of each word was not achieved. Perhaps a return to theoretical findings is necessary to redefine what the language learning goals should be.

Words chosen from 6 sub-lists of the AWL were thought to be ones of which the students should have deep knowledge but probably did not. Results from the pretest show that at least a quarter of the students had prior knowledge of at least 11 words. 8 of these words were among the 2,000 most frequent words on the BNC. The 10 words taught before the pretest was administered were disregarded in this count, though students may have had prior knowledge of some of these words, as well. While only a quarter of the students may not be sufficient to eliminate these words from the curriculum, the limited scope of this study must be taken into consideration. This study examined the pretest and posttest results of only 19 full-time level 4 students. Recall that 43 students were enrolled in level 4 courses. An examination of the results of all the students might reveal that a majority of students had productive knowledge of the same 11 words.

For many of those 11 words, students wrote the exact same sentence on the posttest as they did on the pretest, evidence that perhaps no new learning took place or that the students have acquired chunks of knowledge with these words. If students feel they are not learning

something new, this could have negative effects on their motivation and perceptions of the teachers and institute alike (see for example Barkhuizen, 1998). Consequently, a pretest should be administered as early as possible in the term to determine of which words the students already have some productive knowledge. While it is impractical to test knowledge of more than 50 words at a time, if a majority of students exhibit sufficient command of certain words, those words could be replaced by a list of alternatives. As it would not be practical to test the knowledge of additional words, the alternative words could be taken from sublists 6 or higher. As these words are typically less frequent, it is more likely that fewer students would have productive knowledge of them.

Concerning the findings of the present study, I would recommend eliminating the following words from the core list: *method, alternative, secure, region, obvious, target*. At least 42% of the students were able to provide an accurate sentence for these words on the pretest. All of these words are among the 1,000 or 2,000 most frequent words on the BNC. 'Method', 'alternative', 'secure', and 'region' are on the first three sublists of the AWL. Though 'obvious' and 'target' were words which had been introduced to the students prior to the pretest, 12 and 15 students respectively wrote accurate sentences for these words. The limited exposure they had received in class to these words would probably not have resulted in deep knowledge of one semantic meaning of these words. Therefore, a majority of the students probably had prior knowledge of them. In addition, these are both quite frequent words; 'obvious' is among the 1,000 most frequent words on the BNC and 'target' is among the 2,000 most frequent.

Concerning which AWL words should replace the six words listed above, alternatives should be chosen from sublists 6 and above. There is no guarantee that some students will not have had prior knowledge of words from these sublists, but based on the findings from the

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pretest, the one word from sublist 6 which had not already been taught (incorporate) was only known by 1 student. Though this is not strong evidence to support the recommendation above, words on sublists 6 and above are less frequent in academic texts, but their frequency level on the BNC should also be taken into account. Words from the 1,000 frequency level should be avoided, as there is a greater chance that the majority of the students know them. Furthermore, consideration must be made of which words occur more frequently in the classroom. These are words which students may already have knowledge of or will gain knowledge of during the course of the term. In other words, frequency lists should not be the only criteria for determining vocabulary curricula.

Further research and examination of theoretical findings on the lexicon could be utilized to compile a more informed vocabulary list to suit the learners' needs.   Such a list should take into account learning burden and difficulty of acquisition. Specifically, L1s could be considered when choosing words to teach. For instance, words which follow similar grammatical patterns in the learner's L1 will be easier to acquire. Loan words are also, obviously, easier to learn. In addition, new words which have similar meanings or are morphologically or phonologically similar should not be taught at the same time. This information may allow administrators to predict which words need more attention than others. It could also affect expectations of the amount of learning that might occur with respect to specific words. Finally, instruction of one semantic meaning might be considered to avoid imperfect learning of a range of meanings.

6.0   CONCLUSION

In light of the findings of this study, it is clear that learning and teaching vocabulary is a complex process requiring careful coordination and consideration of many factors, including semantic analysis. Though the quantitative results should be regarded with skepticism in terms of deep knowledge, the fact remains that students were unable to produce one syntactically and semantically accurate sentence for nearly half of the 50 words. Perhaps the expectations that students would have deep knowledge of a majority of the words after apparent significant exposure and explicit teaching of the words were too high. Consideration needs to be given to processing time. Longer delayed posttests might reveal better learning, though more incidental exposure to the words could not be factored out.

In any event, there are several implications to be taken from this study. First of all, rich instruction and exposure to five words per week does not necessarily result in deep knowledge of those words. It is necessary to conduct deeper semantic analyses to determine the difficulty of the form-meaning mapping of individual words. Furthermore, it is not only overly ambitious but perhaps detrimental to attempt to facilitate knowledge of polysemes and homographs of new words at the same time. Learners are having difficulty producing and recognizing derivational forms of the lemmas, let alone trying to amass knowledge of several similar meanings of the new words they are learning. For robust, accurate learning to occur, one semantic meaning or concept of a word should be taught to limit imperfect knowledge and confusion. Learning

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outcomes might have been greater had only one semantic meaning been taught rather than several meanings. Third, both teachers and students need to be better informed about the goals of the curriculum. Research has shown that when teachers and learners are made to feel a part of the decision making, motivation is increased (see for example Barkhuizen, 1998). In terms of teacher involvement, ongoing training workshops should be implemented to keep teachers abreast of the latest research findings and pedagogical techniques. This would also serve to facilitate better intersubjectivity and coordination between the teachers and supervisors. Additionally, it should be pointed out that teachers are expected to know what it means to know a word, how to best facilitate learning of vocabulary, and how to intuit the students' perceptions of their language learning experience (Barkhuizen, 1998). This study has shown that teachers could benefit from more guidance on these points. As for the students, they should be explicitly informed about the importance of mastering the vocabulary from the AWL and the first 3 sub-lists of the BNC. In addition to explicit instruction of a selection of AWL words, students could be provided with the complete AWL, so that more ambitious students could learn vocabulary at their own pace.

Another point which future studies could examine is the role of the learner's attitude towards the language learning situation. Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) suggest that the students' attitude towards the teacher, the curriculum, classroom activities, and the classroom atmosphere can have an effect on learning outcomes. It was noted during the classroom observations that some teachers had created a culture of noticing, which in turn created a lively, warm atmosphere. Additionally, it was revealed during the student interviews that certain activities were more highly regarded than others. Future studies could examine the effects of student attitude towards particular environments or activities on learning outcomes.

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Additionally, future studies could examine student motivation in their engagement in the learning the AWL vocabulary interpreted according to Activity Theory (Donato & McCormick, 1994; Lantolf, 2000; Lientiev, 1978; Storch, 2004). In brief, through Activity Theory researchers can examine students' motives and goals in completing a task. These motives and goals may be different from those intended by the teacher or researcher. Previous research at the present institute (Juffs et al., 2008) found that students were using the CALL vocabulary learning program (REAP) in a way that was different from the goals of the researchers. Only by gaining an understanding of the goals and beliefs of students of different nationalities were the researchers able to interpret the findings. Armed with this understanding, activities which better suit the students' goals and learning styles could be employed. On the other hand, students showing a preference for one learning style could be shown the efficacy of other styles and be encouraged to use them. For instance, Juffs et al. (2008) found that Arabic learners are more inclined to utilize top-down strategies to learn vocabulary, while Asian students prefer bottom-up strategies. Both groups of learners should be made aware of the need and usefulness for both types of learning.

Concerning the motivation to complete a task, the students' own opinions should be considered. During the student interviews, several students pointed out that they were asked to write sentences with the words for several of their classes. They believed this repetition to be useless. Perhaps the problem was with the task itself. If the students were simply asked to write sentences with no other context or purpose, then perhaps they felt the task lacked a meaningful goal. On the other hand, if the students were asked to write a paragraph on a specific topic and to include 3 or 4 core words, the goal is more definable and this may lead to better motivation to

complete the task. Careful consideration must be given to the goal of a task in order to allow motivation to carry the task out.

One final point concerning motivation comes from a personal conversation with a student. The student noted that the words were being presented without a context and he believed this was not the best way to learn new words. This is quite an astute observation from a student worth considering. The students' first contact with the words is looking up their meanings in a dictionary and writing this down to turn in to their reading teachers. Following this, every Monday, the reading teachers went over form, meaning, and use and provided a few examples with the words. It very well may be that the students perceive no goal in this task. On the other hand, if the students first met these words within a text and they needed to understand the words in order to understand a particular passage or sentence, then they would have greater motivation to learn these words. Furthermore, it would help them notice a gap in their knowledge (Schmidt, 1990). Following this first encounter in a context, explicit instruction and activities could implemented. It must be noted, however, that there is no empirical data which confirms the need for context when learning new words. Current research through the PSLC is investigating the effectiveness of learning new words in an L2. Data is showing that both dictionaries and context are effective, but neither has proven to be more effective than the other in promoting learning. Therefore, before spending a great amount of time to provide meaningful contextualization for 50 words, further research should be conducted in this area. In the meantime, one suggestion to make this task more manageable would be to share the task of creating short texts incorporating the weekly 5 words. Teachers and supervisors could be responsible for 1 text over the course of the term.

While robust learning of all of the 50 words did not occur, there are some positive outcomes to come out of this study. Based on the findings, it appears that students are developing an increased awareness of the importance of expanding their lexical knowledge. As noted in the student interviews, students expressed the need to know more about a word than just its meaning. Students felt that learning word forms, collocations, and appropriateness of use were aspects of lexical knowledge that they wanted to be taught. From the teachers' perspectives, having a curriculum which brought all the skills together was something which had been lacking in the institute. It had often been expressed that words students learned in one class were not being used in other classes. As a result, teachers and students felt the students were not learning these words, as exposure to these words was limited. While this is speculation on the teachers' part, this perception perhaps had an effect on their purpose to teach those words. In other words, teachers may have felt their efforts on their own to be somewhat futile. This across-the-curriculum implementation of the 50 words was not only creating more of a "community" among the teachers and students, but also for some teachers, they felt there was a valid purpose behind the approach and they could see tangible results. For other teachers, however, the goals were not clearly defined, and this led to perhaps more skepticism of the curriculum.

Ongoing studies in the current institute are analyzing the production data of spoken and written texts. Researchers are finding that students are not employing a range of morphological forms, particularly derivational, of the core words (Juffs, 2009). While this is not an aspect that the researcher examined in any detail in the present study, evidence of attention to word form was discovered during classroom observations and during the student group interviews. Student 5 in particular gave an account of how her reading teacher taught inflectional forms of the core words, citing "consequent, consequently" (interview between students 4,5 and 6, 7/21/08). In

teaching vocabulary, we must be aware of the difficulty learners have not only producing other forms of a word, but even recognizing derivational forms of head words. This issue must be addressed when considering curriculum design.

Since this study was conducted, the ELI has taken steps towards improving the AWL component of the curriculum. Namely, teachers are now provided with a detailed list of activities to employ for each of the skills. In addition, there are signs of shared understanding between the teachers and the supervisors. It is recommended that the findings of this study be considered in adjusting the AWL list for future terms. Another area of interest which has arisen since the implementation of this AWL curriculum concerns its novelty. The researcher wonders whether the initial 'glamour' has worn off for both teachers and students. For instance, students who were mixed levels were repeating the same 50 words from one term to the next. From personal observation, the researcher noticed that some returning students had a sarcastic attitude towards repeating those same words. Others simply appeared disinterested. Future studies could analyze this issue of novelty, whether it does in fact wear off and how this might affect acquisition.

The present study provided valuable information about the process of vocabulary learning and teaching. Namely, it has revealed the challenges of implementing an explicit program of vocabulary instruction. It has exposed what learners do not know in addition to what they do know and how they know it. It has also shown how teaching techniques vary and how this might affect attitude and subsequently learning. It has also shown how individuals possess different definitions of key concepts, such as what guidance is or what it means to know a word. Finally, it has shown that teacher and student perceptions need to be taken into consideration, as perceptions may affect learning. These findings may be generalizable to other

IEP or ESL institutions in that vocabulary learning appears to be a longer process than some may

anticipate. Any program employing explicit teaching of vocabulary should ensure careful

coordination, good communication on all levels, and adjust expectations of how much deep

knowledge can be acquired during a term.

APPENDIX A

LEVEL 4 CORE AWL VOCABULARY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Week 2	achieve assess concept cooperate establish
Week 3	acquire initial obvious relevant target
Week 4	approximate demonstrate evaluate modify previous
Week 5	factor imply method resource valid
Week 6	affect category distinct evident perspective
Week 7	aspect feature potential range secure
Week 8	complex constant distribute equate indicate
Week 9	alternative correspond exclude incorporate rely (on)
Week 10	compatible consequent principle region restrict
Week 11	considerable illustrate impact perceive regulate

APPENDIX B

CURRICULUM NOTES

B.1   VOCABULARY IN THE ELI

The ELI is taking a more systematic approach to assisting the students in increasing their vocabulary. Every teacher in every skill at every level is a part of the endeavor.

For each level there is a core set of vocabulary consisting of 50 words.
This list is broken down to 5 words per week in weeks 2 -11.

Before the start of each class, have a student put the 5 words on the board in the same place each time so that you and they can be reminded of the core vocabulary. Having the vocabulary on the board is the minimum requirement. Please erase it after every class so that a student from the next class has to put up the vocabulary.

Please consult your curriculum notes and supervisor for more specific information on how vocabulary should be handled in each class.

Again, this is a part of each class in each skill.

The attached document has the core vocabulary by week for each level.

B.2   CURRICULUM NOTES SPEAKING 4

7.   VOCABULARY   Vocabulary   You are provided with the ELI Core Vocabulary list comprising 50 words. Starting in week 2, the class will work with 5 word per week through week 11.

- On Friday, give students the list of 5 words and have them look them up for Monday. Have a student put the words on the board. Don't permit that student to use the list but to be assisted by the other students.
- The goal is to have the students actually use the vocabulary. So, do, once or twice a week, a quick warm up activity from the list or something else where the students can practice with the vocabulary.
- Require that the students use one or two of the vocabulary every day in every writing activity.
    - NOTE: All ELI students in a level will be doing the same 5 words in the same week in every skill.

B.3   CURRICULUM NOTES LISTENING 4

- ***Vocabulary***

    You are provided with the ELI Core Vocabulary list comprising 50 words.

    Starting in week 2, the class will work with 5 word per week through week 11.

    - On Friday, give students the list of 5 words and have them look them up for Monday. Have a student put the words on the board. Don't permit that student to use the list but to be assisted by the other students.
    - The goal is to have the students actually use the vocabulary. So, do, once or twice a week, a quick dictation activity with original sentences using words from the list. Collect and grade, insist on accurate spelling, and incorporate this grade into the vocabulary part of the listening grade.
    - NOTE: All ELI students in a level will be doing the same 5 words in the same week in every skill.

- In listening, you may supplement this list with vocabulary from the various chapters but evaluate the vocabulary in terms of usefulness and frequency before selecting an item. For example, '**trinket'** is one of the vocabulary items in Chapter 1, but really, how often do we use this word? Not very often, It is much more important that the students on more productive vocabulary. Do not add more than 5 words to the list each week.

B.4   CURRICULUM NOTES READING 4

Vocabulary

Students will be expected to learn the vocabulary from the vocabulary lists and from the computer readings they do in the LMC.

Along with the readings in *Well Read* there are vocabulary strategy exercises. Be sure to do these with the class and/or assign them as homework. Keep encouraging students to use these strategies any chance you get.

Well Read does not include specific vocabulary lists. The curriculum supervisor will provide the lists for students to learn. Here is the procedure:

- You will be supplied with a list of required focus words for each week in the form of a chart.
- Students will have to complete the chart. They must use an ESL dictionary for the definitions.
- From the total list of words students will write an original sentence with each word that shows the meaning.
- Collect this homework, grade it, and go over problems in class.

- At the beginning choose some of the original sentences for the students to look at in groups or as a class. Let them discuss why the sentence fulfills the requirements and why it doesn't.
- Grading is as follows:
  - 1 point for each correct definition
    - 0-3 points for the original sentences (see rubric with the vocabulary information)

Vocabulary tests will be based on these word lists. **Be very strict with students who are absent the day of the test.** If a student is absent on the day of the test, she/he must make it up the next day. If the student is absent that day, she/he cannot make up the test unless he has made special arrangements with you.

B.5   CURRICULUM NOTES WRITING 4

Vocabulary   You are provided with the ELI Core Vocabulary list comprising 50 words. Starting in week 2, the class will work with 5 word per week through week 11.

- On Friday, give students the list of 5 words and have them look them up for Monday. Have a student put the words on the board. Don't permit that student to use the list but to be assisted by the other students.
- The goal is to have the students actually use the vocabulary. So, do, once or twice a week, a quick warm up activity from the list or something else where the students can practice with the vocabulary.
- Require that the students use one or two of the vocabulary every day in every writing activity.

B.6   CURRICULUM NOTES GRAMMAR 4

<mark>Vocabulary:</mark> One goal of the ELI is to increase vocabulary across the curriculum. Below are words from the 1000 & 2000 word list that have been identified as focus words for Level 3. Our minimum responsibility in grammar class is to have a S put the words on a corner of the board at the beginning of each class. Then, when possible & when it doesn't strain , please try to incorporate these words in your class - in your example sentences, tests or communicative activities.

Level 4 Core Vocabulary Across the Curriculum – Summer 2008 (2087)

Week 2	achieve assess concept cooperate establish
Week 3	acquire initial obvious relevant target
Week 4	approximate demonstrate evaluate modify previous
Week 5	factor imply method resource valid
Week 6	affect category distinct evident perspective
Week 7	aspect feature potential range secure
Week 8	complex constant distribute equate indicate
Week 9	alternative correspond exclude incorporate rely (on)
Week 10	compatible consequent principle region restrict
Week 11	considerable illustrate impact perceive regulate

VOCABULARY PRETEST/POSTTEST

Speaking 4   Name:_____

English Language Institute   Date: _____

University of Pittsburgh   Score: _____/100

Vocabulary Pretest Summer 2008 (2087)

Directions: Look at each word. Put an X in the "No" square if you do not know the meaning of this word. Put an X in the "Yes" square if you know the meaning. If you answered "Yes", then write an English synonym of this word on the first line. If you give a synonym, then on the second line write a good example sentence with this word to show that you know its meaning. DO NOT write a sentence if you do not give a synonym for this word.

Example:

Word	Meaning		
	no	yes	
option			Synonym: choice
	sentence		I had the option of going to college or finding a job.
rigid			Synonym:
	sentence		

Word	Meaning		
	no	yes	
achieve			Synonym:
	sentence		
acquire			Synonym:
	sentence		
affect			Synonym:
	sentence		
alternative			Synonym:
	sentence		
Word	Meaning		
	no	yes	
aspect			Synonym:
	sentence		
assess			Synonym:
	sentence		
category			Synonym:
	sentence		
compatible			Synonym:
	sentence		
complex			Synonym:
	sentence		
concept			Synonym:
	sentence		
consequent			Synonym:
	sentence		
considerable			Synonym:
	sentence		
constant			Synonym:
	sentence		
cooperate			Synonym:
	sentence		
correspond			Synonym:
	sentence		
demonstrate			Synonym:

	sentence	
distinct		Synonym:
	sentence	
distribute		Synonym:
	sentence	
establish		Synonym:
	sentence	
equate		Synonym:
	sentence	

Word	Meaning		
	no	yes	
evaluate			Synonym:
	sentence		
evident			Synonym:
	sentence		
exclude			Synonym:
	sentence		
factor			Synonym:
	sentence		
feature			Synonym:
	sentence		
illustrate			Synonym:
	sentence		
impact			Synonym:
	sentence		
imply			Synonym:
	sentence		
incorporate			Synonym:
	sentence		
indicate			Synonym:
	sentence		
initial			Synonym:
	sentence		
method			Synonym:
	sentence		
modify			Synonym:
	sentence		

obvious			Synonym:
	sentence		
perceive			Synonym:
	sentence		
perspective			Synonym:
	sentence		
Word	Meaning		
	no	yes	
potential			Synonym:
	sentence		
previous			Synonym:
	sentence		
principle			Synonym:
	sentence		
range			Synonym:
	sentence		
region			Synonym:
	sentence		
regulate			Synonym:
	sentence		
relevant			Synonym:
	sentence		
rely (on)			Synonym:
	sentence		
resource			Synonym:
	sentence		
restrict			Synonym:
	sentence		
secure			Synonym:
	sentence		
target			Synonym:
	sentence		
valid			Synonym:
	sentence		

APPENDIX D

STUDENT SURVEY AND QUESTIONNAIRES

D.1   STUDENT SURVEY

Student Information Survey

1. What country are you from?

2. What is your native language?

3. Which age group are you in?
    a. 18-25 years old
    b. 26-35
    c. 36-45
    d. 46-55
    e. Older than 55

4. How long have you learned English in a school, college or university?
a. I have never learned English in a school, college or university before.
b. 1-3 years
c. 4-6 years
d. 7-10 years
e. I have learned English in a school, college or university for more than 10 years.

5. Have you ever taken an English course where the focus was only on vocabulary? You may circle more than one answer if necessary.
   a. Yes- in my home country.
   b. Yes- here in the ELI.
   c. Yes- at another language school in an English-speaking country.
   d. No, never.

6. Circle all the level 4 classes you attend in the ELI:
speaking   listening   reading   writing   grammar

D.2   STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE 1

Student Questionnaire 1

For each of the statements, circle only one (1) answer.

1. Most vocabulary words in English are learned through reading.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree or Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

2. A dictionary should be used to learn the meanings of new English words.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree or Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

3. Memorizing lists of words is a useful way to learn words in English.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree or Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

4. Taking tests on new words is the best way to learn them.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree or Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

5. Using new vocabulary in writing assignments is important.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree or Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

6. Using new vocabulary when speaking to others is important.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree or Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

7. The ELI should focus more on vocabulary.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree or Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

8. The ELI should focus less on vocabulary.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree or Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

9. Increasing my English vocabulary will help me to read better.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree or Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

10. Reviewing new vocabulary in class is important.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree or Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

D.3   STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE 2

Student Questionnaire 2

Please answer each of the questions in the space provided. You may use the back of this sheet if you need to.

1. How do you learn new words in English?_____
_____

2. What is the best way to learn new words in English? _____

3. What is the worst way? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. How should vocabulary be taught to students in the ELI? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. Why do you think five words are written on the board in each class each week? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX E

TRANSCRIPTIONS OF GROUP INTERVIEWS (*VERBATIM*)

E.1   INTERVIEW BETWEEN STUDENTS 1, 2, AND 3

1: I think the purpose of writing all words on board every week is to emphasize, emphasize, um, that we should focus on those vocabularies and how to use them. That's it.

2: I think I agrees with him.

3: Yeah. And in addition I think that those five words are, uh, helpful, yeah, in the, in the subjects, in the different matters. And is helpful in the common life, yeah, and I think sometimes is very helpful, when you, because you are in a academic course, yeah, and some words , eh eh, are used in academic writtens, eh, in academic say, yeah, so, I think most of us, they are, they are universe, we have university studies and our vocabulary is, uh, yeah, is uh, is very close, eh, when we need to explain something, yeah, especially in academic environment, you know.

2: And I think maybe these five words will, how to say, show up again during this week in different courses like speaking, writing, reading, listening, writing. Yeah, I think, because I think in reading class like I had read something the key words this week the five vocabulary on

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our reading test. So, I think they might be some kind of remind or something, like these five vocabularies was we focus on these vocabularies.

2: I think it was on purpose, yeah because every week I can find some vocabularies.

1: I think it depends, it depends on frequence, frequence that we will [sic] in our usual life, uh, when we read, when we read, uh, or hear something, those words are most frequently show up. I think that's real, that's really why you are chose those words.

2: Yeah, I, I agrees with him but I think (laugh), sorry, because we have different level, so the vocabulary was different. So I think maybe they will separate like different levels, yeah, use the frequency or how useful, or, yeah, something like that. And do they choose that word.

3: Yeah, I, I think the same. I think it's, you know, you know, you use this words, uh, uh, in order to the students have, are familiar, you say, with academic words, yeah, common words in this context, uh, university context, uh, and sometimes, uh, uh, and sometimes is is too difficult to find a good meaning outside the class, yeah, for example achieve, assessment, uh, illustrate, demonstrate, yeah, it's not, if I ask to someone what's the meaning I thinks probably they don't say the correct meaning, you know?

1: Actually from my personal experience, almost all vocabularies wrotten on board, I mean before I came to take this semester, so [sic] more specific words I need to pay more attention to and that's my problem. I think in my opinion, the number, the total amount of those vocabulary is uh limited, is limited, is uh less, is less than we need, eh especially when we want to write a beautiful essays, essay, the vocabulary is not enough. And uh our our semester lasted thirteen weeks. Every week we have five vocabularies, that means we just have, eh, sixty- five vocabularies it's uh limited and besides this I think the most the most important thing for me is to

know the difference of some vocabulary like feature and aspec, aspect but actually I don't know the difference (that) question.

2: I think there is no useful vocabulary just the how often we use that like some words just R says if we ask somebody else the definition, maybe they probably, you know, have no idea like that. So it's not useful but some words maybe it's hard to use in the daily life or something because they might be uh academic words or something.

2: Oh sorry, I misunderstood.

1: I think they're they're all very important, they're all useful but they're limited.

2: Yeah yeah I think all the vocabulary is useful, sorry. Because uh when we do some like outside activities, I think we use some vocabulary word like during the talking or something, so I think it's, it's good.

3: Yes, I think all the words they are very helpful. For me, my perspective (all laugh), I like I like to learn uh words uh known Latin, known from Latin words, you know, for example assessment, achievement, yeah, yeah. Because if I if I read some uh vocabulary word uh that they have the same root, Latin root specific, I can imply the meaning, you know. So, uh, the, my, my opinion is uh is uh that we must have, uh, two kinds of vocabulary words, yeah: One for your academic life and another for uh you know the real the real life, yeah. So, we we we can we we can mix together yeah but uh uh yeah I think it's it's good for us because we are studying university it's good, yeah. But, uh, you know, in in our in social interaction, yeah, sometimes it's not helpful this this words, yeah. Okay, you can use, yeah, but another people no useful it [sic]. Maybe it's talking about the same thing but no use it this, this word. For example imply, yeah, I never say imply, I say I mean that, yeah, Okay, so I think we we can, or or you cause you

you are teacher, give us uh one list for for academic, yeah, another list for for usual ,common words, yeah.

1: That's a good, a good example. Just before just before you came to this class, you listened to your friends and I tried to find out some vocabularies we have learned in this semester but I failed. That means real vocabulary I can found in uh in a TV show "Friends", so I think our semester focus on academic vocab. That's different from usual life, okay, and uh from academic aspect I think it's it's limited from usual life actually what we what we meet cannot help us to have a to conversation freely with [sic] native speaker [sic].

2: Yeah, I think maybe you can provide some words more like like phrase or something that can help us like we talk to each other or maybe we watch some comedy and we can know like freak out or something like that. I think that will more help than you know just learn academic words. But I think its depends on different purpose like maybe level five they already learned a lot of words, so maybe they can focus more on academic words. But maybe different level maybe if the ELI can provide two kind of this like just freak out or [sic] the more daily life words or academic words separate. And we can use because yeah we can't use academic words in our daily lives. We can't go to a Starbucks and say uh I want to…

3: have many factors in this (laugh)

2: Yeah, it's weird, so, and when sometimes we communicate with other people we can't really how to say exactly know what they're talking about because they use some phrase or some short words that we can't know, we can't understand. So, maybe we can learn some like phrase or new words or something for new [sic].

2: Yes, I think probably in like reading, because we read we use website, some resources, so read some articles so we can find a new words in articles.

1: Sometimes I think, um, especially because my situation is a little bit special. My reading is in level five. My rest class is in level four. From my personal experience I think I have learned a lot of different vocabularies most of it from level five, not level four.

3: I have a different opinion about that. I think it's the vocabulary words are very, very useful, you know. The problem that I see is is that sometimes there are not a unity between vocabulary words and different subjects, you know. For example, in reading class, in writing class, reading class, in writing class, is is sometimes is difficult use the vocabulary words, you know. So, er, or speaking class or listening class, yeah, I think that uh you must work um, uh uh such as a team, you know, okay, take together all the subjects, yeah, and emphasize you use this vocabulary words, yeah, bec.. uh, and another another another idea is that okay when you when you are learning grammar uh or or or writing or speaking any anything, yeah, the teachers have different goals, yeah. My suggestion is that some goals they are sharing, you know, yeah. One word maybe can be used in the speech, in the grammar exercise for example or in speaking anything, uh, this vocabulary words all the time. Because if you use regularly all the time this word you can learn more fast, yeah, and is also is very difficult that you forget this word, yeah. If you if you learn new words in wr in reading for example, you you learn only for this moment, for this reading, yeah, because you need this meaning in, at the moment, yeah. You not use any more. But if you use the same word in grammar class, in reading class, in you know speaking you know listening class corre(ct)ly every time, oh, this word you maybe you never forget, you know.

1: For me the most effective way in learning vocabulary is to make sentence use these words, especially our writing teacher always ask us to write sentence on board and then modify it. So, with this kinds of training we know uh uh how to use this vocabulary in a sentence. I

think that's the best way to name it, to master it. Just uh on the other hand, just to know its meaning is meaning sometimes, cause you don't know how use it. Sometimes we are asked to think about the meaning of one word, but some words has different meanings. We just think of one, that's not enough [sic].

3: Dictations.

1: Dictations.

3: In the test also, because sometimes in the test you know the verb, know one vocabulary words, yeah. Where something grammar test, just only in free writing and the last part when you okay I can use the vocabulary words, but in the exercise you never use vocabulary words.

3: Playing games, yeah.

2: I think the correct, uh, the correct, the correct sentence…

1: To correct the sentence.

2: Like if you use the vocabulary like in speaking class our teacher provides some activity like he make like ten, five sentence use these five vocabulary, but some of them, most of them they have something wrong. Like position or something or the meaning is wrong. So, we can discuss with our partner and find find out a problem. I think this one is useful, because if we just make sentence by ourself, yeah we can submit to our teacher and we can got a correct answer but we, I think that the help is not very much because we just know in this situation and we don't know in other situation. Yeah, but if like the sentence we can discuss with our classmate or something, and teacher can also provide other thinking like this word should used behind something or combine with some words or conjunction or something, I think that will be more helpful.

1: It's a good way to emphasize the vocabularies in different classes especially they are they are the same. It's a good way. And eh we can try to speak, try to write, we try to make sentence, so I think it's a very good way. And this [sic] I have already mentioned is [sic].

3: I have a suggestion. Maybe, it is possible that level three take four or five, level four take five or six, level five six or seven words you know to increasing and to uh to improve more. Maybe not only the same five words every each level, yeah. Maybe level three one number, in next level more, a little more, one or two more, in next level one or two more.

2: I want more, but I think the the way we learn vocabulary should be different. If we just find out a definition and make sentence, I think it's not very helpful. Because yeah like, in English you have the same meaning but different words. Maybe you should put them together and we can know in which situation we use this one and in other hand, on the other hand we can use that one. I think that will be more helpful.

1: I think that if, just my suggestion. To some students maybe five vocabulary is too more too much, for other students it's too few, so maybe we can make a make a list for those ambitious students, okay, but the basical requirement is five vocabulary. If you have more energy, okay, you can, you can have twenty. That's my suggestion.

3: He's in level five …

1: For reading.

1: Actually, most of them I I know.

3: You see in class, but, uh, at the beginning of the class. You know, and some times giving some examples, they use vocabulary words words. But uh it's uh it's not natur natural, you know, especially when... For example, grammar you can in grammar don't don't use no one

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vocabulary words and in another textbooks don't use same words. And, so, yeah, I think if the teacher has has a good disposition to to use this word but the texts don't have.

2: I just talked before like speaking class we have some activities like warn up something we can review the vocabulary.

2: I think it's speaking.

3: Yeah, speaking.

1: Actually, I use the words mostly in writing.

3: Yeah, writing class.

1: I always try to use new vocabularies in I try to [sic] in my essay.

1: I don't know about my classmates' situation.

E.2   **INTERVIEW BETWEEN STUDENTS 4, 5, AND 6**

4: I heard that this is target word, so, we, I think we can use it more, more practical in the life, in my life.

5: Even though there are many words that we know, that we already know, but just I think the purpose of learning about these words is just take advantage of lots of things that, what we want to try to say. So, I think …(laugh)

6: I think uh learn this words maybe important thing is good for writing, good for reading, but for speaking I think we, we not often use these word.

4: Yeah. We every day, every day should considering more this words.

6: Yeah.

4: In common, common life.

4: Yeah. For example concept. Concept is in the conversational language everyday we didn't use this.

6: Yeah, we can't use this [sic]. Yeah. From this class, from this class we, it makes it possible to use this words, so this is very ideas good for students.

5: But I think in writing or in reading, maybe we can, we can use lots of them.

4: Yes. Actually, actually after this word, I learned this word and I heard, hear more clearly in the broadcast and in the newspaper and more I can more recog, I can more clearly understand the meaning in the sentence.

5: Yeah.

5: It's a good [sic] Not bad.

4: This word are used in common, in common, common point

6: Aspect.

4: common various things in used. So, so teach, when the teacher the teacher choose the use the target, target word I think they are very might be considered and thinking and thinking and then chose it, I think.

6: Yeah, actually I don't know why the teach, the ELI educational system choose, choose these words, but I think I can guess that uh just [sic] we can use these words very widespread, very widespread. Sometimes uh just personally these words are so very academically, just personally in my opinion.

5: Me too.

6: I want to, yeah I want to make a conversation it's not just, we can say small, small talk, not academically. Yeah.

5: For me, I think uh because I in both level five and level four, so they are different words. For example in level four, almost words I, I knew it, I understand it, but in level five I think almost words I can, I can, I just, I just um know their meaning but I can't use it. I don't know how to use it. So, if the word I feel difficulty, maybe I think it's useful for me. I didn't know it. But if some word I have know it, I have knew it, that is not useful for me.   For example target or some concept, that's … But I like level five word. Trigger or some, yeah trigger.

6: [sic]

5: Yeah yeah. It's useful.

6: Yeah, this question is just do we have to choose one word or two words that I think this is useful.

6: Yeah, there is a few words that I can remember. Yeah. Clarify. You know clarify means.

4: Yeah.

5: Yeah.

6: Because we can use uh when we have a dis, when we make a make a discussion. It's very useful I think. Perspective.

5: (laugh)

6: Every [sic] said in my perspective. (laugh)

5: (laugh) From my perspective.

6: This is very useful structure, structure [sic] I think.

4: I think assess. Assess is very, assess means very various meaning in. Even though I saw, even though I am walking around and I saw very frequently, I saw that in the hospital, hospital or ambulance, I saw that. And uh evaluate is more. Yes.

6: Of course, especially in reading class we got a lot of vocabularies uh. Yeah a lot of vocabularies. But I think these words uh is might be not useful than focus words, because we always, we always learned about the focus words so we can use everything that we want to try to say. But just other vocabulary just scat, scat, scattered? The teacher is just scatter in words, so we just, at the time we can, we could remember, but after the class, as time go by, yeah, know what I mean.

5: (laugh) Forgot.

6: (laugh) Yeah, this might have forgot.

4: I agree with him, because I think the the it is more target, target word is more useful from other word, because we learn the other word in the class, but this is just one time, and then if I am I didn't write down I forgot immediately. But target word is repeat and repeat during for one week, so I can remember more easily.

5: Yeah me too, because sometimes in the board, vocabulary in the board some teacher will push, push us to use it.

6: (laugh)

4: (laugh)

5: Yeah, but we could a grade. If you didn't use the word, you take, you did a bad grade. Yeah. So, if you use more, you will remember…

4: To get grade (laugh)

5: Yeah (laugh)

6: (laugh)

4: Yes. When when you speak, when you speak in front of my classmate uh they are sometimes very embarrassed and nervous, so they forgot the target, target word. But when we

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write essay, they are they are even though they forgot the target word and then revise when they are revising and editing, they use the target word. I think it is more useful to the writing.

6: In reading class. Sometimes we… I don't know what other classes is going on, but in my classroom, especially in write, reading class uh my reading teachers usually give assignment use uh focus focus words and making a sentence. And uh as using, as doing my homework I figure out how we can use these words, so which are useful to understand, what is it, what means and how can how I can how can I use these words.

6: Of course I write the sentences [sic] dictionary.

5: Me too. Uh whenever we make up uh new sentence use the list word, we more understand, know how to use it. Because sometimes the word he need, need a special, specific (), so when we, when we just know the word but we can't, we can't know how to use it, it's not useful. And the test, the test is very useful. (laugh)

6: (laugh)

4: (laugh) Yeah, because they, whether they like or not, they they should study the vocabulary meaning.

5: Writing.

4: Listening listening class, we, after during three weeks or four weeks we, we are should, we should test taking test, take test.

5: Reading and listening. Reading.

4: Reading, yes, reading also.

5: In reading we uh (gap)

4: Rank uh (gap). Yes.

4: Listening also do that. Listening the same. Yeah.

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6: And especially while we are taking the test during the speaking class uh the teacher encourage the students to use use these focus words. I never take advantage of these words.

6: Yeah, just just give a speech in front of the people I got too [sic]. I get nervous

6: Yeah. It's hard for the students to always use these words.

4: And when we start when we start the classroom, the class, the teacher teacher repeat loudly and we follow the pronunciation and I think the most correctly to hear is more useful because in my ear remaining the sound.

4: I think they should divide, divide the different the different word between class class level, because low level is more common common word but very easy, and level four or five is academical word but very useful word.

6: I think if the same classmates are give the same focus words, I think it can it can make it possible to easier to share with the same words we can talk to each other using these words. I think this is a better way to the difficulty of the words is in portion to the level, it pass on to the levels. We can learn about the words different. I think this is very good system.

4: Yeah (laugh).

5: I think lots of advantage, but I I don't think (laugh) any disadvantage because it pushes us to remember to use it. But I but I have a suggestion, maybe we can more word. Five is too little (laugh).

5: Ten, because if you have lots of vocabulary you can use more.

4: If the if the teacher give the vocabulary each classroom different, after after the semester they are the students very depressed

6: (laugh)

5: (laugh)

4: about very big expansion amount of amount of word. So, they will they will give up. Yeah, very easily if the word is more expansion.

6: If if if the number of the words we are going to learn is more, if we if we if we do if we do maybe it might very or give us a chance to take advantage of these words. Just five words and we can we can learn to how to like adjective form and a lot of form. There are a lot of forms in one words. So, yeah.

5: Yeah, because in my reading and writing classes the teacher he will give, not not not these five, he have sometimes some family group

6: Ah.

5: …consider or something that [sic] adjective [sic], so you can learn a lot of same family. You can remember [sic]

4: Or different same meaning but different part of speech.

5: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Then he he will told us how to use this, yeah. Consequent, consequently or something like this.

4: Yeah.

6:   And also we all learn about like a synonym like or British words or something like that.

6: Depends on teachers (laugh).

5: (laugh)

4: (laugh)

6: Maybe if I mention the teachers, the teachers (laugh) might be disappointed.

5: Grammar. I think grammar. Yeah, grammar we didn't use the vocabulary.

6: Didn't.

4: But grammar especially in in in case of our grammar class, we use another another activity, we do another activity, we do another (card) which is which study teacher prepared.

5: Yeah, but I didn't use the focus vocabulary. Sometimes I, the last, the first time I saw the vocabulary in writing class. Right?

4: Yeah.

5: Reading, reading, because the article, all of article we read in the computer

6: Um hum.

5: we need lots of vocabulary. So when we need a test, (laugh) make up sentence then uh we need read, yeah. I think more of vocabulary in reading class.

6: Yeah.

E.3   INTERVIEW BETWEEN STUDENTS 7, 8, AND 9

7: I think because it can remind us. We can use that in the class. Yeah. Teacher can teach us how to pronounce. Just remind us, use this. Yeah.

8: To just restate what she says, what she said now. To be familiar with these uh words.

9: It's the same. Remind, to remind and yeah we can use that every class.

9: Because we can use that vocabulary in normal life and I think that's very practical. And I I saw that vocabulary in the textbook a lot. So, that's why.

7: Yeah.

8:   Further, use word that we can face encounter in our ordinary normal life. However, I have an objection. First of all, when we first came to the ELI, we were subjected to do a

Michigan exam and vocabulary was a part of that exam. When I was doing the exam, I saw the vocabulary, those vocabulary was a little bit tough and is higher level than the level we are in. When, when I saw that, I said Okay, and they placed me in level four, I said Okay that level four must have strong or high vocabulary as I saw in the exam. But when I, now when I'm doing level four I found that those vocabulary are not related with those vocabulary that I saw in the Michigan exam.

9: I think textbook.

7: Yeah, I think they pick from the textbook.

8: But in the textbook as well they are some stronger vocabulary than those [sic] I think it is in my experience or [sic] especially the case, all the vocabulary I faced in the level four are familiar with them before I came to the ELI. And now if I do the Michigan exam again, I can't guarantee let's say eighty percent that I did the same mark, so there's no purpose. Okay, especially I'm talking now about vocabulary, but in general in all, grammar, vocabulary, reading, yeah. Listening and speaking, yes, I think there is some progress because now, here, I'm talking to and listening and talk to a native speaker, teachers. But the vocabulary, grammar, reading, no progress. You specific, you are, you're talking about we need to talk about vocabulary and vocabulary no progress.

7: I think they are from reading article, the online reading article. The people are reading first and the it's (trail) of vocabulary.

7: Yeah, yeah, because I don't think the article will have a lot of vocabulary, the same vocabulary. Yeah, so I think they pick that from the reading. And the vocabulary most of, vocabulary from reading. Not grammar or listening. I think most of them from reading. Yaeh.

7: Yeah. I think most of them are useful.

8: Honestly, none of them are new for me. So, I know all of them are useful. All of them we are we must everybody everyone who study in English must face those words. But for me, none of them are new.

7: Obviously.

9: Um.

7: Previous.

9: Previous.

7: Yeah, but I think most of vocabulary I learned before, but I don't use that a lot. But now I can when we talk we will try to use the vocabulary. But most of them, I learned that before.

8: As, as I taught before, as I was taught, that there are some positive vocabulary or active vocabulary [sic] and uh passive vocabulary. Active that we can, we know the meaning and how to use it. But passive vocabulary that we know we know the meaning of vocabulary but we don't know how to use it.

8: Uh, I usually, I usually do in reading.

9: I think the same. Because we can use all vocabulary in normal lives, so. I try to use vocabulary I learned in the ELI or just at home or from the news or TV or something like that. Yeah.

7: But I think ELI vocabulary are more useful, because we don't know the, how to use the vocabulary from textbook we read by ourself. We don't know how to use. So maybe we use that but it's a mistake or something. So but we learn the vocabulary from the ELI is more, we practice a lot, so it's more useful.

8: I usually, I usually write the new vocabulary, especially that I face in the reading, in the private paper, and look for definition for these words instead of looking for the five words that we use a lot. And sometimes I write definition that I know from my mind not from the dictionary for the vocabulary from work.

8: From my point of view, the most useful of this choice uh first to know the definition and the family for this words. If we, for example, if you get the noun, you must know the verb, adjective, adverb and then pronunciation and how to use it. That's the most useful ways. I use so even myself when I study. When I get the verb, I try to look what's the noun for this one, the adjective, verb and how to use them differently in different part of speech.

9: And I think writing, uh we practice writing using vocabulary is helpful for me. Because even though we know that vocabulary, if I, if we use that incorrectly, it's no use. So, I think it was helpful.

7: And I think in using speech. Yeah, writing speech is good and know the synonym, so that's why I can use different word.

8: Yeah.

9: Yes, I.

7: Yeah.

9: We practice together a lot.

7: We will try.

9: We always try to use them.

9: Yeah.

9: Yes, it helpful yes.

8: It helps, tests. Yes.

9: I think playing game is less useful (laugh).

7: (laugh)

7: I think it will help us to memorize and use that a lot. But sometimes different classes have the same activity, so we do that two times or three times, just make a sentence. So I think it's waste of time, yeah.

8: I agree with her. That's the only disadvantages, however the advantages weigh more than the disadvantages. So, repeat the meaning and definition of the words are useful, or just waste of time. It's the only disadvantage [sic].

8: Sometimes we spend more than three minutes for definitions, three minutes for each class. That means fifteen minutes overall for just five words. And however if each teacher goes straight on these vocabulary in his specific for in his uh part of his topic like writing goes straight to these vocabulary and how to write them and how to attempt in essay or something. And the reading how to know the definition from the whole sentence. As you know there some English words has meaning more than one meaning, so how can how do you know this vocabulary has the meaning of this one and not the other one.

9: Because every native speaker use same word but differently, and so it was helpful.

8: And just I want to add, I want to point out something about those vocabulary. Uh some vocabulary uh noun and verb has the same thing. Same uh same spelling uh, but different pronunciation like impact, for example.

9: Um.

8: So I think the listening one listening teacher should demonstrate how to differentiate which one was it we hear. Is it noun or is it verb? However we can know is it noun or verb from the context itself, but easy from the pronunciation.

7: Yeah.

8: Not usually.

7: Usually.

9: Yeah, usually.

7: Especially listening.

9: Yeah. Especially listening.

8: Not particularly.

8: Especially when we have conversation with each other away from the teacher, we rarely use them.

9: Speaking class.

7: Speaking class sometimes we do.

8: Speaking class, yeah, listening class, yes, but out of the class.

8: Yeah. Because the teachers are, teachers force us to use them. And sometimes some of us try to use them just for the show off.

7: I think listening.

8: Reading and speaking.

8: We spend usually three minutes. But uh effective. Use the words, to know the part, which part of speech and how to use them and families too and how to pronounce.

7: Listening.

9: Listening.

7: And I think reading article, article will help us to understand. But our teacher didn't focus on vocabulary when we read article. Yeah.

8: I think it depends on teachers, because we are in different classes, so I say reading, they say other.

8: Add more words.

8: Because just five words a week, it's less than we expect.

7: Yeah, I think five is Okay because we can use that. If too many we can hardly remember every vocabulary. So five is good, but if ten is too much, too many I think.

9: No, I think six words (laugh).

7: (laugh) Just five to ten. Yeah. The range is five to ten.

9: Five to ten. Yeah.

GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think the five words are written on the board in all of your classes every week?

2. Why do you think the ELI chose **these** words?

3. What is one or two focus words (those words you see written on the board every day) that you learned this term that you think are useful? Why?

4. Are you learning other vocabulary in your classes? Is it more or less useful than the focus words that you are learning?

5. Which classroom activities are most effective in helping you learn the focus words? Which ones are least effective? For example:

    a) Writing words on the board / spelling the words

    b) Taking tests / dictations

    c) Writing sentences

    d) Using the words in speeches

e) Learning collocations

f) Using the words in classroom discussions

g) Reading the focus words in texts (ELI news, REAP etc)

h) Learning the pronunciation / stress

i) Thinking of synonyms for the focus words

j) Asking your teacher the meaning

k) Doing crossword puzzles

l) Playing games – guess the word

m) Gap-fill exercises

n) Replacing a definition with a focus word

6. What are some advantages and disadvantages of learning the same five words in all your classes every week?

a) Do you think 5 words are too many, too few, just enough?

b) Are you split level? If so, how do you feel about having two sets of focus words to learn every week?

7. Do you notice your teacher or classmates using the focus words?

8. Which class do you notice the words in the most?

APPENDIX G

TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How many years of experience do you have as an ESL instructor?

2. Where did you get your training as an ESL instructor?

3. What kind of experience and training have you had specific to vocabulary instruction?

4. On average, how much class-time do you spend on the core AWL vocabulary each week? Less than 30 minutes, 30 to 60 minutes, 60 to 90 minutes, more than 90 minutes?

5. What kind of guidance do you receive specific to teaching the core AWL vocabulary?

6. What is one positive experience you had teaching the core words this term?

7. What is one negative experience you had teaching the core words this term?

8. What kinds of activities did you use to teach the core words?

   a) In your opinion, which ones were most successful?

   b) In your opinion, which ones were least successful?

9. In your estimation, how did the students react to the implementation of core vocabulary in the curriculum?

10. What is your perception of the effectiveness of the implementation of core vocabulary across the curriculum here?

11. What changes (if any) would you make to the ELI's implementation of AWL vocabulary

across the curriculum?

AWL PRETEST AND POSTEST RESULTS OF FULL-TIME LEVEL 4 STUDENTS

AWL Core Word	Number of Students Pretest/19	Number of Students Posttest/19
achieve	13	13
acquire	9	14
affect	7	11
alternative	9	16
aspect	1	5
assess	4	14
category	1	12
compatible	0	5
complex	2	15
concept	4	11
consequent	1	6
considerable	1	6
constant	0	11
cooperate	10	12
correspond	0	3
demonstrate	2	14
distinct	1	11
distribute	3	13
establish	10	8
equate	0	6
evaluate	6	11
evident	3	10
exclude	6	12
factor	3	6
feature	3	10
illustrate	6	12
impact	1	9

imply	0	9
incorporate	1	5
indicate	3	8
initial	5	7
method	13	15
modify	6	13
obvious	12	13
perceive	0	6
perspective	0	12
potential	1	9
previous	5	10
principle	1	7
range	2	7
region	8	14
regulate	1	8
relevant	2	4
rely (on)	7	15
resource	2	9
restrict	2	7
secure	8	13
target	15	11
valid	4	4

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