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The Effectiveness of Using Crossword Puzzles as a Teaching Strategy to Enhance Students' Knowledge of Vocabulary.
The Case of 1st Year Students, University of Constantine

Board of Examiners

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Dedication

In the Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful, All the Praise is due to God alone, the Sustainer of all the worlds

Firstly and foremost, I would give my undeniable and unforgettable thanks to the most graceful and most compassionate the almightily (Allah), that has provided me with a lot of blessing that can never be counted.

I dedicate this work:

To the only person with the exception of God nothing is more important: to you, Mum.

To my father who has helped me to make my dream a reality. Thank you Dad.

To my dear husband who has helped and encouraged me to follow my studies, I am forever grateful.

To all my extended family, particularly my sisters who have supported me, who shared the hard moments with me and encouraged me to go further.

To all my brothers and their sweetest first candles that have enlightened my family; Loey, Alaa, Moatez, Lamiss, and Mohamed.

Acknowledgements

"People with an impoverished vocabulary live an impoverished emotional life; people with rich vocabularies have a multihued palette of colors with which to paint their experience, not only for others, but for themselves as well". (Robbins, 1991. Quoted in Yonek. 2008: 1).

Abstract

This research work aim at investigating the effectiveness of using crossword puzzles as a teaching technique to enhance first year English students' knowledge of new foreign vocabulary items. In this respect, the learner-centered method can be applied to our study in which the learner can practice crossword puzzles to improve their knowledge of vocabulary and the teacher is merely a guide. As a first step we put forward one main hypothesis, if students learn vocabulary through crossword puzzles, their level of achievements in writing in terms of lexical items' usage, exact spelling, and memorization will increase. We believe that vocabulary is something that can be achieved through practice. Students do not wait for their teachers to teach them new words. To achieve such an aim, we relied on two means of research: the teachers' questionnaire and the test. First, the teachers' questionnaire was to collect data about the techniques they use when teaching new words in their lessons and their concerns about the affective side of the learner, whether they incorporate crossword puzzles as a teaching strategy to teach new vocabulary items in their classes. Second, for our study, a pre-test and a post-test were organized. In the pre-test, students were supposed to fill-in themed crossword puzzles with the appropriate word (down and cross). The main aim is to teach students new words, and to see the extent to which students are able to decipher the meaning of the clues, as well as the degree of students' familiarity with them. In the post-test, students were asked to write a paragraph about the puzzles' theme. In this respect, the goal intended is to see the extent to which students are able to make a link between the two activities. It is also to measure the degree of influence of using crossword puzzles for the acquisition of new words. The result showed that the learners proved to have learnt nearly all the unfamiliar vocabulary items that they have dealt with in the pre-test (puzzles). They have also manifested a great enthusiasm in this type of material while teaching them. Accordingly, it is recommended that puzzles should be incorporated in teaching materials.

List of Abbreviations

BD	Bilingual Dictionary
CLT	Communicative Language Learning
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
FL	Foreign Language
GTM	Grammar Translation Method
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
MD	Monolingual Dictionary
N	Number of the Subjects (Participants)
SMD	Standard Monolingual Dictionary
TEL	Teaching English Language
TL	Target Language
TTT	Teaching Talking Time
Q	Question

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General Introduction

General Introduction

1. Statement of the Problem

Vocabulary is a vital part of language that students need to master in order to communicate effectively. EFL students, however, face serious problems regarding this aspect of language. The reason behind this is probably due to the techniques teachers use to teach vocabulary, because the improvement of students' knowledge of vocabulary depends on the teachers' strategy about how to transfer their knowledge to the students and the methods they use are very important. Hence, teachers should pay attention to the techniques for teaching vocabulary and decide which best suits students.

In recent years, there has been a shift from traditional language teaching, in which the teacher plays the central role in class, to the learner-centred instruction in which the learner is responsible for the learning process, and the teacher is merely a guide and facilitator. Recent developments in educational psychology (Nunan, 1992; Slavin, 2003) and recent teaching methods like communicative language teaching emphasized as learner-centred instruction has emerged in opposition to the more traditional method. This latter is still the most common in teaching contexts. Teachers usually use this method in which "students are sitting in rows listening to a teacher who stands in front of them" (Harmer, 2005: 114). However, this method was criticized for a number of reasons. At the affective level, students get bored, and lose motivation for learning. Furthermore, their academic achievements may not be high. Scrivener (1994) gives a criticism to this type of instruction on the basis of his own learning and observation, relating that "explanation, especially long ones tend to leave me cold: I get bored; I switch off". (p. 14). He considers involvement in a task, experimenting with it, and practicing it, is the best way of learning. Thus, to well teach vocabulary, teachers should create effective and various teaching techniques to increase motivation in their students. The

appropriateness of making or using such teaching methods -to be detailed out later- can pursue the achievement of education purposes. The variety of teaching techniques or methods will help learners feel amused while learning. Furthermore, students do probably practise the language inside and outside classroom.

Considering that, this research attempts to bring about novelty by teaching vocabulary through a language game, the crossword puzzles -of interest in the present research- because the students are fond of games. Dobson (1981) states that "a game is a wonderful way to break the routine of classroom drill by providing **r**elaxation while remaining within the framework of language learning".

In this study, we will discuss the crossword puzzles. We will try to demonstrate whether crossword puzzles can be used to improve vocabulary knowledge of the first year English students at the department of languages at the University of Constantine.

2. Aims of the Study

The present research has the ambition to highlight the role of using crossword puzzles as a teaching strategy to enhance students' knowledge of vocabulary. Our aim is not to suggest a pleasant way of passing time. Time passes all too quickly in most classes. However, language teachers are responsible for creating conditions which encourage students for promoting their knowledge of vocabulary. Thus, the main aim of this investigation is to establish a positive correlation between teaching vocabulary through crossword puzzles and the students' academic achievements in writing. We believe that vocabulary knowledge is one of the most important components of performance in a foreign language, especially in an academic setting.

3. Research Questions and Hypothesis

In our research, we will try to answer the following questions and other ones.

a. Would crossword puzzles really help to enhance students' knowledge of vocabulary?

b. Could students' difficulties be lessened when they use crossword puzzles to acquire vocabulary?

c. Could crossword puzzles make students gain a balance between entertainment and extremely effective learning of new vocabulary items?

d. Could crossword puzzles really improve students' familiarity of new words with their spelling skills?

In the light of the above raised questions, we hypothesize that **if students learn vocabulary through crossword puzzles, their level of achievements in writing in terms of lexical items' usage, exact spelling and memorization will increase.**

4. Means of Research

In order to test our hypothesis and to obtain the information required from our subjects and to meet the objectives of our study, we will use a formal questionnaire for teachers and a test for students.

First, a formal questionnaire will be addressed to teachers of Written Expression considering their experience and perception in teaching. Second, for our research, we will use a pre-test and a post-test. For the former, students are supposed to fill the crossword puzzle. The three crossword puzzles embody one specific register which is "stages of life". For the latter, students will be asked to write a paragraph in which they are supposed to use the vocabulary used in the pre-test. In this respect, the goal intended is to see the extent to which

students are able to make a link between the two activities. It is also to measure the degree of influence of using crossword puzzles for the acquisition of new words.

5. Population and Sampling

A sample is randomly taken from freshmen English students at the department of languages at university of Constantine. We believe that first year students are not aware enough about the word meaning in context or even the intended meaning (the pragmatic meaning) because they are only dealing with micro-linguistics that is the study of language as a system for itself within itself (pure linguistics). They have not yet dealt with macro-linguistics that is the study of language beyond language (pragmatics). This is why we opted to work on freshmen English students.

The selected sample is chosen from the first 20 students from the list of Gr 08. The students in the class will be all of mixed ages, gender, and abilities. Many of these students plan on having a B.A in English and wish to graduate from university with adequate vocabulary and to perform well later on in their professional life.

6. Structure of the Study

Our research is divided into two main parts; a descriptive part which includes two main chapters about the theory on and about our subject, and empirical part which includes one chapter; the situation analysis of the questionnaire as well as the students' test.

Chapter One will present vocabulary; its definition, its importance, its influence on successful writing, steps of teaching and learning vocabulary, and some strategies and techniques for teaching vocabulary.

In chapter Two, we will shed light on a comparison between the traditional language teaching and the learner-centred instruction, then, we will try to give a clear picture about "crossword puzzle"; its definition, history, types of grids, its variant types. Then, the role it

plays in enhancing students' knowledge of vocabulary. In other words, we aim at presenting the educational value of crossword puzzles.

Chapter Three will gather data concerning with the analysis of the teachers' questionnaire as well as the students' pre-test and post-test. The data obtained will be tabulated, analysed, and interpreted.

Chapter One: Vocabulary Acquisition

Chapter One: Vocabulary Acquisition

Introduction

In this part of research, we will discuss the place of vocabulary in learning foreign languages. Many studies have been carried out on syntax and phonology, as well as recently much more attention and interest has been given to lexis, this is why we have chosen it as a field of interest. We believe that learning a language goes hand in hand with knowing its vocabulary, its words. Teachers and learners noticed the fact that to effectively use a language, knowledge of vocabulary is necessary. A strong vocabulary gives the learner the right words to use at the right time.

Nowadays, teaching vocabulary has such an importance in EFL classrooms, and should therefore be part of a syllabus and taught on regular basis. A view that meets Lewis, M. (1993) who argues that vocabulary should be at the centre of language teaching because language consists of "grammaticalized lexis not lexicalized grammar'' (quoted in Laraba, 2007: 125).

1. Definition

It is taken for granted that it is impossible to learn a language without knowing its vocabulary, its words. Vocabulary is defined in Oxford Dictionary (2007) as the total number of words that make up a language. Longman Dictionary (1995) defines vocabulary as all the words that someone knows, learns or uses. It is vocabulary that leads learners to express themselves clearly and appropriately in a wide range of situations. Hatch and Brown (1995) consider vocabulary as a list or set of words of a particular language that individual speakers of a language might use.

According to Lehrer (2000: 4-15/16), the term vocabulary refers to the knowledge of words and their meanings. However, this definition is too limited because words come into oral and print forms. Oral vocabulary refers to the words we recognize and use in listening and speaking. Print vocabulary includes those words that we recognize in reading and writing. Word knowledge also comes into two kinds: receptive and productive. By receptive vocabulary, we mean the words that we recognize when we hear or see them. Productive vocabulary includes the words that we use when we speak or write. Thus, according to Lehrer (2000), the term vocabulary is defined as the knowledge of words and their meaning in both oral and print language in receptive and productive forms.

2. The Importance of Vocabulary

Foreign language learners are always in need to learn and enlarge their vocabulary. This is supported by Wilkins (1972) who states that "without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed" (quoted in Thornbury, 2002: 13). Beginners often manage to communicate in English using individual words, and they can most of the time covey meaning without necessarily having acquired grammar. This is the evidence that in learning a language, grammar is not sufficient and, thus, more importance has to be given to vocabulary.

Wilkins (1972) in his advice also states that "if you spend most of your time studying grammar, your English will not improve very much, you will see most improvement if you learn more words and expressions. You can say very little with grammar, but you can say almost anything with words". A view that meets Krashen's view (1993) who postulates that vocabulary is so crucial because usually when learners go abroad, they face some problems to communicate with the native speakers of the host country to convey their messages. This can be done through using only a word rather than grammar rules. "When students travel, they don't carry grammar books, they carry dictionaries". (Quoted in www.auburn.edu). Therefore,

an ability to use grammatical structure does not have any potential for expressing meaning unless words are used.

3. The Knowledge of Vocabulary Influences Successful Writing

Words are unique and interesting; a limited vocabulary keeps the learners from expressing their real thoughts, whereas, a robust vocabulary gives them the right words to use at the right time. As it is stated by Fletcher (1993) "a rich vocabulary allows a writer to get a richness of thought onto paper. However, the writer's real pleasure comes not from using an exotic word but from using the right word". (p. 23). We believe that "writing is an expressive process". (Duin. Graves, 1987. Quoted in Yonek, 2008). Thus, having an adequate vocabulary facilitates the ability to write effectively since "words are considered as the building blocks of language, the units of meaning from which larger structures such as sentences, paragraphs and whole texts are formed". (Read, 2000: 1). The depth of student's vocabulary has a direct influence upon the descriptiveness, accuracy and quality of his writing. It has been suggested that: "writing that contains more mature vocabulary has been consistently viewed as better quality than writing with less mature vocabulary. (Duin. Graves, 1987. Quoted in Yonek, 2008: 24). Corona, Spangenberger, and Venet (1998) state that "at any level, written communication is more effective when a depth of vocabulary and command of language is evident". (p. 26). Sometimes the ability to write effectively depends on having an adequate vocabulary even more than does the ability to read. During the reading process, students have learned to decode words; many unfamiliar words can be read and pronounced by them and their meaning can be demonstrated simply by examining the context in which those words are used. However, it is just the opposite in the writing process. As Ediger (1999) notes "variety in selecting words to convey accurate meanings is necessary in speaking and writing, the outgoes of the language arts''. (p. 1). Thus, the writer must be able to spontaneously use

words that are known not only by sight, but that are understood well enough to use them correctly and appropriately. Mayher and Brause (1986) stated that "writing is dependent upon the ability to draw upon words to describe an event". (Quoted in Corona, Spangenberger, and Venet. 1989: 18). Vocabulary is considered as the core of any language. Thus, steps for teaching and learning vocabulary have to be highlighted.

4. Steps of Teaching and Learning Vocabulary

4.1 Steps of Teaching Vocabulary

In designing a vocabulary course, Nation and Newton (In Coady. J, Huckin. 1997: 239) proposed that the teachers must take into consideration not only the situation in which the course occurs but also how vocabulary should be selected for teaching. They also considered how it should be sequenced and how it should be presented.

4.1.1 Selection

Early researchers looked for the best vocabulary that can result to a best learning. They provided lists of the most widely used words in early stages of learning (they estimated 2000 words). In addition, they took as a second variable of vocabulary selection the range of words used in spoken language. However, frequency and range are not the only two factors; there are also other factors such as combination, definition and substitution of words. Some of these factors were used by West (1953) as frequency, range and replace ability in his book General Service List of English Words that consists of 2000 words. The most appropriate learning strategy here is "selective attention" i.e. the teacher should draw the learners' attention to the target word and he should ensure that he notices it. The teacher can do this through underlining, bold-facing and circling. (In Coady. J, Huckin. T .1997: 239).

4.1.2 Sequencing

There are two main sequences in which teaching vocabulary is based on. The first one is levels of vocabulary; the second one is grouping and ordering of words. The table below is adapted from Nation (1990) shows the division of levels of vocabulary.

Levels	Number of Words	Text Coverage %
High frequency words	2 000	87
Academic vocabulary	800	08
Technical vocabulary	2 000	03
Low frequency words	123.200	02
Total	128 000	100

Table 1: Levels of Acquiring Vocabulary (In Coady. J, Huckin. T. 1997: 239)

The use of English is based on 2000 high frequent words. When the learner acquires these words, he moves to the next level which is academic vocabulary. In other words, if the learner wants to continue his studies, she/he must learn some academic words. However, low-frequency words cannot be read neither in academic texts nor in novels. They are learnt for the use of English for social purposes. Technical vocabulary has a very narrow range because each field has its own technical words. For instance, law, medicine, chemistry and mathematics have different vocabularies and terminologies.

Grouping items within a lesson is not established through learning items together that are synonyms, opposites, etc. It is easier to learn unrelated words than learning items that are near synonyms or opposites. For example, the learners mixed the forms and meanings of words such as "hot" with the word "cold" if they have been taught at the same time. After the lesson, learners cannot be sure if "hot" means "hot" or "cold".

Ordering is very important in teaching a foreign language. Different items should not be taught separately. In other words, there must be a kind of combination between these words for the sake of producing meaningful sentences. (To follow a specific order).

4.1.3 Presentation

Vocabulary lists can be used to make it easier for the teacher and learner. High-frequency vocabulary is taught through vocabulary exercise or individual learning because this type of vocabulary includes few numbers of frequent words. However, low-frequency words are many in number. There are words that do not deserve the teachers' attention. They are rather guessed from the context. As Kelly (1990) has pointed out, guessing is not a substitute for systematic learning of lexis (adapted by Hatch. E, Brown. C, 1995: 240). On the one hand, the teachers' main concern will be the effective development of some strategies. On the other hand, the learners will be mainly concerned with the particular piece of learning with the help of the strategies. There are several ways or general principles for dealing with high and low frequency vocabulary. They can be put into practice directly or indirectly. Both of these approaches require reflection and planning on the part of the teacher.

In a direct approach to vocabulary teaching there will certainly be explicit vocabulary exercises, which may include word-building ones such as crossword puzzles activities –of interest in the present research-, matching words with various types of definition, studying vocabulary in context, split information activities focusing on vocabulary. In an indirect approach to vocabulary teaching, the teachers' concern for vocabulary learning will not be so explicit. Vocabulary learning goes hand in hand with communicative activities like listening to stories, information gap activities, although vocabulary will not be the main goal of the activities.

4.2. Steps of Learning Vocabulary

Since "without grammar very little can be conveyed and without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed" (Quoted in Thornbury, 2002: 13), language teachers must be more interested in how learners should acquire new vocabulary. Consequently, learners should be

provided with a large range of vocabulary which enables them to discuss any topic. This can be done through five steps that seem essential for learners in their vocabulary learning. These five steps are suggested by Brown and Payne, as it is shown in figure 1. (Cited in Hatch. E, Brown. C, 1995: 267).

4.2.1. Encountering New Words

The first main step for vocabulary learning is encountering new words; which means finding sources forwards. The learners' task is thus to read books, magazines, newspapers, stories, or to practise crossword puzzles –of interest in the present research- to listen to radio and television, or even to songs. There are some factors which control the learners' acquisition of words. Interests and motivation lead learners to focus on learning some words rather than others. For instance, boys' interests are more directed to learn names of vehicles, wild animals; girls are much more interested in learning items which are related to fashion and jewellery, etc. In addition to interest, learners' needs may take a difference in learning new words. They always desire to acquire words which satisfy their needs. Another important factor is the work with interactive video materials. These words seem to be learnt more quickly than others in written form or exercises. Frequent words used by the teacher many times may increase the learners' acquisition.

Similarly, single words are learnt easily in their appropriate context. This way of learning is called -accidental learning- where the vocabulary can be learnt unintentionally. It is the result of unplanned activities such as dialogues, reading passages and other materials without direct inclusion of memorization, that is to say, learning some vocabulary items incidentally. The learner tries to guess the meaning of new words through the clues available in the text. According to Schmidt (2000), incidental vocabulary learning is learning through exposure when one's attention is focused on the use of language rather than on learning itself.

However, learning vocabulary through crossword puzzles is an intentional learning in which the attention of the learner is directly focused on learning new words.

4.2.2. Getting the Word Form

The second essential step for vocabulary learning is getting a clear image of the word form-spelling, pronunciation or both. According to Hatch and Brown (1995: 378) this can be done through many sub-steps: (1) associating new words that sound similar in my native language, (2) writing the sounds of words using sound symbols from my native language, (3) associating words that are similar to words in other language I have studied, (4) associating a word with similar sounding English word I know, and (5) seeing a word that looks like another word I already know. Getting the form of a word is considered very important, especially, when learners are asked to define words.

4.2.3. Getting the Word Meaning

The third main step for vocabulary learning is getting the word meaning. It is based on some strategies such as asking the native speakers or people who know the learners' native language about the meaning of the word, relating new words with already made pictures in mind, and finally stating the meaning to someone in order to enable them to give the exact word.

Word definition varies according to the requirements of the situation and the level of the learner. Advanced learners often need more specific definitions for the sake of differentiating between near synonyms. However, those learners assume that dictionaries are the main source of a word definition (meaning). Another way of getting definition is having a bilingual friend or teacher who will help the learner to get the word meaning through their clarification.

Finally, one very popular way of learning word meaning is through contextualization or putting words in situation. The learner then will guess the meaning of new words easily. Although the depth of definition needed may vary and the sources from which the meaning can be extracted may be quite different. All learners must get the meaning of words in some manners, or the word can never be considered truly learnt. As it is stated in our study, the word meaning is dictated by the context of a given the clue.

4.2.4. Consolidating Word Form and Meaning in Memory

The fourth necessary step is to emphasize the consolidation of form and meaning in memory. This method calls for learning word through their appropriate context in which learners can acquire the word meaning and form at the same time. The most useful drills in this step are matching exercises, and practicing crossword puzzles. Through practicing crossword puzzles, the learner can decode the words' meaning from the context of the clue, and consolidate the words form that fit the squares of the puzzle.

4.2.5. Using the Word

The final step in learning vocabulary is using the words. Some see that this step is not necessary especially if the knowledge of the acquired is only a receptive one. However, if the learners' aim from knowing a word is not receptive but productive, word use is essential to test the learners' knowledge of collocations, syntactic restriction and register appropriateness.

Conclusively, the learners need all these five steps in order to enrich their vocabulary and learn full knowledge of the words they want to learn. This can be done through a variety of activities, strategies, or techniques that the learners apply in each step such as crossword puzzles.

Brown and Payne's essential steps in learning vocabulary (Cited in Hatch, Brown) can be applied in our study. We believe that in doing numerous crossword puzzles, -the focus of

our study, it will be detailed out in the coming chapter-, learners can encounter new words and phrases, they never knew before. Thus, with practice, they become familiar with them, get a clear image of the word form, meaning, spelling, and even pronunciation. Consolidate them in memory. Then, the learners may even find themselves using them in conversation or writing assignments and impress their listeners or readers (teachers) with brilliant words. This strategy can offer for students so many chances to learn vocabulary since both entertainment and enjoyment are present. A relaxed atmosphere is also available and, hence, we can gain fruitful achievements.
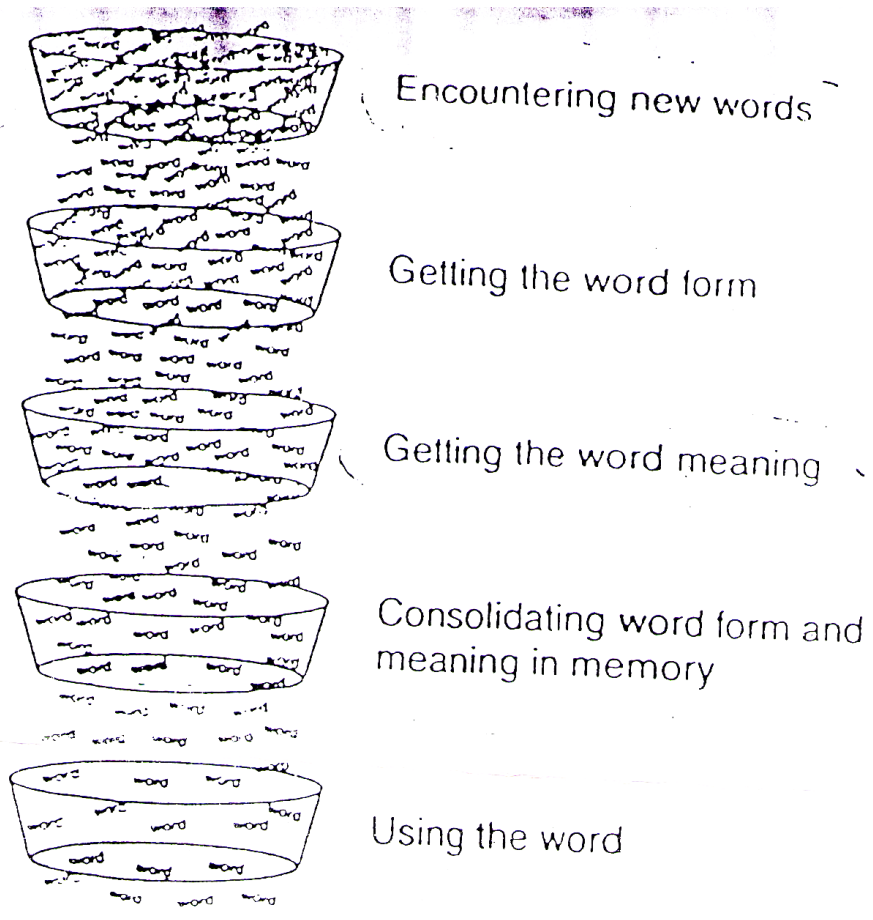
Figure 1: Five Essential Steps to Learn New Words (Hutch, Brown. 1995: 373)

5. Strategies for Teaching Vocabulary

Inside the classroom, the teacher's interference is necessary. Thus, teachers are supposed to adopt strategies and techniques to deal successfully with unfamiliar words. This includes unplanned and planned vocabulary teaching, and some techniques in teaching vocabulary.

5.1. Unplanned Vocabulary Teaching

Seal (1991: 298) defines this term as the "teaching of problem vocabulary that comes up without warning in the course of a lesson". Sometimes students feel that they are in need of the meaning of a vocabulary item during a lesson and sometimes the teacher feels that it is necessary to make certain clarifications. In this, the teacher is going to improvise an explain. Seal (1991: 298), suggests three stages in the unplanned vocabulary teaching: the stage of conveying meaning, the stage of checking the meaning, and the stage of consolidation.

In the first stage the teacher tries to convey the meaning of the target word using different ways as miming, giving synonyms or an anecdote, using opposites, or translation. In the second stage, he checks that the meaning of the unknown word is understood. This may be done through asking the learners questions, or clearly by doing some activities to guarantee or test their understanding, such as crossword puzzles. In the final stage of this kind of vocabulary teaching, the teacher tries to consolidate the information by urging students to use the word in other contexts.

5.2. Planned Vocabulary Teaching

Hatch and Brown (1995: 415) refers to this technique as "intentional vocabulary instruction". Seal (1991: 298) defines it as "when the teacher goes into the classroom with an item or set of vocabulary items that he/she has decided before hand will be taught during the course of the lesson". He mentions two types of this kind of vocabulary teaching.

In the first step the teacher predicts that certain vocabulary items will cause problems for students' comprehension. So, he prepares how to teach them i.e. through his experience, he is able to provide students with what suits them.

The second type of planned vocabulary teaching can be described as the vocabulary lesson. It can be taught as a separate module to develop the FL learners' stock of vocabulary, or it can be taught as a follow-up to other activities such as reading (Stories), listening (Songs), discussion, dialogues, recording, or solving crossword puzzles –of interest in the present research. There are several techniques to be followed in teaching vocabulary of a foreign language. We can use the dictionary, the glossary; or translation.

5.2.1. Dictionaries

The dictionary gives, in an alphabetical order, the meaning of words of language. It includes a word's spelling, syllables, pronunciation, origin, meaning, etc. Using a dictionary strengthen the learner's use of words. It helps them to build their vocabulary. In addition, it is a comprehensive source of general information.

There are three categories of dictionaries which are used by learners to enhance a foreign language. First, there is the bilingual dictionary (BD) which is known also as translation dictionary. This kind of dictionary translates a word from a target language into the learner's mother tongue or vice versa. Second, the monolingual dictionary (MD) is another sort that helps the learner to enrich his vocabulary. This type of dictionary is usually directed for native language learners. The last one is the standard monolingual dictionary (SMD) which has been written with the native language learners in mind. These dictionaries are useful for learners' vocabulary acquisition. For Bouchard (1979) contends that "the dictionary permits readers to obtain the meaning of a word as cannot be divided from the context or word form, as such it is an aid to vocabulary development" (Quoted in Boulmerka 2000: 131). The dictionary helps the learner to acquire new words, to enlarge his culture about his

language and to develop his skills. However, relying only on actual uses of words in all kinds of speech and writing, dictionaries can have a negative impact on the learner. It can interrupt his concentration; it can break down the author's sequence of thoughts when he is reading.

5.2.2. Glossary

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, a glossary is a list of technical or special words, expressions, especially those in a particular text explaining its meaning. This list is usually found at the end of the reading passage. Students find that the glossary is one of the best ways of acquiring vocabulary particularly in literature.

5.2.3. Translation

Translation is the process of giving the equivalence of words in a target language from the mother tongue or another language. It is a valuable means of acquiring vocabulary. It does not require a lot of time, especially in explaining abstract conceptions such as wisdom, happiness, freedom, etc. However, this technique weakens the learners' capacities in making intelligent guesses, because grammar translation method in ELT was based on providing students with detailed explanation of grammar in their native language and bilingual vocabulary lists to learn them by heart and try to translate these words from the FL or vice versa into very complicated sentences which are most of the time beyond their levels.

5.2.4. Focusing on Form

The learner will meet a number of unfamiliar vocabularies when he starts reading. Most of these words are related in many ways to words he already knows. Consequently, a word is subject to change in its form, this leads to a change in words meaning and class. This

is what we called "word formation" that is based on a set of regular relationship; affixation, compounding and conversion, as we will see presently.

5.2.4.1. Affixation

It is the process of adding a letter to change its meaning. It is divided into two kinds:

5.2.4.1.1. Prefixes

A letter or group of letters added to the beginning of a word to make a new word or to change its meaning. It is useful to make pupils aware of the usual meaning of such prefixes as "un, re, ex, and dis…", for example :

happy → **un**happy
change → **ex**change
like → **dis**like
order → **dis**order

Some prefixes take the form of prepositions or adverbs which the learner has been already known. for example

take → **under**take
turn → **over**turn
set → **up**set
estimate → **under**estimate

5.2.4.1.2. Suffixes

A letter or group of letters added to the end in order to from new words.

- Nouns related to verbs and related by a suffix: deni**al**, depart**ure**, achieve**ment**, complex**ity**.

- Nouns related to adjectives and marked by a suffix: close**ness**, capabil**ity**, shy**ness**.

- The participle of verbs: suspend**ed**, defend**ed**.

- Adjectives plus **-ish-**: redd**ish**, sheepish, sweet**ish**.

- Words related to nouns: luxury, beastly, and cultural.

5.2.4.2. Compounding

Compounding is combining two or more separate words with various meanings in order to create new words very different in meaning and from the one which made it:

- Adjectives Compounds: well spoken, long lasting, absentminded.

- Verbs Compound: become, babysit.

- Noun Compound; combining words are three kinds :

  ➢ **Noun + Noun**: timetable, tea party

  ➢ **Possessive Noun + Noun**: father's car, sister's coat.

  ➢ **Prepositional Structure**: A film of violence.

What we must say is that English is very rich of compounds: nouns, adjectives, adverbs, verbs, etc. But the largest class of the compounds is nouns. Sometimes between the two parts of compounds we find a hyphen, for instance, dark-haired, water-cooling.

5.2.4.3. Conversion

The process in which an item may be used in different word classes without changing its form is also called "zero affixation" which demonstrates that zero takes procedure/ending over any letter. The distinction between these word classes is based on stress. In other words it should look at stress marks for example:

Nouns	Verbs
'Subject	Sub**'ject**
'Object	Ob**'ject**
'Conduct	Con**'duct**
'Import	Im**'port**

However, in some cases of conversion pronunciation has also an impact on words classification. For example: ad**'vice** and ad**'vise.**

5.2.5. Focusing on Word Meaning

Knowing a word means knowing its semantic value. The latter may guide the learners in differentiating the match between words and meaning. The different semantic relationships are often expressed through the use of polysemy, synonymy, antonymy, and hyponymy. As far as polysemy is not the concern of our research, we are going to focus on: synonymy, antonymy, and hyponymy.

5.2.5.1. Synonymy

Synonyms are words or expressions which have the same or nearly the same meaning as another in same language. Dictionaries, traditionally, provide lists of words that are more or less synonymous in each country. Hatch and Brown (1995) stated that synonyms could take form of single words. In this case, synonyms are interchangeable, as it is stated in our study, for example, the word "vaccinations" is the equivalent or synonym of "shots" However, native speakers can detect the difference between two synonyms in different ways. For example "to cease" is the synonym of "to stop" but "to cease" is most often selected in a discourse. Furthermore, the mother is unlikely to say to her child "cease that". Second, we may also use expressions to indicate synonyms, for instance "a level at school" is the equivalent of "stage" or "grade". Hatch and Brown (1995: 17) state that "some forms are

better than others for a particular use in particular circumstances". Sometimes, it is preferable to use "sort of" instead of "kind of". The best task here, we think, is to give the learners a suitable reading passage and ask them to find there the underlined words corresponding to the definition provided. There are more definitions than words.

5.2.5.2. Antonymy

Autonyms are words that mean the opposite of another word or words. They can be indentified on bases of some features. For example, we explain the meaning of "to pass" by saying that it the opposite of "to fail", as it is stated in the empirical touch of our study. The same thing is true with "long" and "short".

5.2.5.3. Hyponymy

It is often said that a person is easily detected through the family from which he descend. This is also the case for the meaning of a word which can be determinate via its family. For instance, from the following lists "baby, child, teen, doves, old, corpse ", it is easy for the learner to recognize that the odd word is "doves". The other words belong to the same family "stages of life" while the word "doves" belongs to another family "birds". The relation of hyponymy refers to members of the same class (family). It includes the upper term which is called the superordinate, and the lower term is called hyponym. The relation between hyponyms is called co-hyponyms, as figure below show. (Palmer, 1976: 96).
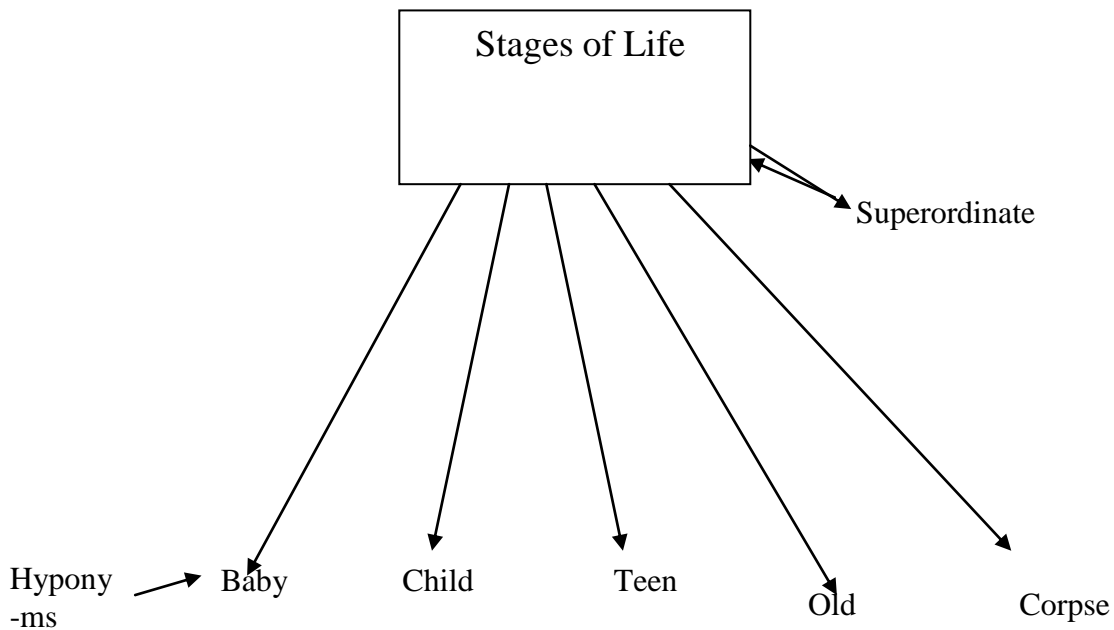
Figure 2: Hyponyms of the Superordinate of "Stages of Life" (Palmer, 1976: 96)

Conclusion

The goal of vocabulary teaching must be more than simply covering a certain number of words on a word list. Ancient methods and approaches gives a great importance to the language structures and grammar rather than vocabulary. In addition, these methods encourage rote learning i.e. learners are provided with a list of words to be learnt by heart even without understanding. Hence, it will be a necessity to look to how teaching techniques can help the learner realize what is meant by knowing a word. Now, vocabulary teaching/learning has developed especially with the more recent approach applied "Competency Based Approach". This approach puts the learner in the centre of the teaching/learning process. The role of the teacher is merely a guide who helps the learner develop some learning strategies.

Chapter Two: Using Crossword Puzzles in EFL Classroom

Chapter Two: Using Crossword Puzzles in EFL Classrooms

Introduction

The role of the learner in the teaching/learning process is emphasized by recent developments in educational psychology (Nunan, 1992, Slavin, 2003). Consequently, in recent years, there has been a switch from more traditional classes, where the teacher plays the central role, to more learner-centred instruction in which the learner is responsible for the learning process whereas, the teacher is just a guide and facilitator (Atkinson, 2003).

Using puzzles is considered as a tool that allows language teachers to add colour to their classroom activities and to make them lively by providing challenge and entertainment at the same time. As Danesi (1979: 7) suggests, "puzzles may also serve as a needed change of pace to the daily routine of teaching techniques and can perhaps serve to increase students' motivation as a result". Clearly it is to the learners' advantage to be exposed to a variety of classroom techniques so that interest is asserted. It is evident from our experience as EFL learners that the more words students exposed to, the better vocabulary they will have.

In this chapter, we try to provide a discussion about crossword puzzles; its history, its variant types, as well as its types of grid, and clues. A comparison between traditional language teaching and the learners-centred instruction is investigated. Furthermore, an in depth discussion about the educational value of practicing crossword puzzles, is also provided.

1. Traditional Language Teaching Vs. Learner-Centred Instruction

In the field of language teaching and learning, recent teaching methods often recognized the learner-centred methods emerged as opposed to the more traditional methods in which the teacher plays the central role in class. The traditional method as far as teaching is

concerned is still the most common in teaching context in which "students sitting in rows listening to a teacher who stands in front of them" (Harmer, 2005: 114).

"Is language something we learn through first consciously "knowing" and then transferring that knowledge to application, or something we learn through doing; i.e. through experience?" These two questions which are related to the exact nature of language learning are asked by Wood (1996: 188). Throughout these two questions, the way in which the teacher will teach in class is determined.

The first part of the question is an assumption about language learning underlies the teacher-centred instruction in which the teacher is the main actor in class, transfer his knowledge to his students who are supposed to take in. Scrivener (1994) discusses various teaching techniques underlying the teachers' assumptions about teaching and learning. He takes the traditional picture of the teacher into consideration and he further argues that "his teaching style is based on the assumption that the teacher is the "knower" and has the task of passing over his knowledge to the students". (p. 1). He is also convinced that the teacher is "the most active person" in classrooms.

However, the second part of the question is an assumption which forms the basis of a more recent experiential learning in which the learner himself is expected to take charge of his own learning (Woods, 1996). On the other hand, the role of the teachers according to Tsui (Cited in Freeman, Richard. 1996: 98) should not be that of "assessors, but of facilitators who help students to develop strategies for generating ideas, revising, and editing".

As far as our research is concerned, the latter assumption can be applied to our study. Learners are not supposed to wait for teachers to teach them new vocabulary items. We believe that vocabulary is something that can be achieved through practice, and, crossword puzzles can be one way to experience such learning.

Harmer (2005: 115) is convinced by the idea that learners have to "discover things or research things for themselves". Moreover, the Chinese proverb recognizes the importance of task involvement of learners for successful learning "tell me, and I'll forget; show me, and I'll remember; involve me, I'll learn". Hence, it should be noted that crossword puzzles can be beneficial on a number of scales. Involving all students in the same activity strengthens their sense of accomplishment. Furthermore, crossword puzzles require of teachers to give only instructions in the case of which this activity would be much easier for teachers. Moreover, both education (thinking) and entertainment (fun) are included in solving a given crossword puzzle. Thus, students feel more secure with the teacher acting as a controller and under "his direct authority". (Harmer, 2005: 115).

The traditional teaching methods describe the process of teaching as a matter of transferring knowledge from a more proficient user of the language, the teacher, to less proficient users of the language, the students. This view of teaching came to be criticized for a number of reasons. At the affective level, students get bored, and lose motivation for learning. Furthermore, their academic achievements may not be high. Scrivener (1994) gives a criticism to this type of instruction, and he considers involvement in a task, experimenting it, and practicing it, is the best way of learning. Language is not an independent system that students can take without involving their feelings and emotions. Brown (2000:144), explains clearly that:

> Language is a behaviour, that is, a phase of human activity which must not be treated in essence as structurally divorced from the structure of nonverbal human activity. The activity of man constitutes a structural whole in such a way that it cannot be subdivided into neat "parts" or "levels" or "compartments" with language in a behavioural compartment insulted in character, content, and organization from other behaviour.

Brown's definition of language makes it clear that the interference of other factors in second/foreign language learning is unavoidable. Scrivener (1994) adds that "talking at the

learners does not necessarily mean that learning is taking place; in many cases teacher talking time (TTT) actually represents time when the learners are not doing very much and are not very involved". (p. 14). Scrivener (1994) questions about the efficiency of the traditional method i.e. the teacher-centred approach, arguing that the process of teaching and learning do not necessarily make a "cause and effect" relationship. In other words, it is not necessary that if teaching happens, learning will automatically take place. In fact, "it is quite possible for a teacher to be putting great effort into his or her teaching and for no learning to be taking place; similarly, a teacher could apparently be doing nothing, but the students be learning a great deal". (p. 2).

In recent years, research has emphasized the role of the classroom setting. (Woods, 1996) sees that:

> The central role of research in the area of language learning/teaching have shifted over the years, from a focus on the method of teaching, to a focus on the learner and learning processes, and most recently to a focus on the classroom setting in which formal learning is taking place. (p. 3).

He believes that the process which is involved inside classroom is more crucial than "the product of teaching". He further makes it clear that "an important purpose underlying this research shift was to determine what are the classroom processes that lead to successful learning of the language". On the other hand, Williams (2003: 103) emphasizes the focus in learners-centred instruction stating that "it consists of shifting the focus of classroom activities from the teacher to the students". However, it should be clearly stated that, despite the fact that when teachers are willing to change to a new type of instruction, they always revert to the traditional way of teaching. Thus, the switch from the traditional language teaching to the learners-centred instruction is a gradual and long-term process.

We believe that crossword puzzle is an activity that can be fun and educational at the same time: fun in the sense that challenge and entertainment can be involved, educational in

the sense that new vocabulary items can be acquired. According to Brown (2007), there exist two hemispheres in our mind; the right hemisphere deals with emotions and feelings, and the left hemisphere deals with abstract rules or world (p. 58). Thus, in solving a crossword puzzle, the right hemisphere will be activated with the fun way, while the left hemisphere will be accelerated with the educational side. Hence, it is better to study a language by another part of language (crossword puzzles) and the two hemispheres work in a homogenous way.

This process can keep the students' minds active and lead them to a more lively participation and practice of the language, especially in matters of vocabulary learning. Pedagogically speaking, using crossword puzzles in class is supported as a way of putting this into practice. Crossword puzzle is relatively a new teaching method. Therefore, some of its features have to be highlighted.

2. Crossword Puzzle

According to the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (2009) crossword is defined as a puzzle which contains an arranged number of squares. The goal is that the white squares to be filled with letters both horizontally and vertically (across and down) in relation to numbered clues (the definitions). It is defined in Collins English Dictionary (2003) as a puzzle in which a list of numbered clues are supposed to be solved by words and then to be written into corresponding squares (blanks) in a grid to form a vertical and horizontal pattern. Crossword is the famous word for short. (Cited in www.The Free Dictionary.com/crossword puzzle).

Generally, a crossword puzzle takes the form of a square grid of white and shaded squares. The white cells which are sometimes called lights are supposed to be filled with letters. Hence, words are formed by solving the numbered clues which yield to the answers.

Whereas, the shaded cells, which are called darks, blanks, blocks, or shaded squares are used to separate the words or phrases.

The words, obviously, are not written in the puzzle; only the spaces or blanks where the answer's letters should be written. Moreover, the white squares in which answers begin are usually numbered. The clues or the definitions are directed by numbers and sometimes letters, for example, C across and 6 down. The total number of letters is sometimes given at the end of the clues, as it is clearly stated in the present study. These directions may facilitate the job of the learners. (Cited in www.Wikipedia. Org).

3. Terminology

Crossword puzzle has a specific terminology:

- **Entries or Answers:** are the horizontal and vertical lines of white squares into which answers are written.

- **The Definitions:** are the lists of numbered clues. "the clues"

- **The White Cells:** are sometimes called lights.

- **The Shaded Cells:** are sometimes called Darks, Blanks, Blocks, Blacks or Shaded Squares. Shaded Squares make the constructor's job much easier. In some types of crossword puzzle, they are specified; the number of the answers' letters which limit the blanks before and after each answer's letters.

- **The Crossed Cell:** is a white cell which is part of two entries (both cross and down). It is also called checked or keyed.

- **The Unchecked Cell:** is a white cell which is part of only one entry. It is called Unkeyed, or Uncrossed.

- **Cruciverbalism:** the creativity or designing of crosswords including its practitioners.

- **Cruciverbalists:** are the creators or the originators of crossword puzzles. They are called creators, compilers, settlers in Britain. (Cited in www. wikipedia. org).

The History of Crossword Puzzles

The story of crossword puzzles started in September 14, 1890 when the first crossword appeared in the Italian magazine 2 Secolo Illustrato Della Domenicia. It was originated by Giuseppe Airoldi and titled "Per Passare il Tempo" which is the equivalent of "To Pass the Time" in English. Airoldi's puzzle involved horizontal and vertical clues but it was four by four grids with no shaded squares.

The first word cross appeared in the "Sunday supplement" of the New York World on December 21, 1913. It was the creation of an Englishman Arthur Wynne; a journalist from Liverpool, England and had migrated to the United States. It contained thirty-two clues and consisted mainly of simple definitions. When it first appeared, the crossword grid was shaped like a diamond, However, the square shape was changed by the time it arrived Britain eleven years later, it became like that we are now familiar with. Soon after, crossword puzzles became a regular feature in newspapers. By the 1920, people noticed the phenomenon of crosswords. In 1921, the New York library declared that "the latest craze to strike libraries is the crossword puzzle". In the 19th century, people of England were aimed at a juvenile audience and adults were less interested in them until Simon and Schuster printed the first book of them in 1924. The crossword puzzles' popularity continued to build throughout the 20th century. At that time solving a puzzle became a fashion and people had great desire to challenge each other. The term crossword puzzle did not appear in a dictionary until 1930. The New York Times was not to publish a crossword puzzle until 1942, after the complaints it had done about crossword puzzle in 1924. The New York Times declared that: "crossword puzzle is not a game at all, and it hardly can be a sport, get nothing out it except a primitive form of mental exercise, and success or failure in any given attempt is equally irrelevant to

mental development". (www.wikipedia.org). However, today, most American daily newspapers include a crossword puzzle as well as many magazines and the New York Times crossword puzzles are the most prestigious and the most difficult to solve. (www. wikipedia. org)

5. Types of Grid

Usually, crossword puzzles take the form of square grid of white and black squares. According to Wikipedia, there are four types of grid; American, British, Japanese and the Swedish style grid. Hence, creators should make a decision upon which type of grid he going to use for his puzzle.

5.1. American Style Grid

The most obvious feature of the North American style crosswords is the fact that every letter in the puzzle is "an interlinking letter". In other words; every letter in the puzzle is a letter in an across word, and also in a down word. This style facilitates the solver's job because difficulty can be removed through some assistance of those previously used letters, in addition to the words which intersect with each others. Shaded squares are limited, whereas white squares are mainly used in such type of the North American style. It is also characterized with rotational symmetry which means that, if the crossword puzzle i.e. the graph is turned up or down, the grid remains the same. In other words; if it is turned 90° or 180 degree, the patterns of the blocks is exactly the same (www. wikipedia. org), as the figure 3 below shows.
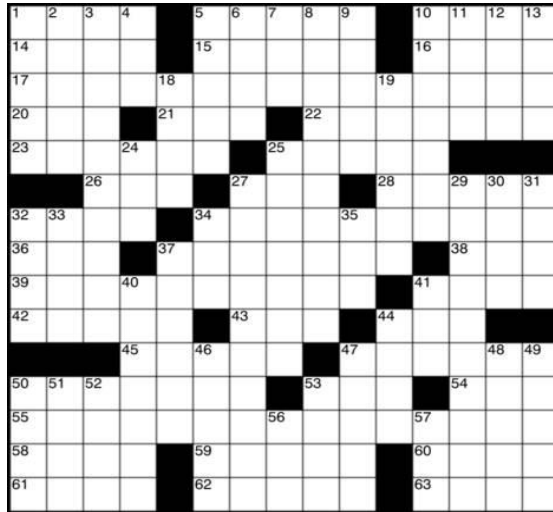
Figure 3: American Style Grid (www. wikipedia. org)

5.2. British Style Grid

A British crossword puzzle has also 180° rotational symmetry; if the puzzle is turned upside down, its pattern of blocks remains the same. However, in some ways, the British style and the American one are completely different. Typically, shaded squares are used with higher percentage and unchecked (uncrossed) cells are mainly involved. For example, if the first row of the crossword puzzle is in an across way, then, there will be no across in the second row, as shown on figure 4. (www. wikipedia. org).
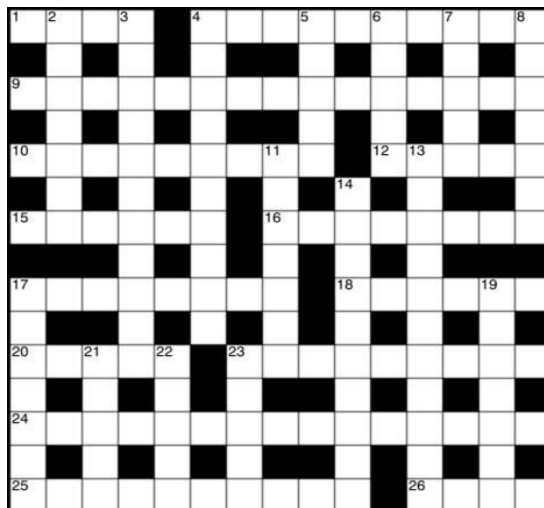
Figure 4: British Style Grid (www. wikipedia. org)

5.3. Japanese Style Grid

There are two additional rules involved in the design of the Japanese crossword grid:

1. The corner square must be white.

2. The shades square are diagonal; they are not beside each other, as shown in figure 5. (www. wikipedia. org)

   The difference between the three grids is that the British grid uses the vertical and horizontal blanks; the Japanese grid uses only the diagonal blanks, while the American grid uses a combination of them.
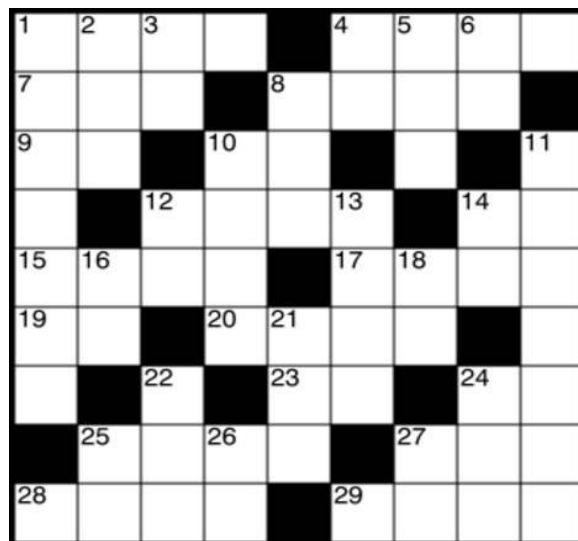
Figure 5: Japanese Style Grid (www. wikipedia. org)

5.4. Swedish Style Grid

   The Swedish style grid is different from the previous grids. In this type of grid, the clue numbers are not used; they are included inside the squares which would normally be blackened in other countries. Thus, those clues are followed by arrows. This latter indicates in which direction the clues have to be answered (across or down). The shaded squares can be also replaced by a photo or a movie star and it serves as a clue to an answer. This type of grid

does not have a rotational symmetry. It is the most popular type grid in Algeria and it is used in most countries other than Sweden, as shown in figure below. (www. wikipedia. org)
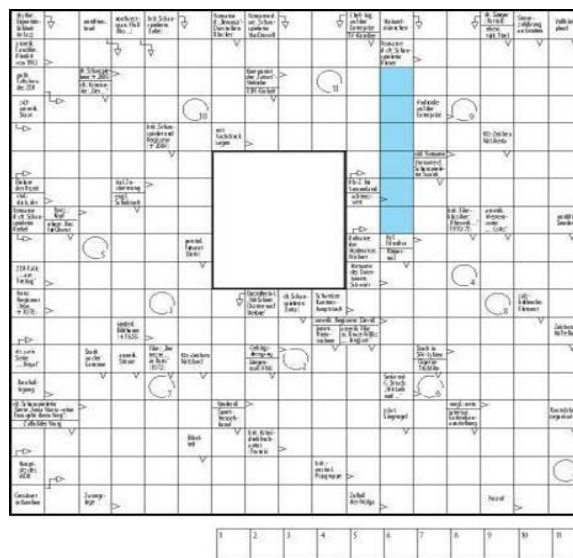
Figure 6: Swedish Style Grid (www. wikipedia. org)

In addition to these types of grids, there are other common forms:

- Barred crosswords in which bold line are used between squares to separate answers.

- Free Form Crosswords are not symmetric and it is characterized with simple design.

Although the above stated types differ in shape, they are alike in principle. That is to say, the constructor has to fill in the blanks with regard to certain clues. Generally, puzzles themes are general ones i.e. they include terminology from different fields: political, cultural, health, etc. We assume that if certain puzzles are designed with accordance with writing terminology-needs (polysemy, synonymy, hyponymy and so on), we would help learners to benefit from them a great deal. We would call this type *instrumental*, as opposed to pleasurable ones.

6. Types of Clues

To answer crossword puzzles, of course, the solver deeply relies on the clues. There are different kinds of the clues:

6.1. Straight or Quick

The clues which contain usually simple definitions for the answers are straight or quick. The crosswords' clues and their solutions should be related to each other in terms of tense and number. If a clue is in the past tense, for example "travelled on a horse back", the answer would be in the past tense "rode" and not "ride". If a clue is in the plural, for example "family members", the answer would be in the plural "aunts" or "uncles" and not "aunt" or "uncle". (www.wikipedia. org). As it is clearly stated in our empirical touch concerning the word "vaccinations". The equivalent answer would be in the plural form as "shots", and not in singular one as "shot".

- Some answers are determined through the previously use of one letter.

- Some clues are represented through the distribution of letters of another word (anagrams). For example, "Worth" is anagram of "throw".

- Fill-in-the blank clues are the most easiest in a puzzle, for example "………….Johnson, explorer" = Osa

- Sometimes, some clues are ended with a question mark which usually indicates that some sort of related "pun", "wordplay", or "metaphor" is involved in the clue and the answer combination. (Shortz, 2001).

- There are also straight clues which require colloquial answers; colloquial language would be involved in the entries of the puzzles' grid. Phrases like "what's up", "as", or "whaddya" are included in such a crossword puzzle.

- The use of abbreviation in the clue indicates that the answer is to be abbreviated. Hence, a crossword's constructor must be aware of the answers' abbreviation. For example, "SEN" is the abbreviation of "senator". Thus, the solver might choose the abbreviation of the equivalent of "senator"; i.e. "member of congress" abbreviated.

- Variant Spelling: The use of "Var." signals that the answer is a variant spelling. For example: "EMEER", "EMIR".

- The use of foreign language or a foreign place within the clues indicates that the answer is also in a foreign language. For example: Printemps "French for spring" might be clued as "spring in the Sorbonne".

- The abbreviations of common three-letter answers are also used as answers; it is generally indicated in the clue. When asking for a PC key, there are also three letter keys like ESE for (East-Southeast), NNW for (North-Northwest) etc. Three letter answers can also be used when the clues are asking for directions or compass points. (www.Wikipedia.Org). Thus, learners must be aware of these instructions to follow a specific order to solve their crossword puzzle.

6.2. Crossword Themes

Some crossword puzzles have themes. When the theme is identified, then the other words would have some degree of relationship, pun or somehow related with the theme words. The theme is the general category or class where all the answers of the puzzle belong to that general class. For example; stubble, grass, grain, chaff, cows, bees, jar, are answers which belong to one category theme which is "country life".

Sometimes the most important aspects of a subject are not immediately obvious. Hence, it is the job of the students to keep reading to get the complete picture about the theme. Some crosswords would have the theme as the title as it is stated in our study. For example; the main theme, or the title is "Stages of Life", and words such as, "baby, child, kindergarten,

teen, old, grave", etc; have a great relationship with the category theme. i.e. they belong to the same class. Sometimes the theme is not written as the title, it can be the longest word in the puzzle. (www.wikipedia.org).

6.3. First Entries

This kind of clues combines a few words into a phrase. For example "You, ill, never, walk, alone" would become "You'll never walk alone". It is popular in the British newspapers.

6.4. Clues for Cryptic Crosswords

The clues of the cryptic crossword puzzle are different from other type of clues. The clue itself is a puzzle. This kind of clue has a definition at the beginning or the end of the clue. Most of the times, the length of the answers are stated in parentheses after the clue. Cryptic would also use homophobes and different kinds of wordplays. It would also include anagram clues. These kinds of clues are more common in United Kingdom.

The cryptic crossword puzzle differs from any other kind of crosswords in the fact that the clues themselves contain little puzzles. So, unlike the usual crossword where all what is needed to do is to read the clue and try to figure out the answer. However, in a cryptic puzzle, the solver will need to decipher what the clue is all about before he starts thinking of the possible answers. (www.wikipedia.com).

We assume that, despite the fact that this type of puzzles is difficult for learners to decipher the meaning of a given clue. However, it is to the learners' advantages to be exposed to a variety of types to measure or develop their abilities in understanding a given utterance, as well as in practicing their skills in making inferences, evaluating choices, and drawing up possible conclusions.

6.5. Double Clue Lists

Some crossword grids can have two sets or lists of clues, one is straight and the other one is cryptic. The solution can be different or the same. When the solution is the same, the straight clue sometimes serves as reinforcement for the cryptic clue. This type of clues enables both beginners and experts to work the same puzzle.

6.6. Indirect Clues

The answer is not in their literal meaning, in this type of clues. Thus, the constructor would end the clue with a question mark to indicate that it is a metaphor.

The last four types of clues of crossword puzzle are very difficult for our students to decipher/decode/ or figure out the meaning of the clue (the answer). Thus, in our study, the level of the students is taken into consideration. Hence, a themed crossword with a title is provided (Stages of Life). Furthermore, simple clues are used, to facilitate the students' job.

7. Type of Crossword Puzzles

Mainly, there are five crossword variants. Those five types of crossword variants may be different from a regular shape grid puzzle; they need different clues and different solving skills.

7.1. Cipher Crosswords

Cipher crosswords contain numbers in the clues, and the solver must break the cipher code to read the clues and solve the puzzle. A cipher crossword replaces the clues for each entry with clues for each white cell of the grid – "an integer from 1 to 26 inclusive" is printed in the corner of each. Cells with matching numbers will also have matching letters/answers, and no two numbers will stand for the same letter throughout the entire puzzle. (www. wikipedia.org)

7.2. Fill-in Crosswords

Fill-in crosswords may often have longer word length than regular crosswords, because the more characters the solver start working from, the easier the puzzle will be to solve. The constructor is required to enter a full list of words to the grid, but there are no explicit clues for where each word goes. So, he has to figure out how to integrate the list of words together with exact spelling within the grid, so that all intersections of words are valid, because a misused word or even phoneme may distort the whole puzzle.

7.3. Crossnumbers

In this type of crossword puzzles, the clues of the puzzle are numbers instead of words. They are typically mathematical expressions or formulas, but could also be verbal clues to reference specific numbers, such as dates or populations.

7.4. Acrostic Puzzle

Acrostic puzzles are usually composed of two sections: first is a set of lettered clues and the second part is a long series of numbered blanks and spaces.

7.5. Diagramless Crosswords

Diagramless crossword often called a" skeleton" or "carte blanche" Originated from the UK, they offer overall dimensions, and the locations of most of the clue numbers and shaded squares are unspecified. Not only does the solver have to come up with the correct answers to the given clues, but he must figure out how to arrange answers into larger arrays, using properly spaced black squares, as shown in figure 7.
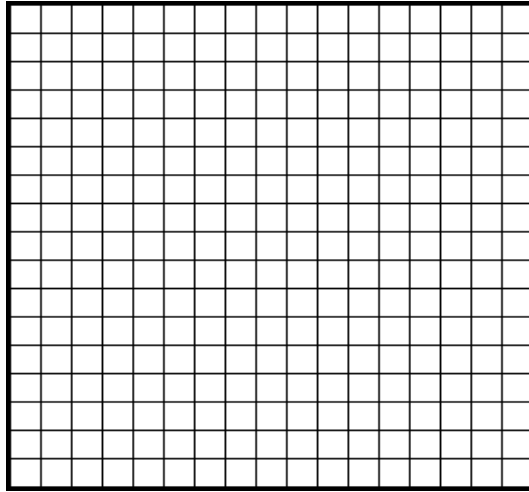
Figure 7: Diagramless Crossword Puzzle Style Grid

Diagramless crossword puzzles cannot be solved until students can decode the two secrets "the clue numbers and the symmetry". Thus, as far as our students' level is concerned, it is too difficult for them to decode the clue numbers and the symmetry. Hence, in our study, a diagramless crossword puzzle is used. It contains a set of horizontally located letters and a set of vertically located numbers. The clues are directed by them, for example; C2. The number of the answer's letters is specified at the end of each clue. Moreover, simple clues are used and the difficult words are explained at the bottom of the paper, and the square before and after each answer must be blackened. Thus, there is no symmetry. It is worth mentioning, here, that certain types of crossword puzzle are very difficult, so the use of them in educational setting might not have the desired results. In this respect, in this study, we use diagramless type that can be modified in order to achieve our purpose (facilitating the learning process).

8. The Educational Value of Crossword puzzles

According to Kerry Jones (2007), there are many benefits of crossword puzzles in EFL classrooms:

8.1. Motivation

Most language teachers agree that learners' motivation is one of the most important factors that influence their success or failure in learning English as a foreign language. In other terms; it drives forwards learning operation for success. Slavin (2003) considers motivation as "one of the most ingredients of effective instruction". (p. 328). It is also considered as "a component of metacognition in so far as it plays a self-regulatory role in learning". (Jones et al. 1987; cited in O'Malley & Chamot, 1990: 160) and it has been found to have great effect on enhancing students' performance in the target language (Garder, 1989, Oxford & Ehrman, 1993, Slavin, 1990, cited in Woolfolk, 2004). In fact, "the will to learn appears to be essential for developing the skill to the learner". (Paris, 1988, cited in O'Malley & Chamot, 1990: 184). So, it is generally agreed that if some learners do well and others poorly in language learning, this fact is much related to motivation than to intelligence. In this connection, the role of the teacher is to vary his materials to avoid boredom. Slavin (2003) claims that "it is the educator's job to sustain students' motivation and to engage them in activities that lead to learning". (p. 329). Thus, to acquire new vocabulary items, crossword puzzles can serve this goal. Corder (1967) states that "in language teaching, given motivation, a human being will inevitably learn a language if he is exposed to the data of that language". Therefore, crossword puzzles can provide the necessary stimulus to invite the learners to make more efforts to learn a language. (Fadel, 2005: 15).

8.2. Vocabulary Knowledge

After doing numerous crossword puzzles, the learners will become familiar with a number of words and phrases that they never knew about before. This often yields to acquiring new vocabulary items. They may even find themselves using them in conversation or writing assignments and impress their teachers with brilliant words. In this respect, self-

confidence can be created. i.e. the student can use a word and he/she is aware and sure about the word's form (spelling), meaning, class, and even pronunciation. Harmer (2005) raises the issue of self-confidence and considers it a very important factor for good writing.

8.3. Exact Spelling

A student trying to solve a crossword puzzle must first understand the clues that lead to the answers. If the student is unable to answer a particular puzzle question, he can then consult the dictionary to get the right answer and use the exact spelling. Obviously, this will lead to huge results in improving the students' large skill or proficiency. This is so because the student will be able to practice spelling, word identification and even pronunciation.

8.4. Less Threatening

Another benefit of using crossword puzzles in classrooms is that they can be less threatening for students as a review tools. They offer challenge between students.

8.5. Memory and Recall

According to Brown when solving themed crossword puzzles, Memory and recall also come into play. "A science teacher may create a puzzle that uses scientific terms to coordinate with lessons, while a history related puzzle might have terms from one particular time period, with historical figures, key place names, and other relevant historical facts". (http://puzzlemaker. discovery education. com).

8.6. Practicing Skills

Practicing crossword puzzles, students will be able to practice their skills in making inferences, evaluating choices, and drawing up possible conclusions.

8.7. Different Learning Style

Crossword puzzles also have the advantage of appearing to different learning styles:

8.7.1. Visual learners often have a great desire to solve a crossword and feel great satisfaction when they complete one.

8.7.2. Auditory learners enjoy step by step reasoning, so they are actively involved in the sequential steps of completing a crossword puzzle.

Conclusion

Crossword puzzles have many characteristics which enable teachers to teach vocabulary in a more recent ways, give learners the opportunity to prepare themselves to become capable learners; rely on themselves to develop self-confidence and achieve better results. Crossword puzzles are a great way to have fun while students build their vocabulary at the same time.

Students' vocabulary can be expanded through playing with words because their brain will be forced to play with letters. Thus, it will be better and effective to study a language by using another part of language. This activity keeps the students' mind active, and leads them to a more lively participation and practice of the language, especially in matters of vocabulary learning.

Chapter Three: Situation Analysis

Chapter Three: Situation Analysis

Introduction

The present research is designed to investigate the effectiveness of using crossword puzzles as a teaching material to enhance students' acquisition of new words. To serve the needs of our hypothesis, the empirical touch will be sustained with evidence from two perspectives. From one side, the teachers' questionnaire serves as a guide-line to collect dada about the affective side of the learner, teachers' techniques for teaching vocabulary, including their concern of crossword puzzles. From the other side, the experiment we have set down is an attempt to catch up empirical data vis-a-vis students' application to crossword puzzle. A pre-test was organized in three sessions. A diagramless crossword puzzle was given to students in each session. The three crossword puzzles embody the same theme "Stages of Life". Results obtained in the three crossword puzzles were compared and analysed. In the fourth session, a post-test was organized. Students were asked to write a paragraph about stages of life from birth to grave. In this respect, the goal intended is to see the extent to which students are able to make a link between the two activities. In other words, to measure the degree of influence of using crossword puzzles for the acquisition of new words, as well as to test whether students are able to transmit what they learnt to their written production.

1. Research Design

1.1. The Choice of the Method

There is no best way of classifying research methods in the field of education. The choice of the research method is dictated by the nature of the subject to be treated. i.e. the topic, the aim of the research, the sample under investigation and the collected data, impose

the use of a specific method. As long as our research is concerned, the most suitable method is qualitative quantitative data.

1.2. Population and Sampling

1.2.1. Teachers' Questionnaire

The questionnaire explores whether teachers of written expression in the Department of English at University of Constantine incorporate crossword puzzles in teaching this module. The administration of the questionnaires and their collection was held from hand to hand. Fifteen questionnaires were given to teachers of written expression and were collected a week later. 07 questionnaires were given back: the teachers who did not return 08 questionnaires were absent the day of the collection of the questionnaire and did not hand them in later date.

1.2.2. Students' Experiment

1.2.2.1. Population

Population is defined by Polit et al (2001. p. 233) as "the entire aggregation of cases that meet a specified set of criteria". The present study deals with freshmen English students at the department of languages at university of Constantine. Students were supposed to have studied English for at least five years (two years at middle school) and (three years at secondary school), in addition, to the one year at university which was at its end when the study was made. The students in class were all of mixed ages, gender, abilities and cultural background, most of the students came from a literary stream; This is known through asking students orally during the test.

1.2.2.2. Sampling and Randomization

According to Polit et al (2001), "sampling involves selecting a group of people, events, behaviours, or other elements with which to conduct a study. When elements are persons, they are known as subjects who are selected from the delineated target population in a way that the individuals in the sample represent as nearly as possible". Hence, a sample of twenty students was randomly chosen from freshmen English students. This has been done by selecting the first twenty students from the list of Gr 08. The majority of the participants are girls; from twenty students who participated in the experiment three of them are boys. In this study, the sex variable will not be taken into consideration. This sample corresponds to the students who have taken the pre-test, have been under investigation during the treatment period, and finally have been post-tested.

For time constraints and in order to avoid the participants' burden of the extra sessions, the treatment phase of this study lasted three weeks. Two sessions in the first week, one session in the second week and the last session in the third week; three sessions were devoted for the pre-test, and the fourth session was designed for the post-test. The time devoted for each session was an hour and a half.

1.3. Description of the Tools

1.3.1. Description of the Questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire (cf. Appendix I) seeks to collect data about teachers' concern with the affective side of the learner, techniques for teaching vocabulary, crossword puzzles as a teaching material, and the impact of them on vocabulary knowledge. In the introduction, we explained to the teachers the aim of this questionnaire: to investigate the effect of crossword puzzles on the acquisition of vocabulary of the first year students at

university of Constantine; examining the use of crossword puzzles as a teaching technique, and investigating the field of vocabulary teaching. The teachers were required to answer the questionnaire by ticking the appropriate box and making statements whenever required. The questionnaire (cf. Appendix 1) consists 13 questions divided into three sections:

Section One: Teachers' Concern with the Affective Side of the Learner (Q1 ⟶ Q4)

It is intended to gather data about the psychological side of the learners under an important element which is motivation, as well as the teachers' concern with the general learning climate 'atmosphere'. These four questions would enable us to determine the extent to which teachers concern themselves with the psychological side of their students which, according to many scholars is an essential as the cognitive side.

Section two: Teachers' Perception about Teaching Vocabulary (Q5 ⟶ Q7)

It investigates whether teachers teach vocabulary as such. In other words, do teachers present new words in every lesson? In addition to the teachers' perception of the different techniques, they mostly use when teaching any new words in class. It investigates also whether students have difficulty with vocabulary mastery, despite the different techniques teachers use to teach vocabulary.

Section three: Crossword Puzzle as a Teaching Strategy (G8 ⟶ G13)

This section deals with an important element in our research which is crossword puzzles. It investigates whether teachers of Written Expression use such a technique as a teaching materiel in class, as well as teachers' attitudes toward the use of them. i.e. their perception about the impact of crossword puzzles on students' knowledge of vocabulary.

1.3.2. Description of the Test

To collect data about the learners' knowledge in the area of vocabulary through crossword puzzles, a pre-test and a post-test were organized.

1.3.2.1. Description of the Pre-Test

In the pre-test, three sessions are devoted for solving three crossword puzzles. All of them embody one specific theme or register which is "Stages of Life" i.e. words like "baby, cry, walk, weaning, kindergarten, shots, child, teen, ring, date, grave, corpse, etc are included in the answers. Each session, students are supposed to fill only a diagramless crossword puzzle with the appropriate word place horizontally as well as vertically corresponding to the clues. This diagramless crossword puzzle contains a set of horizontally located letters and a set of vertically located numbers. The clues or the definitions are directed by them. For example, C2, the difficult words are explained at the bottom of the paper. The level of the students is taken into consideration. Thus, simple clues are used. At the end of each session, the crossword puzzle must be corrected with students on the board to guarantee that students will benefit from correct spelling. The definitions which are used in the first crossword puzzle are different from the definitions of the second and the third crossword puzzles in terms of meaning.

For the next session before teaching new words, a test on the previous session's words must be given to each student orally. Then, other new definitions must be used in the next crossword puzzle, in addition to the previous difficult definitions which students were unable to solve. In this respect, the goal intended is to see the extent of students' ability to remember the new words.

1.3.2.2. Description of the Post-Test

The fourth session is devoted to the post-test. Students are asked to write a paragraph about the stages of life. In this respect, the goal intended is to measure the degree of influence of using crossword puzzle for the acquisition of new words.

2. Analysis of the Results

2.1. Analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire

2.1.1. <u>Section One:</u> Teachers' Concern with the Affective Side of the Learner

- **Q1: Do you feel that your students are motivated to write in the English Language? And why?**

Options	N	%
Yes	02	28.29
No	05	71.71
Total	07	100

Table 2: Teachers' Perception of Students' Motivation in Writing

Most teachers (71.71%) say that their students are not motivated to write in the English Language. Only (28, 29%) state that their students are motivated to learn. The following question would give us a clear image of teachers' perception of their roles as far as this component of learning is concerned.

- **Q2: Do you think that it is the teachers' job to motivate students?**

Options	N	%
Yes	06	85.86
No	01	14.14
Total	07	100

Table 3: Teachers' Attitudes about the Task of Motivating Students

The result shows that all teachers (except one) corresponding to (85, 86%) state that it is their job to motivate students. This implies that teachers of Written Expression are aware of the great role motivation plays in successful language learning, and that besides giving knowledge, teaching should be seen as considering both the linguistic and the psychological side of the learner.

- **Q4: Do you try to establish a relaxed atmosphere?**

Options	N	%
Yes	07	100
No	00	00
Total	07	100

Table 4: Rate of Establishing a Relaxed Atmosphere

As it is shown in table 4, all teachers (100%) admit that they try to establish a relaxed atmosphere for learning. This means that they are aware of the importance of the relaxed atmosphere while learning. The following sections provide some strategies to achieve a relaxed atmosphere in learning vocabulary which is of our interest in this study.

2.1.2. <u>Section Two:</u> Teaching Vocabulary

- **Q5: Do you present new words in every lesson?**

Options	N	%
Yes	06	85.75
No	01	14.14
Total	07	100

Table 5: Teachers who Present New Words in Every Lesson

As it is indicated in table 5, all teachers (except one) corresponding to (85,75%) present new words in every lesson. This implies the importance that teachers of written expression give to vocabulary teaching.

Q6: When you teach new vocabulary do you use:

Options	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		If Necessary		Never		Total
Translation	00	**00**	00	**00**	02	**28,57**	04	**57,15**	01	**14,28**	07
Definition	02	**28,57**	03	**42,86**	00	**00**	02	**28,57**	00	**00**	07
Word in Context	04	**57,15**	02	**28,57**	00	**00**	01	**14,28**	00	**00**	07
Synonym/opposite	05	**71,44**	01	**14,28**	00	**00**	01	**14,28**	00	00	07

Table 6: Techniques used by Teachers when Teaching New Words

It appears from table 6 that the most used techniques are giving synonyms and opposites (05 teachers corresponding (71, 44%) said that they always use this technique) and putting words in context (04 teachers corresponding (57, 15%) said that they always use this technique). We think that these two techniques make the learners memorize the new words easily and help recalling them at any moment. Overall, (57, 15%) teachers state that they use translation "if necessary", in other words, after having recourse to all other techniques. This implies that teachers think that since they are teaching a FL, the use of the first language must be prohibited. They (42, 86%) have "sometimes" recourse to the use of definitions. This can be explained by the fact that it is difficult for the learners to memorize or write down a definition since most of the time the latter necessitates the useful of other unknown words. Each teacher gave some techniques with different degrees of use such as dictionary, giving examples, drawing on the board, and making gestures an mimes. The following question would give us a clear image of teachers' perception whether students have difficulty with vocabulary mastery.

- **Q7: Do students have difficulties with vocabulary mastery?**

Options	N	%
Yes	06	85.86
No	00	00
Sometimes	01	14.14
Total	07	100

Table 7: Students' Difficulties with Vocabulary Mastery

55

The results show that all teachers (85.86%),(except one), confirm that students really have difficulties with vocabulary mastery. Only one teacher corresponding to (14,14%) state that sometimes students have difficulties with vocabulary acquisition.

2.1.3. <u>Section Three:</u> Crossword Puzzles as a Teaching Strategy

- **Q8: Do you use language games in class?**

Options	N	%
Yes	02	28.29
No	05	71.71
Total	07	100

Table 8: Teachers who Use Language Games in Class

The table 8 indicates that the majority of teachers (71.71%) do not use language games. This implies that the teachers are not aware about the benefit and the advantages of using language games in class. Only (28.29%) use language games.

- **Q9: If yes, which ones?**

The two teachers, who said that they use language games in class, mentioned puzzles such as word search, and ordering scrambles letters to form correct words. Only one teacher mentioned crossword puzzles with no explanation.

- **Q10: Do you use crossword puzzles in class?**

Options	N	%
Yes	01	14.14
No	06	85.86
Total	07	100

Table 9: Teachers who Use Crossword Puzzles in Class

Most teachers of Written Expression in the department of English at university of Constantine corresponding to (85.86%), (except one) do not use crossword puzzles in class.

- **Q11: Do you think that the practice of crossword puzzles helps improve students' familiarity with new technique?**

Options	N	%
Yes	01	14.14
No	00	00
I don't know	06	85.86
Total	07	100

Table 10: Teachers' Perception about Crossword Puzzles and Students' Familiarity with New Words.

Since all teachers (except one) do not use crossword puzzles as a teaching material, Hence, most of them (85.86%) answered "I don't know". Only one teacher corresponding to (14.14%) confirms that crossword puzzles are so effective for acquiring new vocabulary items as well as improve students' familiarity with them through a lot of practice.

Q12: Do you consider teaching vocabulary through crossword puzzles is:

Options	N	%
a- An educational Strategy	00	00
b- An entertaining Strategy	00	00
c- Both	07	100
d- A waste of time	00	00
Total	07	100

Table 11: Teachers' Perception about Teaching Vocabulary via Crossword Puzzles

The table indicates that all teachers (100%) consider teaching vocabulary through crossword puzzles is both an educational and entertaining strategy. They might believe that students have fun while fill in the puzzle, and learning while having fun is so effective. And hence, it is considered as a way of motivating learners.

- **Q13: what is the educational value of practicing crossword puzzles?**

Despite the fact that all teachers (except one) corresponding to (85.86%) do not use crossword puzzles in their classes. Nevertheless, the majority of teachers (06 teachers) recognize the educational value or the pedagogical advantages of teaching vocabulary through crossword puzzles. Their recognition of the effectiveness of crossword puzzles differs from one teacher to another. The teachers' perception provides us with valuable advantages. Only one teacher did not answer this question at all. This can be due to the fact that he did not teach via crossword puzzle. Hence, he did not attribute his opinion neither emphasizing nor denying the fact of any benefit.

Out of the six teachers who claimed that crossword puzzle had some advantages, only one did not explain. The others, however, provided a variety of answers: to begin with, one teacher claimed that crossword has a very positive effect on student's motivation. The latter is raised and strengthened as students have more opportunities to show what they know. In the same vein, another teacher reports that a feeling of comfort can be generated in the students who would further enjoy activity. Furthermore, challenge is one component in solving a given crossword puzzle. The two categories of answers i.e. motivation and challenge raise the issue of practicing crossword puzzles in class makes students feel that they are incorporating in a competition between each other. Thus, fruitful achievement can be gained. The third category of answers is provided by two teachers. One raised the idea of knowledge of vocabulary can be increased through practicing crossword puzzles. This implies that the learners can face new words and phrases, they never met before. In the same vein, the other one emphasized that by doing numerous crossword puzzles; the students' familiarity with new words can be increased. The fourth category of answers is provided by another teacher. He confirms another important element in vocabulary knowledge via crossword puzzles. Visualising the word form with the exact spelling i.e. word's meaning and form (spelling) can be best

identified through practicing crossword puzzles. This implies that the learners' problem of vocabulary acquisition can be removed, and their self-confidence can be created through a lot of crossword puzzles. i.e. the learner can use words and he is aware and sure about the words' form (spelling) and meaning. Thus, academic achievements can be realized not only in writing but also in the reading speed.

2.2. Analysis of the Test

2.2.1. Analysis of the Pre-test

2.2.1.1. Description of the First Session (The Crossword + Atmosphere)

A diagramless crossword puzzle (cf. Appendix 2) was given to all the students of the group. It was about "stages of life". First, steps how the puzzle should be solved were given to the students. The difficult words were explained at the bottom of the paper. The clues were shown to them. The number of answer's letters was specified at the end of each clue. Dictionaries were allowed to help the students extract the meaning of words. Because of their level of proficiency in English, it was explained that they could ask any question, whenever they did not understand a given clue. Some advices concerning the crossword puzzle were given to them, for example, the Square before and after each answer must be blackened.

Students were actively involved in solving the crossword puzzle. Their teacher said: "Even that girl who never raised her hand, she is now participating and asking questions?!" Meanwhile, we drew the crossword puzzle on the board. When all students finished solving the crossword puzzle, we asked them to blacken all the white squares which wereleft. After, we have collected the papers, we started correcting them. we asked a volunteer student to give the answer and then write it on the board to guarantee that students will benefit from the correct spelling. Students were actively involved in participation. Many proposed answers

were flown in the class, which opened the door for challenge. Most students were co-operative and were challenging each other in an exciting way.

2.2.1.2. Analysis and Interpretation of the Students' First Crossword Puzzle

- **C2:** **Someone born yesterday. (4 letters)**

	N	%
Correct answers	20	100
Wrong answers	00	00
No answers	00	00
Total	20	100

Table 12: Students' Answers of the Clue C2

The first clue was a model for students to make things clear for them. In other words, steps how the crossword puzzle should be solved and the answer as an example, were given to the students. Hence, all students (100%) got the right answer as **"Baby".**

- **H2:** **Number of years old. (3 letters)**

	N	%
Correct answers	7	35
Wrong answers	12	60
No answers	1	5
Total	20	100

Table 13: Students' Answers of the Clue H2

The table shows that few students (35%) rightly answered the clue **H2** as **"Age".** the majority of students (60%) were not able to guess the meaning of it, and (5%) represents the rate of students who left the squares white. Despite the fact that simple words are used, nevertheless, the clue was difficult for students to be solved. This implies that students did not understand the meaning of the clue, and they were unable to find the right expression.

- **C4:** **Dead body. (6 letters)**

	N	%
Correct answers	20	100
Wrong answers	00	00
No answers	00	00
Total	20	100

Table 14: Students' Answers of the Clue C4

The result of the clue C4 was not as it was expected. All students (100%) were able to decipher the meaning of "Dead body". It was a surprising result, because many questions were asked during the session concerning this clue. The reason behind this is that, many different explanations of the same clue were given to the students. Hence, students' good inference came into play, and all of them rightly answered as **"Corpse".**

- **D6:** **Young person. (5 letters)**

	N	%
Correct answers	18	90
Wrong answers	02	10
No answers	00	00
Total	20	100

Table 15: Students Answers' of the Clue D6

The majority of students (90%) were able to guess the meaning of "Young person". They rightly defined it as "child". Nevertheless, sometimes the ability to spell the word correctly is much more interesting than the ability of understanding the meaning of a given clue. We believe that spelling is an impeding factor to write effectively as some students did in the clue "**D6**". (90%) of students got the right answer with the right spelling and (10%) of students were able to guess the meaning of the clue but with a wrong spelling of the word **Child** ⟶ Chald.

- **H8:** **Between 13 and 18. (4 letters)**

61

	N	%
Correct answers	**7**	35
Wrong answers	13	65
No answers	00	00
Total	20	100

Table 16: Students' Answers of the Clue H8

The majority of students (65%) did not understand the meaning of the clue **"H8"**. They misunderstood the overall meaning. In other words, they did not understand it as it is a period of person's life. Thus, the most of them wrongly answered it as "five". Whereas, (35%) of students got the right answer as **"Teen".**

- **C10 : Burial takes place here (5 letters)**

	N	%
Correct answers	17	85
Wrong answers	03	15
No answers	00	00
Total	20	100

Table 17: Students' Answers of the Clue C10

The table shows that the majority of learners (85%) were able to solve the clue **"C10"**. The reason behind this is that, the difficult word in the clue "burial" was explained at the bottom of the paper. This facilitated the job of the learners to guess the meaning. Moreover, different explanations of the same clue were presented during the session. While, students (15%), who got the wrong answer, were mistaken at the level of spelling, they used the word "Crave" instead of **"Grave"**. This implies that students' level of understanding is approximately very high.

- **A13: Grow...................gracefully. (3 letters)**

	N	%
Correct answers	6	30
Wrong answers	8	40
No answers	6	30
Total	20	100

Table 18: Students' Answers of the Clue A13

Despite of the different explanations which were presented during the session concerning this clue, nevertheless, the result shows that the majority of students (40% + 30%) were not able to fill in the gap of the clue. This implies that the clue **"A13"** was difficult for students to solve. Only (30%) got the right answer **"Old"**.

C7: Husband gives wife this. (4 letters)

	N	%
Correct answers	18	90
Wrong answers	2	10
No answers	00	00
Total	20	100

Table 19: Students' Answers of the Clue C7

The results were not as it was expected. Most students (90%) were able to solve the clue **"C7"**. They rightly answered, despite the fact that many questions were asked during the session concerning this clue. Hence, the results were surprising: only (10%) were unable to guess the meaning of the clue. The proposed answer was "love". Nevertheless, the correct answer is **"Ring".** The reason behind this is that students who worked across and down got the correct answer. This is because the letter "G" of the word "Grave" was an aid for students to guess the answer of the clue **"C7"**, because the letter "G" of the word "Grave" is the end of the word "Ring".

- **E2: Mothers give..............to a child. (5 letters)**

	N	%
Correct answers	14	70
Wrong answers	6	30
No answers	00	00
Total	20	100

Table 20: Students' Answers of the Clue E2

The table shows that all students were able to fill in the gap with the correct word **"birth"**. However, (30%) represents the number of students who got the right answer with wrong spelling. Their answers were "borth" instead of **"birth".**

E9: To use speech. (4 letters)

	N	%
Correct answers	20	100
Wrong answers	00	00
No answers	00	00
Total	20	100

Table 21: Students' Answers of the Clue E9

The result shows that the clue E9 was very easy for students to infer its meaning. Thus, all students (100%) got the right answer "to use speech" which is the equivalent of **"to talk"**. The number of answer's letters has also played an important role in solving the clue. This was evident when the proposed answer of many of the students during the session was "speak". But, "speak" contains five letters, whereas the number of the right answer is only four letters which is appeared at the end of the clue. Hence, students were obliged to find the equivalent of "speak" with four letters. Thus, all students (100%) got the right answer with the right spelling. We assume this due to the fact that this word is so common.

- **H1: Health..............(4letters)**

	N	%
Correct answers	00	00
Wrong answers	15	75
No answers	05	25
Total	20	100

Table 22: Students' Answers of the Clue H1

The table shows that all students (100%) were unable to fill in the clue **"H1"**. Some of them (25%) found it difficult to solve or to guess the right answer. Thus, they left the four squares white. Others (75%) have wrongly answered the clue. The proposed answer of the students was "safe". Nevertheless, the appropriate answer is **"care"**, "Health care". This implies that students were not familiar with such a collocation.

- **H6: Go on this before marriage. (4 letters)**

	N	%
Correct answers	6	30
Wrong answers	9	45
No answers	5	25
Total	20	100

Table 23: Students' Answers of the Clue H6

The result shows that (45%) of students wrongly answered the clue **"H6"**, (25%) of students found the clue difficult. In other words, they were unable to decipher the meaning of the clue. Hence, they left the squares white. Most of the students, who misunderstood the clue **"H8"**and answered it as "five", were not able to solve the **"H6"**. Only students (30%), who got the clue **"H8": "Between 13 and 18"** as **"Teen",** and the clue **"D6": "Young person"** as **"Child"**, were able to infer the meaning of the clue of "**H6": "Go on this before marriage"** as **"date"**. This is due to the fact that students who worked across and down were able to solve the clue, because the final letter of the word "Chil**d**" is the initial letter of the right answer of the clue **"H6"**. Moreover, the initial letter of the word "**T**een" is the final letter of

the right answer of the clue **"H6"**. This also, we assume, is due to the difficulty in understanding the phrasal verb "to go on", which does not mean "to go".

Conclusion

The analysis and interpretation of the crossword puzzle of the first session lead us to say that students were not familiar with the vocabulary of some clues. Nevertheless, the difficult words which were explained at the bottom of the paper, the number of the answer's letters which was given at the end of each clue, in addition to the different explanations of the clues during the session, and the aid of previously used letters facilitated the job of the students to solve the clues correctly. Furthermore, inferences played an important role to decode the meaning of the clues. However, sometimes the ability to spell the word correctly is much more interesting than the ability of understanding the meaning of a given clue. We believe that spelling is an impeding factor to write effectively. Thus, we will see in the next crossword puzzle whether students can memorize and remember the words which they learnt in the first crossword puzzle with the exact spelling. We will see whether students' mistakes can be remedied.

2.2.1.3. Description of the Second Session (The Crossword + Atmosphere)

Before the second crossword puzzle was given to the students, a test of the previous clues was given to each student as a reviewing tool. In other words, the definition or the clue was introduced by the teacher and the students were asked to find the answer "the word" orally, according to the proposed definition. Students were actively involved in the participation. The results showed that the students' answers were correct. Then, the second crossword puzzle (cf. Appendix 3) was given to them. It contained new definitions, in addition to the previous clues which the students found difficult in the first session. While the teacher was handing out the papers, students were excited to see the crossword puzzle; they

were hotly waiting to see if the clues were easy or difficult. Thus, students were seriously involved in solving the puzzle.

During the session, a relaxed atmosphere was available. Students were working seriously and asking questions whenever they did not understand a given clue. Both entertainment and education were present. This was evident, when many proposed answers were given to the teacher, to tell them if the answer is true or wrong. However, my answer was always "I don't know, we will see the correction together later on". At the end of the session, the crossword puzzle was drawn on the board. When all students finished filling the crossword puzzle, we asked them to blacken all the white squares which were left. After we collected the papers, we started correcting the crossword puzzle in class. We asked a student from the list to give the answer, and then, write it on the board to ensure spelling. All students were participating, and many proposed answers were given by them. Moreover, students were informed that each correct answer will have a positive influence on their T.D mark. Thus, all students were hotly involved in participating.

2.2.1.4. Analysis and Interpretation of the Students' Second Crossword Puzzle

- **D1:** **Frame for getting around. (6 letters)**

	N	%
Correct answers	00	00
Wrong answers	00	00
No answers	20	100
Total	20	100

Table 24: Students' Answers of the Clue D1

As indicated in table 24, all students (100%) were unable to answer this clue. It leads us to say that the clue **"D1"** was very difficult for students. They did not understand the meaning of the clue. They were not familiar with such a vocabulary or combination, despite the fact

that many different explanations of the same clue were presented during the session. However, the students left the squares white. **"Walker"** is the right answer of the **"D1"**.

- **A4:** **Vaccinations or...................(5 letters)**

	N	%
Correct answers	00	00
Wrong answers	04	20
No answers	16	80
Total	20	100

Table 25: Students' Answers of the Clue A4

The result shows that all students were not able to get the meaning of the word "vaccinations". The proposed answer of the students was "inject". Nevertheless, the word "vaccinations" is a noun and in a plural form. Thus, the answer would be in a plural form, because the clue and its answer must be related to each other in terms of tense and number as it was well illustrated in the second chapter. Hence, the students (20%) have wrongly answered with "inject". While others left the squares white. This leads us to say that the clue **"A4"** was difficult for students to solve with **"Shots".**

- **F6:** **Burial takes place here. (5 letters)**

	in the First Session		in the Second Session	
	N	%	N	%
Correct answers	17	85	20	100
Wrong answers	03	15	00	00
No answer	00	00	00	00
Total	20	100	20	100

Table 26: Students' Answers of the Clue F6 in the First and the Second Sessions

The results strikingly change from the first session to the second one. In the first session, (85%) of students got the right answer and (15%) of students got the wrong answer i.e. wrong spelling. However, after they recognized the right spelling in the first session, then,

all students (100%) have rightly answered the clue in the second session. This leads us to say that students' problem of spelling can be removed through practicing crossword puzzles.

- **G9:** **What a baby does after crawling. (4 letters)**

	N	%
Correct answers	20	100
Wrong answers	00	00
No answers	00	00
Total	20	100

Table 27: Students' Answers of the Clue G9

All students (100%) were able to solve the **"G9"**. This is due to that, the difficult word, "crawling" in the clue, was explained at the bottom of the paper. This facilitated the role of the students to guess the meaning. Hence, all students have rightly answered the clue as **"Walk"**.

- **I12:** **With age hair turns...............(4 letters)**

	N	%
Correct answers	17	85
Wrong answers	03	15
No answers	00	00
Total	20	100

Table 28: Students' Answers of the Clue I12

The result shows that the majority of students were able to fill in the clue **"I12"**. They were able to guess the meaning from the context of the clue. In addition to working across and down can help the students to solve the clue, because of the previously used letter **"Y"** of the word "Cr**y**". However, the other students (15%) who were the victims of spelling, their answers were "Griy" instead of **"Grey"** or **"Gray"**. This implies that students' inference played a crucial role in guessing the meaning of the clue. This process can improve students' critical thinking as well as intelligence which are important components for successful learning.

- **B10:** **Young person. (5 letters)**

<div style="text-align:center"><u>in the First Session</u>   <u>in the Second Session</u></div>

	N	%	N	%
Correct answers	18	90	20	100
Wrong answers	02	10	00	00
No answer	00	00	00	00
Total	20	100	20	100

Table 29: Students' Answers of the Clue B10 in the First and the Second Sessions

The results show an improvement of students' spelling of the word **"Child"** from (90%) to (100%). Since all students in the first session were able to guess the meaning of clue, only (02) students were unable to write the answer with the correct spelling. In the second session, all students (100%) were able to write the answer with the right spelling. This leads us to say that student's familiarity with new words with the exact spelling can be increased through practicing crossword puzzles.

- **A1:** **Toddlers often make a ....(4 letters)**

	N	%
Correct answers	00	00
Wrong answers	20	100
No answers	00	00
Total	20	100

Table 30: Students' Answers of the Clue A1

Despite the fact that the difficult word "toddlers" was explained at the bottom of the paper, and many explanations were given to the students concerning this clue during the session. Nevertheless, no one got the right answer. All students (100%) were unable to fill in the clue **"A1"**. The reason behind this is that students found the clue difficult, and they were not familiar with such a vocabulary.

- **D1:** **To create letters. (5 letters)**

	N	%
Correct answers	19	95
Wrong answers	01	05
No answers	00	00
Total	20	100

Table 31: Students' Answers of the Clue D1

The table shows that the majority of students (95%) were able to answer the clue **"D1"**. Most students were rightly defined it as **"Write",** they have understood the meaning of the clue. However, sometimes students have the ability to think and understand the meaning of a given clue; whereas, spelling can be an obstacle to the students to write the word correctly as what the student, who were wrong, did "wreit" instead of **"Write"**.

G1: ....garten (6 letters)

	N	%
Correct answers	20	100
Wrong answers	00	00
No answers	00	00
Total	20	100

Table 32: Students' Answers of the Clue G1

The table 32 shows that all students (100%) were able to solve the clue **"G1"**. The result was not as it was expected. It was surprising, because many students were asking about the meaning of "garten" during the session. The reason behind this is that. Many explanations were given to them as; the word "garten" is a half of a word, students are supposed to complete the word by adding the other half. It means "**a school for very young children, aged from 3 to 5 years**". Thus, all students were rightly answered as **"Kindergarten".**

- **I9: Blessing for.............life (4 letters)**

	N	%
Correct answers	17	85
Wrong answers	03	15
No answers	00	00
Total	20	100

Table 33: Students' Answers of the Clue I9

The results show that the majority of students were able to solve the clue **"I9"**. The previously used letter "L" of the word "wa**l**k" facilitated the students guess work. Then, the students' inferences came into play. Hence, most students (85%) have rightly answered as **"long"**. However, sometime the ability to write the word correctly i.e. spelling is much more interesting than the ability of understanding a given clue, because spelling can be an impeding factor to write correctly as what the students (15%), who were wrong, did "lang" instead of **"long"**.

- **J4:** **Between 13 and 18. (4 letters)**

	in the First Session		in the Second Session	
	N	%	N	%
Correct answers	7	35	19	95
Wrong answers	13	65	01	05
No answer	00	00	00	00
Total	20	100	20	100

Table 34: Students' Answers of the Clue J4 in the First and the Second Sessions

The results strikingly change from the first crossword puzzle to the second one. In effect, in the first crossword puzzle, the majority of students (65%) misunderstood the overall meaning of the clue. In other words, they did not understand it as it is a period of a person's life. Thus, most of them have wrongly answered it as "five". However, the majority of them (95%), in the second crossword puzzle, rightly answered it as "Teen". The (5%) which represents one student out of twenty was the victim of spelling "tean" instead of **"Teen"**. It is undoubtedly that crossword puzzles have helped in the acquisition of new words with mainly exact spelling.

- **L2:** **Husband gives wife this. (4 letters)**

	in the First Session		in the Second Session	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**
Correct answers	18	90	20	100
Wrong answers	02	10	00	00
No answer	00	00	00	00
Total	20	100	20	100

Table 35: Students' Answers of the Clue L2 in the First and the Second Sessions

The results show that there is an improvement from the first crossword puzzle to the second one (from 90% to 100%). After students have recognized the meaning of the clue as **"Ring"**, (100%) of them rightly answered the clue. There is also a decrease in the number of students who gave wrong answer from 02 to 00. These results lead to a positive conclusion that crossword can increase students familiarity with new words and create more confidence in the learners.

- **L10: First thing a baby does (3 letters)**

	N	**%**
Correct answers	20	20
Wrong answers	00	00
No answers	00	00
Total	20	100

Table 36: Students' Answers of the Clue L10

All students (100%) were able to solve the clue **"L10"** as **"Cry"** in terms of meaning and spelling. They found it easy. In addition to the previously used letter "y" of the word "grey", this facilitated the guess work of the learners.

- **C6: Mothers give...............to a child. (5 letters)**

	in the First Session		in the Second Session	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**
Correct answers	14	70	17	85
Wrong answers	06	30	03	15
No answer	00	00	00	00
Total	20	100	20	100

Table 37: Students' Answers of the Clue C6 in the First and the Second Sessions

The results show that there is progress but not a complete one (from 70% to 85%). All students were able to fill in the clue. However, most students (85%) rightly answered as far as meaning and spelling are concerned. But few students (15%) still made mistakes at the level spelling, For example, "borth" instead of **"birth"**.

In spite of this latter result, we note that there is a positive decrease in terms of the number of students who gave wrong answers i.e. (wrong spelling) from (06) in the first crossword puzzle to (03) in the second one. The result obtained for answering the clue **"C6"** show that practicing crossword puzzles have increased the percentage of the acquisition of the word **"birth"**. The score is higher in the second crossword puzzle (85%).

Conclusion

The analysis and interpretation of the second crossword puzzle reveals that first year students could benefit from practicing crossword puzzles. Since, they enjoy learning and that they can develop a certain amount of acquisition of words in terms of meaning and spelling they are not necessary familiar with. Thus, learner's confidence is asserted.

2.2.1.5. Description of the Third Session

The third session was done on Monday from 14:00 to 15:30 of the second week. A diagramless (cf. Appendix 4) crossword puzzle was given to the students. It contains new definitions related to the theme "Stages of Life", in addition to the previously difficult clues in which students were unable to give the exact answer. The difficult and new words are explained at the bottom of the paper, some fill in the blank clues are used for allowing students to guess the meaning of new words and then, memorize them in their minds. While the teacher was distributing the papers, the students were excited to see the definitions; they were waiting hotly if the clues are easy or difficult. Students were used to solve crossword

puzzles; they enjoyed learning when they found the class material as an activity that can be fun and educational at the same time.

Challenge was one of the main interests of students. In other words, many proposed answers were given by students during the session to see who is right and who is wrong. Students' interest is unavoidable. They asked many questions whenever they did not understand a given word or a clue.

2.2.1.6. Analysis and Interpretation of the Students' Third Crossword Puzzle

- **E4:** **Burial takes place here. (5 letters)**

	in the First Crossword		in the Second Crossword		in the Third Crossword	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Correct answers	17	20	20	100	20	100
Wrong answers	03	00	00	00	00	00
No answer	00	00	00	00	00	00
Total	20	20	100	100	20	100

Table 38: Students' Answers of the Clue E4 in the First, Second, and Third Crossword Puzzle

The results show that after students have dealt with this clue many times, they became familiar with such a vocabulary. Thus, all the students' (100%) answers were correct. These lead us to say that crossword puzzles can help students to memorize new words, and then become familiar with them and they can use them in their speech and writing unconsciously.

- **A6:** **After wearing a baby will............(3 letters)**

	N	%
Correct answers	20	100
Wrong answers	00	00
No answer	00	00
Total	20	100

Table 39: Students' Answers of the Clue A6

Once students understood the meaning of the new word "weaning" which was explained at the bottom of the paper as "start feeding a baby with another food"; students' inferences came into play and all of them (100%) were able to fill in the blank and rightly answered it as **"Eat"**. This implies that the clue **"A6"** was very easy for students to fill in the gap, because they were familiar with such a vocabulary. This is why they rightly answered the clue.

- **F6:** **Between 13 and 18. (4 letters)**

	in the First Crossword		in the Second Crossword		in the Third Crossword	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Correct answers	7	35	19	95	20	100
Wrong answers	13	65	01	05	00	00
No answer	00	00	00	00	00	00
Total	20	100	20	100	20	100

Table 40: Students' Answers of the Clue F6 in the First, Second, and Third   Crossword Puzzle

The results show that there is a striking improvement from the first session to the third session. In the first crossword puzzle, the majority of students (65%) misunderstood the overall meaning of the clue. In other words, they did not understand it as a period of a person's life. Thus, most of them have wrongly answered it as "five". However, after students have recognized the meaning of the clue, then most of them (95%) were able to answer the clue correctly in the second crossword puzzle. There is also a decrease in the number of students who gave wrong answers (from 13 to 1), the one student who was wrong, it was a matter of spelling. In the third crossword puzzle, all students (100%) have rightly answered it as far as meaning and spelling are concerned.

It is undoubtedly that practicing crossword puzzles can increase students' knowledge of vocabulary in terms of meaning and spelling as well. In other words, they can help in the

acquisition of new words in terms of meaning and spelling, they are not necessarily familiar with.

- **B10:** Vaccinations or................(5 letters)

	in the Second Crossword		in the Third Crossword	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**
Correct answers	00	00	20	100
Wrong answers	04	20	00	00
No answer	16	80	00	00
Total	20	100	20	100

Table 41: Students' Answers of the Clue B10

The results strikingly change from the second crossword puzzle to the third one. In the second crossword puzzle, the students were not able to guess the equivalent meaning of "vaccinations". No one got the right answer. The majority of students (80%) left the squares white. The proposed answers were "inject". Nevertheless, the word "vaccinations" is a noun in the plural form. Hence, the answer would be in plural, because the clue has a great relationship with its answer in terms of tense and number as it is stated in the second chapter. Thus, the students (20%) have wrongly answered it as "inject". However, the result was just the opposite in the third crossword puzzle. All students (100%) were able to answer the clue **"B10"**. The reason behind this is that, students were not familiar with such a vocabulary. i.e. with the word **"Shots"** until they have recognized the new word in the previous session, then, they memorized it. These results lead us to say that the students' acquisition of new words and familiarity with them can be increased through practicing crossword puzzle.

- **H10:** Bring home a report............(4 letters)

	N	**%**
Correct answers	15	75
Wrong answers	00	00
No answer	05	25
Total	20	100

Table 42: Students' Answers of the Clue H8

The results were not as they were expected. During the session, students have asked many questions concerning this clue. They did not understand the meaning of the clue, despite the fact that simple words are used. However, the results show that most students (75%) were able to fill in the clue. In other words, they rightly answered it as **"card".** The reason behind this is that, students who worked across and down together could guess the remaining letters, in addition to the previously answered ones. This operation could, we think, facilitate the role of the learners to infer the answer from the previously used letters. Thus, this result confirms what has been said in the literature review that with practicing crossword puzzles, students can practice their skills in making inferences, evaluating choices, and drawing up possible conclusions.

However, few students (25%) have low inferences making and evaluating. Thus, they were unable to fill in the clue **"H10".** They left the squares white.

- **E12: Get this after college. (3 letters)**

	N	%
Correct answers	20	100
Wrong answers	00	00
No answer	00	00
Total	20	100

Table 43: Students' Answers of the Clue E12

The table shows that all students found the clue **"E12"** easy. Thus, all of them got the right answer **"Job"**. Students were familiar with such a vocabulary. Hence, all of them (100%) were able to infer the meaning of the clue "get this after college". This result was due to the easiness of the clue.

- **A1: Frame for getting around. (6 letters)**

	in the Second Crossword		in the Third Crossword	
	N	%	N	%
Correct answers	01	05	20	100
Wrong answers	00	00	00	00
No answer	19	95	00	00
Total	20	100	20	100

Table 44: Students' Answers of the Clue A1 in the Second and the Third Sessions

The results strikingly change from the second to the third crossword puzzle. They show a progress from (5% to 100 %) concerning the correct answers. There is also a decrease in the number of students who did not answer at all, those who left the squares white (from 19% to 00%). The results are surprising. These improvements show that students were not familiar with such new words. Hence, after they are exposed to such a vocabulary especially through crossword puzzles, memorization is asserted, and it is showed in the results that all students (100%) rightly answered the clue.

This leads us to say that crossword puzzles have contributed in the acquisition of new words such "Walker", "Teen", "Grave", and "Shots" and have increased students familiarity with them. Furthermore, they helped in creating more confidence in the learners (all students gave the right answer in the third crossword puzzle).

- **I1: Health....................(4 letters)**

	in the First Crossword		in the Third Crossword	
	N	%	N	%
Correct answers	00	00	20	100
Wrong answers	15	75	00	00
No answer	05	25	00	00
Total	20	100	20	100

Table 45: Students' Answers of the Clue I1 in the First and the Third Sessions

A total progress has been observed from the first to the third crossword puzzle. A striking improvement change from (00% to 100%) concerning the right answers. Since there is a progress, obviously there is a decrease in the number of students who save wrong answers

(from 75% to 00%) as well as the number of students who did not answer at all (25% to 00%). In the first session, (75%) of students have recognized that the word "safe" is the right answer. While the word **"care"** was the most appropriate one as "Health care". Hence, most students have wrongly answered this clue. However, after they recognized the appropriate and right answer while the correction at the end of the session; they have understood it as being **"Health care"**. Thus, all students (100%) rightly answered the clue **"I1"**. It is undoubtedly that crossword puzzles helped in the acquisition of new words as well as increase students' familiarity with them in terms of meaning and spelling as well.

- **C6: Many elderly have false................(5 letters)**

	N	%
Correct answers	01	05
Wrong answers	06	30
No answer	13	65
Total	20	100

Table 46: Students' Answers of the Clue C6

The majority of students were not able to fill in the blank of the clue. (65%) of the total respondents left the squares white, and few students (30%) save wrong answers. The proposed answer of students was "teach". However, the right answer is **"Teeth"**. Only one student out of twenty corresponding (5%) got the right answer. The reason behind this is that, in addition to the previously used letters such as the letter **"T"** of the word "Ea*t*" and the letter **"H"** of the word "s*h*ots" and students' good inference. He got the right answer because the letter **"T"** is the initial, and the latter "H" is the final of the right answer **"Teeth"**.

- **E7: A heart.................indicates life. (4 letters)**

	N	%
Correct answers	17	85
Wrong answers	03	15
No answer	00	00
Total	20	100

Table 47: Students' Answers of the Clue E7

The table shows that the majority of students (85%) were able to fill in the blank of the clue **"E7"** by guessing the meaning from the context of the clue, in addition to the aid of the previously used letter **"T"** of the word "sho**t**s", because the letter **"T"** is the final of the right answer **"beat"**. However, sometimes the ability to spell a word correctly is much more interesting than the ability of understanding of a given clue because spelling can be an impeding factor to write effectively. This is the case of students (15%) who wrongly answered the clue as "peat" instead of **"beat"**. A phoneme distorts the whole meaning.

- **G2: A level at school (5 letters)**

	N	%
Correct answers	12	60
Wrong answers	00	00
No answer	08	40
Total	20	100

Table 48: Students' Answers of the Clue G2

The majority of students (60%) were able to guess the meaning of the clue **"G2".** The proposed answers of students were "Grade" or "Stage". Both answers are correct, but, most of the students used the word "Stage" rather than "Grade". They are not aware enough about the word "Grade". (40%) of them counted five squares to fit the answer's number and left them white. Then, they blackened the square before and after these five squares. This leads us to say that they did not find the equivalent word, or expression to the clue "G2" i.e. they were not familiar with such a vocabulary, or they did not understand the meaning of the clue, despite the fact that many explanations were given to them concerning this clue.

- **I1: Many elderly walk with a ....(4 letters)**

	N	%
Correct answers	02	10
Wrong answers	00	00
No answer	18	90
Total	20	100

Table 49: Students' Answers of the Clue I1

As indicated in table 49, the majority of students were unable to fill in the blank of the clue. They did not find the suitable word to fill in the gap. Most of the (90%) left the squares white. Only (10%) who got the right answer as **"cane"**. This is due to the help of the previously used letters such as the letter **"C"** of the word "**C**are", which is the initial letter of the right answer, in addition to the final letter of the word "Grav**e**"; **"E"**. Moreover, students' inference plays an important role in guessing the meaning of the clue. The is due to the unfamiliarity of this word.

- **I9**: not to fail. (4 letters)

	N	%
Correct answers	20	100
Wrong answers	00	00
No answer	00	00
Total	20	100

Table 50: Students' Answers of the Clue I9

The clue I9 was very easy for students to find the opposite of "to fail". Thus, all students have rightly answered it as **"Pass"**.

- **K6**: Young person. (5 letters)

	in the First Crossword		in the Third Crossword	
	N	%	N	%
Correct answers	18	90	20	100
Wrong answers	02	10	00	00
No answer	00	00	00	00
Total	20	100	20	100

Table 51: Students' Answers of the Clue K6 in the First and the Third Crossword Puzzles

The results strikingly change from the first session to the third one. In the first crossword puzzle, the meaning of the clue **"Young person"** was known by all the students. Nevertheless, spelling was an impeding factor for some students. They answered "Chald" instead of **"Child"**. However, in the third crossword puzzle, our aim is achieved; because all students (100%) got the right answer with the right spelling. This leads us to say that the students' problem of spelling of the word "Child" is remedied through practicing crossword puzzles.

- **C1:** **Blessing for.................life. (4 letters)**

	in the Second Crossword		in the Third Crossword	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**
Correct answers	17	85	19	95
Wrong answers	03	15	01	05
No answer	00	00	00	00
Total	20	100	20	100

Table 52: Students' Answers of the Clue C1 in the Second and Third Crossword Puzzles

The results show that there is a little improvement from the second crossword puzzle to the third one (from 85% to 95%). All students were able to fill in the clue. The striking point is that. Most of them (95%) rightly answered as far as meaning and spelling are concerned. However, few of them (5%) are still making mistakes at the level of spelling; for example "lang" instead of **"long"**.

In spite of this latter result, we note that a positive decrease in terms of the number of students who gave wrong answers i.e. (wrong spelling) from 03 in the second crossword puzzle to 01 in the third one. The result obtained for answering the clue **"C1"** show that practicing crossword puzzles has increased the percentage of the acquisition of the word **"long"** (the score is higher in the third crossword puzzle).

- **A5:** **Toddlers often make a............ (4 letters)**

	in the Second Crossword		in the Third Crossword	
	N	%	N	%
Correct answers	00	00	20	100
Wrong answers	20	100	00	00
No answer	00	00	00	00
Total	20	100	20	100

Table 53: Students' Answers of the Clue A5 in the Second and Third Crossword Puzzles

Concerning the clue **"A5"**, the results show that there is a striking improvement change from the second crossword puzzle to the third on from (00% to 100%). On the second crossword puzzle, all students without exception wrongly answered the clue as a "step". We do not deny the fact that "toddlers" often make a step. But, this is not the right answer according to the horizontal answer "Shots", because the last letter of the answer is the initial letter for the word "Shots". Hence, all students were unable to get the right answer. However, after students have recognized the right answer in the second session, they, all rightly answered the clue as **"Mess"**. This leads us to say that practicing crossword puzzle helped in the acquisition and memorization of the word **"Mess",** and increased students' familiarity with it.

Conclusion

The analysis and the interpretation of the third crossword puzzle allow us to say that crossword puzzles can develop the learners' comprehension of words that they are not necessary familiar with before, and increase their familiarity with them in terms of meaning and spelling. Thus, the learners' confidence is asserted. It is undoubtedly that crossword puzzles are an excellent way to review vocabulary, as students immediately know their answers are incorrect if they do not fit the puzzle. Then, they can benefit from the teacher's immediate feedback at the end of each session.

Moreover, if students cannot figure out the answer, they can simply count the squares in the puzzle, find word equal length and then try to deduce the correct answer. We will see in

the next section, if students can use these words which they learnt from the first session until the third one in their written assignments.

After analysing both teachers' questionnaire and students' test, now an attempt is made to compare the obtained results from the two perspectives to see what teachers of Written Expression at the department of languages at Mentouri university of Constantine actually do in class to teach vocabulary, and whether they incorporate crossword puzzles in teaching, and the students application to crossword puzzles.

2.3. Discussion of the Results

The majority of teachers of Written Expression said that their students are not motivated to write in the English language. This result can be due to many factors, of which the most important are, according to most teachers, fear of committing grammatical mistakes, problem at the level of punctuation and organization of ideas, lack of vocabulary items i.e. they may have not adequate vocabulary, how to carry on or express their ideas, or lack of interest in the writing topics themselves. As it is stated in the second chapter, motivation is extremely necessary for students in order to carry out their writing task. Thus, teachers should find their ways to motivate students and should look for the real problems of their students and create efficient methods for teaching. Consequently, student' problems can be removed.

It is revealed that teachers of Written Expression are aware of the great role motivation plays in successful language learning, and that besides giving knowledge, teaching should be seen as considering both the linguistic and the psychological side of the learner.

The reason of the teachers who said that it is their job to motive students is that; creating a good learning atmosphere can be of major benefit to the learners. Thus, they would feel comfortable with learning and be encouraged to write even if their English is not that good. One teacher is completely convinced by the idea that the teacher should motivate his

students to write and that teachers have nothing to do in the classroom except motivating students to learn.

The only teacher answered saying that it is not the teacher's job to motivate students argues that there are many factors that interfere in determining the learner's motivation, and the teacher would not be able to fight these external factors. Another argument is that students' intrinsic motivation can be undermined if the teacher tries to motivate them, and that is in the form of extrinsic motivation.

In sum, the notion of motivation seems to be understood differently by our teachers, and this leads to adopt various procedures to deal with their students. But, generally, motivation seems to have a place in their teaching plans. Furthermore, they consider the psychological side of the learner and understand that it is of a paramount importance for successful language learning.

All teachers admit that they try to establish a relaxed atmosphere for learning. This implies that they are aware of the great importance of providing such an atmosphere while learning. Creating a relaxed atmosphere helps students a lot and will have a very positive effect on the way they behave in class as well as the way they look at learning. Thus, fruitful achievements can be realized. They would change too, their views of learning which are generally looked at as a serious process in a serious milieu in which teachers give knowledge to students and the latter are supposed to receive it.

In fact, teachers have a variety of ways for creating the good learning context that students need in order to be well engaged in learning, and they are also aware of the great importance of the relaxed atmosphere plays while learning.

The results show that teachers present new words in every lesson. This implies the importance that teachers of Written Expression give to vocabulary teaching i.e. they are aware of the importance of it, considering it as a paramount component in their teaching of a FL.

The most used techniques are giving synonyms and opposites (05 teachers said that they "always" use this technique) and putting words in context (04 teachers said that they "always" use this technique). We think that these two techniques make the learners memorize the new easily and help recalling them at any moment. Overall, teachers state that they use translation "if necessary", in other words, after having recourse to all other techniques. This implies that teachers think that since they are teaching a FL, the use of the first language must be prohibited. They have "sometimes" recourse to the use of definitions. This can be explained by the fact that it is difficult for the learners to memorize or write down a definition since most of the time the latter necessitates the useful of other unknown words.

Each teacher gave some techniques with different degrees of use. All the teachers mentioned dictionary as another technique that they mostly use when presenting new words. Their reason is that, they give their learners the opportunity to look up the words in dictionary. By doing that, the learners' knowledge of words meaning, form, spelling, pronunciation, and word class can be increased. Some teachers mentioned other techniques - drawing on the board, making gestures and mimes and giving examples- which are mostly used when presenting new words. This implies that the teachers' goal is to enhance students' skills in thinking, making inferences, and drawing up possible conclusions. The result obtained about teaching vocabulary show the importance given by the teachers to teach vocabulary using different techniques of presentation and explanation. However, there was no congruity between the techniques used by the teachers on the one hand and the students' difficulty of vocabulary mastery on the other hand. In other words, despite of the techniques which are used by the teachers; nevertheless, teachers state that students still have difficulty with vocabulary mastery. This implies that efficient methods might be needed to help learners acquire and remember the new words easily.

The majority of teachers do not use language games. This implies that the teachers are not aware about the benefits and the advantages of using language games in class. The two teachers, who said that they use language games in class, mentioned puzzles such as word search. This latter implies that the teacher's goal is to increase student's familiarity with words' form. The second puzzle is ordering scrambles letters to form correct words. Only one teacher mentioned crossword puzzles with no explanation.

The results also proved that most teachers of Written Expression at the department of languages at Mentouri University of Constantine (except one) do not use crossword puzzles in teaching. This question enables us to discover that it seems that they are not so enlightened about this technique in the field of teaching. This can be due to either to teachers' ignorance of this important technique in their form of teaching or to the consistency in their procedure with what they are actually doing.

However, despite the fact that teachers of Written Expression do not use crossword puzzles in class, Nevertheless, All teachers consider that teaching vocabulary via crossword puzzles is both an educational and entertaining strategy. They believe that students have fun while filling-in the puzzle and learning while having fun is so effective. Thus, it is considered as a way of motivating learners. The majority of teachers recognize the educational value or the pedagogical advantages of teaching vocabulary through crossword puzzles. Their recognition of the effectiveness of crossword puzzles differs from one teacher to another. The teachers' perception provides us with valuable advantages. Only one teacher does not answer this question at all. This can be due to the fact that he did not teach via crossword puzzles. Hence, he did not attribute his opinion neither emphasizing nor denying the fact of any benefit.

Out of the six teachers who claimed that crossword puzzle has some advantages, only one did not explain. The others, however, provided a variety of answers to begin with, one

teacher claim that crossword has a very positive effects on student's motivation. The latter is raised and strengthened as students have more opportunities to show what they know. In the same vein, another teacher reports that a feeling of comfort can be generated in the students who would further enjoy activity. Furthermore, challenge is one component in solving a given crossword puzzle. The two categories of answers i.e. motivation and challenge raise the issue of practicing crossword puzzles in class makes them feel that they are incorporating in a competition between each other. Thus, fruitful achievement can be realized.

The third category of answers is provided by two teachers. One raised the idea of knowledge of vocabulary can be increased through practicing crossword puzzles. This implies that the learners can face new words and phrases, they never knew before. In the same vein, the other teacher emphasizes that by doing numerous crossword puzzles; the students' familiarity with new words can increase.

The fourth category of answers is provided by another teacher. He confirms another important element in vocabulary knowledge via crossword puzzles. Visualising the word form with the exact spelling i.e. word's meaning and form (spelling) can be best identified through practicing crossword puzzles. This implies that the learners' problem of vocabulary acquisition can be remedied, and their self-confidence can be created through crossword puzzles. i.e. the learner can use words and he is aware and sure about the words' form (spelling) and meaning. Thus, academic achievements can be gained not only in writing but also in the reading speed.

Analysing the students' pre-test has revealed that first year students can benefit from practicing crossword puzzles. Since, they enjoy learning and that they can develop a certain amount of acquisition of words in terms of meaning and exact spelling, they were not necessarily familiar with before, and increase students' familiarity with them. Thus, the learners' confidence is asserted.

The difficult words which students were unable to solve of each previous crossword puzzle are purposefully inserted in the following one. Surprisingly, there was a striking improvement from the first session to the second to the third crossword puzzle in terms of comprehension of words' meaning such as the words, "Vaccinations" = **"Shots",** "Between 13 and 18" = **"Teen",** "Number of years old" **= "Age", "**Frame for getting around" = **"Walker"**, and the collocation **"Health care".** In addition to some fill-in blank clues, such as "Toddlers often make a **mess**", "Grow **old** gracefully". "Bring home a report **Card**", "Many elderly walk with a **cane**". This leads us to say that it is undoubtedly that crossword puzzles have contributed in the acquisition of new words, and have increased students' familiarity with them. Furthermore, they helped in creating more confidence in the learners (all students gave the right answer in the third crossword puzzle).

Students also, who were the victims of spelling, have recognized their mistakes and remedied them. In other words, a positive progress also strikingly changes in terms of spelling from the first crossword puzzle to the third one, such as the words, "Chald" to **"Child",** "Lang" to **"Long",** "Wreit" to **"Write", "**Peat" to **"Beat",** "Crave" to **"Grave",** "Tean" to **"Teen",** "Borth" to **"Birth", and** "Griy" to **"Grey or Gray"**. Since there is a positive progress obviously there is a decrease in the number of students who gave answers. This leads us to say that student's familiarity with new words with the exact spelling can be increased through practicing crossword puzzles. They have increased students' knowledge of vocabulary in terms of meaning and spelling as well. These improvements show that students were not familiar with such new words. Hence, after they are exposed to such a vocabulary especially through crossword puzzles, memorization is asserted, and it is showed in the results that students rightly answered the clues.

It is undoubtedly that crossword puzzles are an excellent way to review vocabulary, as students immediately know their answers are incorrect if they do not fit the puzzle. Then, they

can benefit from the teacher's immediate feedback at the end of each session. Moreover, if students cannot figure out the answer, they can simply count the squares in the puzzle, find word of equal length and then try to deduce the correct answer.

The explained words at the bottom of the each crossword puzzle, and the aid of the previously used letters, in addition to students' inference helped students a lot to decode or decipher the meaning of the clues. Thus, this result confirms what has been said in the literature review that in practicing crossword puzzles, students can practice their skills in making inferences, evaluating choices, and drawing up possible conclusions.

Furthermore, for the post-test students did not use all the words they have learned in the three crossword puzzles because some words did not see fit. The reason behind this is that, students did not focus on details in their written assignments. This is why, they did not use words such as "ring, teeth, shots, and beat" which are not directly related to stages of life. Furthermore, some words such as "walker, card, pass, date, grey, and corpse" do not fit the context. Consequently, students have used only what is relevant such as "baby, birth, cry, eat, child, talk, walk, kindergarten, teen, old, age, job, care, long, cane, grade, stage, grave". In addition to some phrases such as, "between 13 and 18", "many elderly walk with a cane" and "the first thing a baby does", are included in the students' written assignments. The words that are not relevant to the topic have been included by the researcher on purpose in order to test the students' understanding or ability to use only what is relevant (words that are relevant). Surprisingly, students show positive signs of being able to use only the relevant words. This is positive in the sense that they avoided padding.

In fact, they have achieved more than what they were really expected to do. In other words, the researcher was expecting that his respondents would use 4 or 5 out of the 28 words given. Surprisingly, they have used many more: 18 out of 28.

As a conclusion of this, we can say that students responded well to our teaching. This also means that if we take our time to explain everything to students, we can -then- expect such good responses.

Finally, the results have proved that most teachers of Written Expression do not use crossword puzzles in teaching vocabulary in class. Nevertheless, it is proved that it is a good means in the field of teaching foreign language lexical items. Thus, teachers are not aware of the specificity of this activity in developing the students' knowledge of vocabulary, and make them autonomous writers as far as the linguistic component is concerned.

General Conclusion and Recommendations

As a basic skill in the English language, vocabulary is one important aspect of writing that can be taught in various ways depending on the teacher background, and students' preferences. However, teachers should know that the learning process can be greatly affected by the psychological factor "motivation". In fact, this factor was found to have strong effects on the learner as well as his achievement. On the affective side, crossword puzzles can raise students' motivation, foster their self-confidence, and lower their anxiety.

The first chapter deals with the importance of vocabulary considering it as one of the paramount elements that influences successful writing. Then, steps for teaching and learning vocabulary, as well as teachers' centred strategies and techniques for teaching this aspect of language are mainly highlighted.

In the second chapter, a comparison between traditional language teaching; in which the teacher plays the central role in class, and the learner centred instruction; in which the learner is responsible for his learning, and the teacher is merely a guide, is present. This latter emerged as opposed to the former type of teaching and it is emphasized by recent teaching methods and also CLT. Then, a clear image about crossword puzzles is provided, including its definition, terminology, the variant types of it, and its type of clues and grid, in addition to its educational value.

This research investigation - the degree of the impact of crossword puzzles as a technique on vocabulary acquisition of first year students- was carried out to answer the statement of the problem: whether the teaching of a foreign language through the use of crossword puzzles as an activity helps students acquire new vocabulary items and use them in their written production. In other terms, whether students learn vocabulary through crossword puzzles, their level of achievements in writing in terms of lexical items' usage, exact spelling, and memorization will increase. In this context, the teachers questionnaire has given

important data about their concerns with the affective side of the learners, and how they teach and present new vocabulary items showing their preference for one technique or another. The results have shown that our teachers care about the students' psychological side in that they motivate them, try to provide a relaxed atmosphere for them, and support them. Nevertheless, teachers' techniques to support their learners' are somehow limited. For one reason or another, some teachers do not probably bother themselves looking for these techniques, and others may have an idea about these techniques, but they do not use them. Despite the fact that teachers at the department of languages at Mentouri university of Constantine do not use such a technique in their classes, they showed a positive view about using crossword puzzles in class.

The results of the test showed that the learners acquired more than half of the words they did not know with different degrees of attainment. Likewise, they have also confirmed the research hypothesis that such activities referred to as crossword puzzles contribute greatly in the development of foreign learners' vocabulary acquisition of first year students, as well as increase students' familiarity with them, which result in rich written production.

The experiment has demonstrated the need of the learners for practicing crossword puzzles can be beneficial to them, in the educational side and the emotional one. Thus, the use of this kind of activities in foreign language teaching/learning is a good means, not only to develop the language, but the learners' also will be able to practice their skills in making inferences, evaluating choices, and drawing up possible conclusions.

Therefore, future teachers are asked to critically examine their ways of teaching and make some changes if necessary. Crossword puzzles proved to have good effects on the learners' affective side (the psychological side of the learners) in the sense that they motivate students and provide great challenges between them in order to achieve the task. As they create more self-confidence to the learners. On the academic level, practicing crossword

puzzles helped the learners to develop the degree of comprehensibility, acquired new vocabulary items, and have increased students' familiarity with them as far as spelling and meaning are concerned, in addition to their usefulness to enrich their written production. We believe that a strong vocabulary gives the students the right words to use at the right time. In order to make this type of activities play the role they are intended for, syllabus makers and future teachers should consider it and give it the place it deserves in the teaching/learning process. In the light of our analysis and findings, we recommend the following:

- that it has become a necessity to think about how to make learners get this type of activities in English, since we noticed their wish to be procured with more activities of such type.

- that syllabus designers, should introduce crossword puzzles in a syllabus that will be intended for first year English students at the university level.

- that they should exploit the learners' writing in the practice of the language by asking students to write paragraphs related to what they have practiced in solving a given crossword puzzle

Crossword puzzle has proved to be a good means in the field of teaching a foreign language. Syllabus designers and especially future teachers should take it into consideration as an effective teaching material that can help them in their learners' acquisition of the foreign language they teach, and no longer consider it as a relaxing, recreational one.

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Appendix 1

The Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear Teacher,

The following questionnaire is part of research work that deals with the impact of crossword puzzles on the acquisition of vocabulary of the 1 year students. It examines the use of crossword puzzles as a teaching strategy to enhance students' knowledge of vocabulary.

Your answers will be of great help for the research. Would you, please, tick the appropriate box and make statements whenever required.

Thank you in advance

Section One: Teachers' Concern with the Affective Side of the Learner

Q1: Do you feel that your students are motivated to write in the English language? And why?

Yes ☐   No ☐

....

....

Q2: Do you think that it is the teachers' job to motivate students?

Yes ☐   No ☐

Q3: Whatever your answer is, please explain.

....

....

....

Q4: Do you try to establish a relaxed atmosphere?

Yes ☐   No ☐

Section Two: Teaching Vocabulary

Q5: Do you present new words in every lesson?

Yes [ ]   No [ ]   Sometimes [ ]

Q6: When you teach new vocabulary do you use:

Options	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	If Necessary	Never
Translation					
Definition					
Word in Context					
Synonyms/ Antonyms					

Others : please , specify

…………………………………………….   ……………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

Q7: Do students have difficulties with vocabulary mastery?

Yes [ ]   No [ ]   Sometimes [ ]

Section Three: Crossword Puzzles as a Teaching Strategy

Q8: Do you use language games?

Yes [ ]   No [ ]

Q9: If yes, which ones

…………………………………………………………………………………………...........

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Q10: Do you use crossword puzzles in class?

Yes ☐   No ☐

Q11: Do you think that the practice of crossword puzzles will improve students' familiarity with new words?

Yes ☐   No ☐   I don't know ☐

Q12: Do you consider teaching vocabulary with crossword puzzles is:

a. An educating strategy   ☐
b. An entertaining strategy ☐
c. Both ☐
d. A waste of time ☐

Q13: What is educational value of crossword puzzles?

…………………………………………………………………………………………..........
.... ……………………………
……………………………………………………………….....................................

Thank you for your cooperation

Appendixes

Appendix 2

- Complete the following crossword puzzle with the appropriate word place horizontally and vertically corresponding to the clues.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	E	J	K
1											
2											
3											
4											
5											
6											
7											
8											
9											
10											
11											
12											

Diagramless Crossword Puzzle "Stages of Life"

Across

C2: Someone born yesterday. (4 letters)

H2: Number of year old. (3 letters)

C4: Dead body. (6 letters)

D6: Young person. (5 letters)

H8: Between 13 an 18. (4 letters)

C10: Burial takes place here. (5 letters)

Down

A3: Grow -------------- gracefully. (3 letters)

C7: Husband gives wife this. (4 letters)

E2: Mothers gives --------to a child. (5 letters)

E9: To use speech. (4 letters)

H1: Health --------------- (4 letters)

H6: Go on this before marriage. (4 letters)

- **Burial**: The ceremony when a dead body is buried.

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APPENDIX 3

- Complete the following crossword puzzle with the appropriate word place horizontally and vertically corresponding to the clues.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	E	J	K	L
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												
7												
8												
9												
10												
11												
12												

Diagramless Crossword Puzzle "Stages of Life"

Across

D1: Frame for getting around. (6 letters)

A4: Vaccinations or------------------- (5 letters)

F6: Burial takes place here. (5 letters)

G9: What a baby does after **crawling** (4 letters)

I12: With age hair turns ------------- (4 letters)

A8: Dead body. (6 letters)

B10: Young person. (5 letters)

Down

A1: Toddlers often make a ---------- (4 letters)

D1: To create letters. (5 letters)

G1: ---------------- garten. (6 letters)

I9: Blessing for ------------ life. (4 letters)

J4: Between 13 and 18. (4 letters)

L2: Husband gives wife this. (4 letters)

L10: First thing a baby does. (3letters)

C6: Mothers give --------to a child. (5letters)

- **Crawling**: To move slowly with the body on the hands and knees. **Toddlers**: A child who has only just learnt to walk.

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APPENDIX 4

- Complete the following crossword puzzle with the appropriate word place horizontally and vertically corresponding to the clues.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												
7												
8												
9												
10												
11												
12												

Diagramless Crossword Puzzle "Stages of Life"

Across

E4: Burial takes place here (5 letters)

A6: After **weaning** a baby will ---------- (3letters)

F6: Between 13 and 18 (4 letters)

B10: Vaccinations or --------------- (5 letters)

H10: Bring home a report ------------- (4 letters)

E12: Get this after college (3 letters)

A1: Frame for getting around (6 letters)

I1: Health……... (4letters)

Down

C6: Many elderly have false -------- (5letters)

E7: A heart ---------- indicates life (4 letters)

G2: A level at school (5 letters)

I1: Walk with a --------------- (4 letters)

I9: Not to fail (4 letters)

K6: Young person (5 letters)

C1: Blessing for………life (4letters)

A5: Toddlers often make a………….. (4letters)

- Weaning: To start feeding a baby with other food as well as its mothers' milk.

APPENDIX 5

- Write a paragraph in which you talk about stages of life from birth to grave.

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