

## DEVELOPING A PRELIMINARY CHECKLIST FOR VOCABULARY TASK EVALUATION

**Manal Laaribi**

Doctoral Candidate, Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences in Rabat, UM5, Morocco  
Corresponding Author Email: [laaribi\\_manal@um5.ac.ma](mailto:laaribi_manal@um5.ac.ma)

| Article Info   | Abstract   |
|--|--|
| <b>Article History</b><br>Received: February 2022<br>Revised: March 2022<br>Published: April 2022  | <i>Language teachers are usually provided with textbook material that contains several tasks and activities. Although these activities are meant to facilitate the learning and teaching processes, it is important to approach the provided material critically, make the necessary adjustments to its components, and contextualize its themes. The use of a checklist may render this process of adopting and adapting material feasible and effective since a checklist provides a practical systematic approach to analysis. This paper provides the reader with a preliminary design of a checklist for vocabulary task evaluation that includes a 5-point Likert scale and contains eight main items and twenty-two sub-items that represent some of the main principles of vocabulary learning. These principles have been incorporated into the checklist on the basis of relevant literature and perspectives of different researchers, experienced teachers, and teacher trainers. This paper also provides readers with a demonstration of the use of this checklist through the analysis of a unit's vocabulary section of the book "Gateway to English 2." The results of the analysis showed that the tasks foster different vocabulary principles and that an overall evaluation of tasks is needed to benefit from a complementary and comprehensive nature of the material. This evaluation includes the analysis of the pre-task and post-task material, and the selection, adjustment, and placement of the components of the tasks.</i> |
| <b>Keywords</b><br>Task Evaluation;<br>Vocabulary Learning;<br>Language Teaching;  |  |
| <b>How to cite:</b> Laaribi, M. (2022). Developing a Preliminary Checklist for Vocabulary Task Evaluation. <i>JOLLT Journal of Language and Language Teaching</i> , 10(2), pp. 134-147. DOI: <a href="https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v%vi%i.4783">https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v%vi%i.4783</a> |  |

### INTRODUCTION

Students do not possess a photographic memory that captures everything it encounters. In reality, even those who are said to have an eidetic memory cannot remember everything they experience (Hudmon, 2006). As a result, memory tends to be selective. Stimuli are encountered and experienced on a daily basis, but only some are remembered and the others are presumably forgotten. This brings one the realization that certain factors must explain the selection of certain stimuli over others. This article will attempt to have a general overview of the main principles of recall from the perspective of vocabulary acquisition. In his book, "how to teach vocabulary", Thornbury (2002) discusses several principles of vocabulary acquisition. The next sections will tackle these principles and analyze them through empirical studies and literature.

Repetition, spacing and retrieval are three of the main principles of vocabulary acquisition. Repetition tends to be one of the most popular strategies to memorize stimuli, as students attempt to process new material by constantly repeating it while it is still in the working memory. However, Thornbury continues to explain that repetition, on its own, is not sufficient for long term recall. Therefore, repetition must be paired with spacing. In other terms, "it is better to distribute memory work across a period of time than to mass it all together in a single block" (p. 24). Lotfolahi and Salehi (2016) conducted a study that tests the effect of spacing on vocabulary acquisition. EFL learners were taught English–Farsi word pairs using massed (five-word pairs in session one and five-other word pairs one week later) and spaced (10-word pairs

in session one and restudied them one week later) schedules. To amplify the benefits of spacing, tests and corrective feedback were incorporated into different schedules of spacing. After conducting the post-assessment, the results showed that spaced practice produced better long-term retention than massed practice.

The two factors of recall, repetition and spacing seem to be related to the third principle of vocabulary acquisition: retrieval. The simple act of retrieving information from one's memory enhances the chances of its later recall (Marin-Garcia, Mattfeld, & Gabrieli, 2021). Thornbury described this act of retrieval as a way to "oil the path" (p. 24) for future recall. The three factors of repetition, spacing, and retrieval seem to complement each other; they do so in the sense that in order for a stimulus to be recalled, it must be repeated, specifically within spaced periods of time. In addition, each time this spaced repetition occurs, the stimulus is retrieved from memory which increases its recall possibility. The application of the notions of repetition, spacing, and retrieval in second language acquisition suggests that the target linguistic items must be frequently presented over spaced periods of time. In other words, the faster an item is desired to be acquired, the more frequent and spaced it must be presented.

Additional factors that arguably enhance recall are attention, motivation, and personal organization. When it comes to attention, research into memory has supported the claim that some degree of conscious attention is required for effective recall (Chun and Turk-Brown 2007, Dudukovic and al 2009). Thornbury gives the example of language learners not being able to remember new vocabulary items by simply listening to a tape while sleeping. This example broadens the use of the term attention. In other words, attention may not only refer to the state of being completely aware of the stimulus recall process but also refer to at least having a slight degree of selective attention towards it. In addition, when an individual is not fully focused on a certain piece of information, due to multitasking, its later recall will be weaker and more challenging. This is due to the reason that information may not have been well encoded in the brain.

Several studies have investigated the positive effect of motivation on learning (Tohidi and Jabbari 2012, Tokan and Imakulata 2019, Steinmayr, R., Weidinger, A. F., Schwinger, M., & Spinath, B.2019) and emphasized its role in language learning and education in general. Thornbury attributes the positive effect of motivation to the additional time and effort that accompanies it. On the other hand, Murty and Dickerson (2016) approach motivation from a neurological perspective as they were able to find that the neural systems that underlie motivation positively interact with and facilitate activity within systems that underlie episodic memory. One may also claim that attention and motivation may be related to each other, in the sense that one's motivation may enhance his/her attention. In turn, this may enhance his/her memory performance. However, motivation will not be included in the checklist due to its abstract nature. In other words, it differs from one student to another; some students may be motivated by the vocabulary tasks and lessons themselves, while others may need other incentives.

Other than this, personal organization is another principle of vocabulary learning as personal judgments about the organization of stimuli may enhance recall. In specific, Thornbury addresses this principle from the perspective of personalization as he claims that students who personalize their learning material may have an advantage over those who do not. On a related note, Mandler (1976) conducted an experiment where participants were given different words and asked to sort them into different categories. He found that memory performance was higher among participants who used more categories to organize their words. His claim was that those who used more categories imposed more organization. Therefore, he concluded that organization is "necessary" for recall. Although Mandler's use of the word "necessary" may be extreme, but one may claim that personal organization plays an important role in recall.

Imaging is a well-known principle of vocabulary learning as well. In this context, imaging refers to the visualization of mental pictures for the purpose of creating strong associations with the newly-processed information. When conducting a quasi-experimental study that investigates the effect of mental imagery, Zahedi and Abdi (2012) compared the scores of an experimental group and a control one in terms of their vocabulary proficiency. The results indicated that the experimental group of students, who were required to create mental imageries, outperformed the control group of students who learned items through direct translation. Similar to Thornbury, Congos (2005) also suggests that associating new words to mental images can enhance their chances of later recall. Although they both agree that imaging is important for memory performance, they disagree on the nature of the images. Thornbury believes that it does not matter if the image is not highly imaginative or vivid, as any image will positively impact recall as long as it is self-generated. On the other hand, Congos believes that the sillier the Image, the more effective it is in terms recall. This last point, by Congos, may be related to another factor that presumably affects memory performance: mnemonics.

Thornbury defines mnemonics as “tricks” that help retrieve stimuli that are not, usually, “automatically retrievable” (p.26). The use of the notions “tricks” and “automatic retrieval” suggests the explicit use of mnemonics as a vocabulary learning strategy to deal with stimuli that is difficult to recall. In other words, mnemonics may be used to help students deal with stimuli that require some sort of “trick” to be retrieved, as opposed to being retrieved automatically. In terms of language, Thornbury claims that non-native speakers do not strictly use mnemonics. For example, native speakers of English rely on mnemonics such as “I before e except after c” to help them remember some spelling rules. Congos (2005) also believes that mnemonics are effective when it comes to memory performance. In addition, he claims that there are several types of mnemonics such as rhyme, word, connection, and image mnemonics. The last type of mnemonics seems to be related to a factor discussed earlier, which is “imaging” since image mnemonics are tackled as a strategy one uses to create images and associations to promote later recall. Image mnemonics may be related to the imaging factor in the sense that subjects explicitly use image mnemonics to create vivid images in their mind so that they can promote the retrieval of their associated stimuli. Overall, there have been several studies that tested the effect of mnemonics on vocabulary recall and that yielded positive results (Fasih, Izadpanah, Shahnavaaz 2018. Whitescarver, 2018).

Finally, cognitive and affective depths are two principles that may affect recall (Pérez. & Alvira, 2017). In specific, Perez and Alvira state that certain vocabulary strategies employ cognitive and affective factors that can positively affect students’ attitude and motivation towards vocabulary tasks. Thornbury (2002) explains that cognitive depth involves making deep, cognitively demanding, judgments about stimuli. On the other hand, affective depth involves making personal, emotional, judgments about stimuli. The claim is that both these types of depth can help in the later retrieval of the stimulus. In addition, cognitive information about stimuli is stored along with its affective information, and that both these types can play an equally important role in the storage and recall of stimuli. When it comes to the recall of words, cognitive depth may include questioning which part of speech the target word belongs to and whether it belongs in certain sentences or not. As for affective depth, it may include questioning whether the sound, look, or representation of the target words is pleasant, or whether the word evokes any emotions or associations.

The principle of cognitive depth that Thornbury discussed seems to be related to the levels of processing framework (1972) that claims that the durability of memory trace is a direct by-product of depth of processing. The basic premises of the LOP framework are known for their robust and influential nature in the field of psychology. One of these premises is that depth refers, specifically, to semantic involvement, as it is claimed that deeper, semantic, levels of processing result in a better recall of the stimuli than the shallow, sensory, levels of processing.

Alipour, Sheybani, and Akhondy (2012) investigated the effect of depth of processing on explicit and implicit memory. Their study opted for an experimental design, as eighty university students participated in individual experiments. In addition, they divided participants into four main groups, where they were assigned different learning situations. Three groups were assigned incidental learning through either structural, phonemic, or semantic processing, while one group was assigned deliberate learning. The findings of the study demonstrated that retrieval, in explicit memory, is better achieved in deep processing than superficial processing. Furthermore, there is no significant difference between structural and phonemic processing in terms of memory performance, as they are both weak in comparison to semantic processing. In addition, Alipour and al attribute this positive effect on explicit memory to mental associations since the deeper the processing, the more associations form in the mind facilitating the following recall. Another important finding of this study is that depth of processing does not have a significant role on the implicit memory as opposed to the explicit one.

The two depths discussed so far can be illustrated in the following example: An English language learner encounters a new vocabulary item “ocean”. First, he makes cognitive decisions about the word. For example, the learner may decide that “ocean” is a noun. He may also discover that one of its collocations is “Pacific Ocean”, and he may integrate the target word with other words with similar meanings. Then, the learner may proceed to make affective decisions about the word as well. He may decide that “ocean” holds a beautiful meaning and that he likes what it stands for and what it is associated with. This particular learner may have more chances of recalling the word “ocean” than another learner who has not made any cognitive or affective decisions about the target words.

**The vocabulary task evaluation checklist:**

The following checklist can be used to evaluate vocabulary tasks. It can be applicable across different types of material. However, it should be noted that one checklist cannot be universal as it has to be accommodated on the basis of the context of learning and on the needs and interests of learners. In addition, this is a preliminary design that can be further adjusted and adapted after being piloted on different materials. That being said, this checklist contains eight items that represent the principles of vocabulary learning. These principles are repetition and spacing, attention, personal organization, imaging, mnemonics, distinctiveness, cognitive and affective depth. The principle of motivation is omitted since it is heavily controlled by the psychological and physical state of the learner rather than the textbook material.

| Task evaluation  |                |       |         |          |                   |
|--|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| Repetition and spacing   | Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The task recycles the current target vocabulary items.</li> <li>• The task recycles the past target vocabulary items (previous lesson, units, themes...)</li> </ul> |                |       |         |          |                   |
| Personal organization  |                |       |         |          |                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The task encourages the use of students’ decision making skills.</li> </ul>   |                |       |         |          |                   |

|                 |  |  |
|-----------------|--|--|
|                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The task allows the production of original stimuli by students.</li> <li>• The task allows diverse possibilities of students' produced stimuli.</li> </ul>  |  |
| Attention       |  |  |
|                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The task brings direct attention to the target vocabulary items.</li> <li>• The task brings indirect attention to the target vocabulary items.</li> </ul>   |  |
| Imaging         |  |  |
|                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The task is accompanied with visuals (e.g. pictures, graphs, tables...)</li> </ul>  |  |
| Distinctiveness |  |  |
|                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The task fosters distinctive themes.</li> <li>• The task contains distinctive images.</li> <li>• The task contains distinctive sentences.</li> </ul>  |  |
| Mnemonics       |  |  |
|                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The task uses imaging mnemonics.</li> <li>• The task uses acronym mnemonics.</li> <li>• The task uses rhyme mnemonics.</li> </ul>   |  |
| Cognitive depth |  |  |
|                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The task contains meaningful stimuli.</li> <li>• The task includes the vocabulary items' word associations.</li> <li>• The task includes the vocabulary items' connotations.</li> <li>• The task includes the vocabulary items' collocations.</li> <li>• The task includes the register of the target vocabulary items.</li> <li>• The material allows the student to create meaningful productions.</li> </ul> |  |

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Affective depth |  |
|                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The task includes themes and topics that students can relate to.</li> <li>• The task allows the students to create personal productions.</li> </ul> |

**Demonstration of the checklist**

As a demonstration of this checklist, a textbook unit from the book “Gateway to English 2” will be analyzed; it is one of the main textbooks used to teach second- year baccalaureate students in Morocco. In specific, the vocabulary section will be analyzed on the basis of the general principles of recall and vocabulary acquisition. It is important to remember that this analysis will not test the effectiveness of the material as that will require experimental studies. However, this checklist can help teachers recognize the present and missing vocabulary acquisition principles in their used material and make positive changes accordingly. The textbook contains “formal, informal and non-informal education” unit. This unit includes nine sections in total which are: introduction to the theme of the unit, vocabulary work, listening and speaking, communication, reading, grammar, writing, and learner training. As a demonstration of the use of the checklist to analyze material, the vocabulary work section will be evaluated on the basis of the main items of the checklist.

**Findings: Task Analysis and discussion**

**Task A:**

Figure 1: Task A (Hassim and Al, 2007, p.11)

**Vocabulary Work: Collocations**

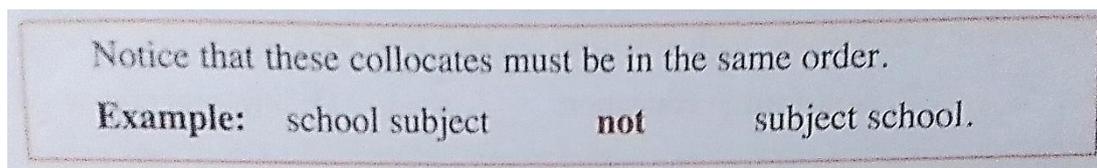
**A. The following four words are usually combined with some other words.**  
**Example: physical education.** These words are collocates.  
**Find in the list the words that collocate with each of the four words. An example is given.**

subject - institution - background - lessons - school - system - opportunity - goals - uniform - year - rights - status

|                    |  |   |
|--------------------|--|---|
| <b>educational</b> |  | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">.....</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">.....</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">.....</div>   |
| <b>school</b>      |  | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">subject</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">.....</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">.....</div> |
| <b>private</b>     |  | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">.....</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">.....</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">.....</div>   |
| <b>equal</b>       |  | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">.....</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">.....</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">.....</div>   |

11

Figure 2: Comparative example in Task A (Hassim and Al, 2007, p.12)



The first task (figure 1) is mainly devoted to collocations; students are required to find three collocates to four target words “educational”, “school”, “private”, and “equal”. An example of the collocation “physical education” was given prior to the task. In addition, a comparative example (figure 2) between “school subject” and “subject school” was given after the task to demonstrate the necessity of structural order. Although this task may appear simple on the surface, it is able to implement several principles of vocabulary acquisition, the most obvious one being the use of collocations. This task allows students to have the opportunity to work on twelve different collocations and take two common ones as examples to help them with the task and enrich their linguistic knowledge.

The other strongly implemented principles in Task A are repetition and spacing as all the task’s vocabulary items have been repeated across the unit titled “Formal, Informal, and Non-Formal Education” that contains the task. Specifically, before introducing the task, the target words educational and education were mentioned nineteen times, the word school was mentioned three times, while the words private and equal were not mentioned. This analysis of repetition indicates that some items were disregarded in the pre-task material which may cause some difficulties for students working on Task A. For example, they may be unfamiliar with certain words. As a solution, the teacher can make the necessary adjustments to compensate for this. For instance, the instructor can pre-teach some of the target items or direct the class discussions towards them. It is important to incorporate vocabulary recycling into the class material since it positively affects learning and vocabulary acquisition (Varela, 2020).

When it comes to personal organization, this task allows students to employ their decision-making skills to a certain extent in that they choose the collocates that go together. However, their personal organization is not original since they do not produce their own stimuli, as they work with pre-determined and pre-organized material. Once again, the teacher can interfere by adapting the task to allow students to produce original language. For example, the students can employ the collocations in meaningful sentences or dialogues. Not only will this activity help students use language, but it may also help them work on the task critically, as they will see the extent to which their assembled collocates are logical and meaningful. This means that students can work on their productions while they are working on the task. However, an alternative would simply be holding a quick discussion session after working on Task A where students can use the target collocates in sentences. Results from Kregiel’s (2014) study that tested the production effect showed that when reading a mixed list (some words aloud, others silently), recall improved significantly for the words read aloud.

Task A does not directly implement the principle of imaging, as it does not provide students with any pictures. However, the pre-task material in the unit contains several images. In specific, the material has fifteen images in total that are associated with the target collocates in Task A. For example, the second task under the section labeled, “introduction to the theme of the unit”, asks students to match nine pictures to three types of education: formal education, non-formal education, and informal education. All nine pictures are labeled which can help students understand the basic meanings of the items by associating the pictures with the labels. On the surface, this task seems to focus on the introduction of the theme of education. However,

it can help students in several ways when it comes to vocabulary work. For example, students can learn new vocabulary items by associating the images with their labels. In addition, students can familiarize themselves with education-related vocabulary which can help them later produce meaningful stimuli using the newly acquired knowledge. Furthermore, the teacher can refer to these pictures when working on Task A or other vocabulary tasks to facilitate understanding. Besides comprehension, visual aids may foster motivation as multiple studies (Almekhlafy and Alqahtani 2020, and Montoya and Jhoan 2017) have investigated the positive attitudes of language learners towards the use of imagery in the classroom.

The third principle that is noticeably present in Task A is attention since the task directly brings attention to all the target vocabulary items. In order to form collocations, students will have to actively look for the meaning of the collocates through peer-feedback, teacher-feedback, or activation of the prior background. In this context, the teacher can make the decision of the type of learning method that can aid students to understand the meanings of the items; it is important to note that it does not have to be one method or the other as there can always be a combination of strategies. For example, before working on Task A, a teacher decides to present students with several pictures and discuss them with the students focusing on the upcoming vocabulary items. In addition, the teacher can assign the task in pairs so that feedback and background knowledge are exchanged between students.

Similar to the principle of imaging, distinctiveness is not directly employed in Task A. However, the pre-task material discusses education from an informal standpoint. Usually, education is associated with formal academic settings, but the unit focuses on non-academic aspects as well. In other words, it discusses learning that directly results from everyday life activities and discussions with people. This employs the principle of distinctiveness to a certain extent since it helps students think outside the box that limits education to academia. Therefore, students might keep this idea in mind when working on Task A, hence enforcing distinctiveness. For example, when faced with the vocabulary items “lessons”, “opportunity”, and “background”, they may reflect on the different types of education to contextualize these items.

Task A does not make use of mnemonics. However, it must be noted that mnemonics are essentially memory tools (Amiryousefi, 2011, Whitescraver, 2018). This means that their main purpose is to retain vocabulary items that are not automatically retrieved from memory, and that requires additional effort. Several items in Task A were not introduced in the pre-task material. This suggests that one of the main objectives of the task is the gradual use of language for the purpose of long-term recall, not immediate recall. Therefore, the non-usage of mnemonics is justified. However, some students might find it challenging to recall a certain vocabulary item in the task for later use. Therefore, students need to be equipped with strategies that can help them with recall and learning. According to this, the teacher can devote a portion of their class time to discuss some vocabulary recall strategies with students. Besides this, it would help if the textbook itself has sections that introduce students to learning strategies to enhance their metacognitive skills.

The concept of cognitive depth is a broad complex one; it cannot be limited to a few items in a checklist. However, the items can at least provide teachers with general ideas they can attend to when working on vocabulary tasks. Still, it must be noted that depth is a spectrum so one task cannot be simply deemed as “deep” or “superficial”. Instead, it must be analyzed on the basis of different aspects. For example, Task A contains meaningful collocates that are associated with one another but does not include register or connotations. In addition, this task focuses primarily on production in terms of matching pre-determined stimuli rather than working on original stimuli. According to what has been discussed so far, instead of labeling this task as deep or superficial, it would be more efficient to focus on pushing it up the depth spectrum. For instance, students can be introduced to the different associations, register, and connotations of the target vocabulary items and be encouraged to produce their own language

using the newly acquired collocates. In addition, the teacher may encourage students to produce language that is personal to them to encourage affective depth.

Similar to cognitive depth, affective depth is a complex spectrum. It can be challenging to label Task A as a deep or shallow activity on the basis of affective depth. The reason behind this is that it heavily differs from one student to another; the same word that may be skimmed over by a student might deeply affect another one by triggering a channel of memories and experiences. However, this task contains one major affective connection which is education. In a context where second-year high school students are working on a task that contains vocabulary items surrounding education, it is only natural that the items may invoke a background of feelings, experiences and thoughts.

### Analysis of Task B:

Figure 3: Task B (Hassim and Al, 2007, p. 12)

**B. Match the words in column A with the words in column B to form appropriate collocations.**  
(There may be more than one possibility for some collocations).

| Column A      | Column B          |
|---------------|-------------------|
| 1. higher     | a. graduate       |
| 2. university | b. classes        |
| 3. free       | c. degree         |
| 4. learning   | d. access         |
| 5. gender     | e. background     |
| 6. mixed      | f. illiteracy     |
| 7. cultural   | g. poverty        |
| 8. adult      | h. discrimination |
| 9. rural      | i. education      |
| 10. basic     | j. needs          |

The second task (figure 3) requires students to match the words (column A) to their appropriate collocates (column B). Column A has ten words which are: higher, university, free, learning, gender, mixed, cultural, adult, rural, and basic. On the other hand, column B has ten words which are: graduate, classes, degree, access, background, illiteracy, poverty, discrimination, education, and needs. The students are also informed that some collocates have different possibilities. This task is quite similar in structure to task A; therefore, it will be analyzed similarly on the basis of the checklist items.

Repetition can be approached from two perspectives when analyzing Task B. The repetition of the target vocabulary items can be analyzed by comparing Task A with Task B and comparing Task B with the pre-task material. First, the comparison between the two tasks shows that there is no repetition of vocabulary items as they contain different collocates. However, this arrangement seems to be logical since Task B is sub-sequential to task A; the main goal behind this might be to introduce students to different collocates through the two tasks. This approach is not applicable to the comparison between Task B and the pre-task material as it is important for students to have preliminary ideas of the vocabulary items before learning about their collocations. It seems that several items were not introduced in the pre-task material which may cause some difficulties for students working on the task. Therefore, the teacher can make the necessary adjustments to compensate for the unfamiliarity of the target items. As it has been suggested before, the instructor can pre-teach some of the target items or revolve the class discussions around them.

The principle of attention is noticeably present in Task B as it directly brings attention to all the target vocabulary items. In order to form collocations, students will have to actively look for the meaning of collocates. However, the main goal of this task is the appropriate matching of the pre-determined collocates; this suggests that decision-making skills are employed but limited to the production of unoriginal language. Therefore, although this task brings attention to the target items, it lacks their personal organization to a certain extent. The absence of this principle can be compensated through an adaptation of the task in a way that allows students to produce original language, or by encouraging them to hold meaningful conversations and discussions using the newly learned items. It is important to direct students' attention towards the target vocabulary items since attention positively affects recall (Chun and Turk-Brown 2007, Dudukovic and al 2009)

Similar to task A, Task B does not provide students with any visuals, so it does not directly employ the principle of imaging. However, the pre-task material contains fifteen images that are associated with the target collocates in Task B. It is true that these images can be helpful for students in terms of the visualization and contextualization of the items, but it is important to remember that these two processes are not limited to physical imaging. In other words, it can be efficient for students to visualize and contextualize the items through mental imaging to personalize the acquisition process, especially since the task itself does not have any images on its own. However, it is evident that the students have the most control over this process as teachers can only encourage it and stimulate it through personalized pictures, videos or stories. In fact, a portion of class time can be devoted to discussing efficient vocabulary learning and acquisition strategies such as visualization and imaging mnemonics.

The principle of distinctiveness is not directly employed in Task B. However, as had been discussed earlier, the pre-task material may help students think outside the box that limits education to academia. This is because it discusses education from an informal standpoint and from learning that results from everyday life activities and discussions with people. Therefore, students can look back on these ideas when working on Task B, hence enforcing distinctiveness. For example, the item "restaurant" is not usually associated with education but is introduced in the pre-task material as one type of informal education; students might keep this distinctive association in mind when working on items such as "learning", "cultural", "background" and "education" ... in Task B.

As it has been discussed before, one cannot simply deem a certain task as cognitively or affectively deep since cognitive and affective depths involve a spectrum that must be analyzed on the basis of different elements. In fact, the different elements of depth themselves are complex and multilayered on their own. For example, when analyzing Task B in terms of meaning, a notorious aspect of depth, one can simply describe it as meaningful. However, the term "meaningful" in general is not sufficient, as any stimuli can be meaningful depending on the context and situation. Instead, one may focus on meaning from specific aspects. For example, Task b contains meaningful collocates that are associated with one another. In this context, the meaning refers to appropriate language, context, association, and collocations. On the other hand, this task does not touch upon other aspects of cognitive depth such as register, connotation, and original production. As for affective depth, the theme of education itself can act as an affective stimulator for students. Since this book is designated for second-year baccalaureate students, it is only natural that the target items may stimulate an emotional background for students.

**Analysis of Task C:**

figure 4: Task C (Hassim and Al, 2007, p.12)

**C. Fill in each blank with a suitable collocation from activity B.**

. The problem of \_\_\_\_\_ can be solved through organising non-formal evening classes.  
 . \_\_\_\_\_ are finding it difficult to get a job.

The final task of the vocabulary work section requires students to fill in each blank with a suitable collocation from the second activity, Task B. In particular, students are required to find five appropriate collocations to the missing gaps to have meaningful sentences. It is clear that one of the main foci of this task is the principle of repetition. Right from the start, students are asked to refer back to Task B and to use the newly learned collocations in meaningful sentences. However, this principle is not limited to the two tasks alone as it can be noticed that the pre-task material has some of the target vocabulary items repeated across the unit.

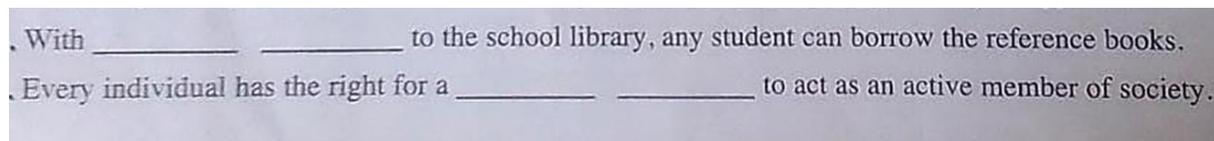
Similar to tasks A and B, the principle of attention is noticeably present in Task C since it brings attention to the target vocabulary items. One may argue that the attention in Task C is divided rather than selective, as opposed to the two other tasks, since the presence of other vocabulary items besides the target collocates may diverge the attention from the target items and mislead it. However, this is not necessarily the case. In fact, this task may even increase the selective attention span, as students must focus on the meaning of the collocates and their contextualization in order to place them properly. In other words, students must study the words up close and test their meaning against other meanings.

The task can be approached in two ways. The first approach is that the students work on Task B and proceed to work on Task C without being provided with the correct collocations; this means that students may not be entirely sure of their answers yet. The second approach is that the teacher can provide students with the correct collocations before proceeding to work on Task C. Since there are two possible cases, some of the implied principles may differ in their degree depending on the taken approach. For example, the principle of personal organization may be more present in the first approach as students will employ their decision-making skills in finding suitable collocates within different meanings; some students may end up changing their initial answers after testing their collocates within appropriate contexts. This brings one to another principle that, once again, can be strongly employed within the first approach which is attention. In specific, when students are still figuring out the appropriate collocations while simultaneously contextualizing them, it may be more challenging for them. Thus, students may strongly direct their attention and concentration towards finding suitable collocates and meanings. This analysis demonstrates that this checklist does not only serve to analyze individual tasks but can also be used to evaluate the full picture of the material in hand. In other words, teachers can refer back to these items when making decisions on the selection, placement, and the taken approach of the vocabulary tasks.

When it comes to cognitive depth, this task fosters it to a certain extent since it encourages students to use the collocations of the target vocabulary items in contextualized meanings. By contextualizing the items, students can have a preliminary idea of their connotation, register, and association. However, similar to the two other tasks, this one involves limited production of language, since students will simply fill in the gaps using pre-determined language. The teacher can compensate for the limited production by holding discussions or working on tasks where students get the chance to produce their own language. As an example, an activity can have the following steps: the teacher can provide the students with the three main themes of the unit which are formal, informal, and non-formal education. After that, the students can be instructed to produce sentences that relate to the three themes using the collocations from Task

A and B. This activity can foster vocabulary learning in several ways. First, it employs the principle of spaced repetition since students recycle the newly learned collocates. Second, the activity encourages the production of meaningful language and the recall of background information. Third, this activity focuses on the general theme of the unit which will ultimately lead to the discussion of discourse and associations surrounding the target items. Finally, students may resort to their personal experiences, feelings, and ideas to produce meaningful language which may foster affective depth.

Figure 4: Task C (Hassim and Al, p.12)



As it has been discussed before, affective depth differs from one student to another depending on memories and experiences, the same word that may be skimmed over by a student can deeply affect another and channel affective background stimuli for him/her. That being said, this task contains several themes that may be closely related to students. For example, the two first sentences touch upon the themes of illiteracy and unemployment among university graduates (figure 3). It is true that these two topics that do not directly affect the students since this book is targeted towards second-year baccalaureate students in Morocco. However, these topics may still be personal, and even sensitive to many students. For example, one student may have an unemployed close family member who recently graduated from university; another student may have parents who have never gotten formal education. These situations may channel a range of emotions, discussions, and experiences that can directly affect the student. Therefore, the two target concepts may invoke a substantial amount of affective depth towards the items.

In general, affective depth involves the affective background of students and the affective decisions they make about the target items. Although the items may not necessarily activate affective channels for some students, they may at least activate their affective judgments. The reason behind this is that humans are emotional beings with thoughts and feelings, and are bound to have affective judgments of stimuli, therefore, to say that some items completely lack affective depth may be a baseless statement. All things considered, Task C has other topics that may directly affect students. In particular, the task contains sentences (figure 4) that tackle the need for proper education and free access to the school library, which are rights that must be acknowledged and discussed by students.

## CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this checklist is to critically analyze vocabulary tasks on the basis of the general principles of vocabulary learning. However, it is important to note that it is not necessary for one task to cater to all these principles. As it has been demonstrated using the "Gateway to English 2" example, this checklist must be used to evaluate the material at hand from a comprehensive perspective. After analyzing each task's present and missing items, the necessary adjustments can be made by selecting the appropriate material, adapting it, and critically placing its components. In addition, a thorough analysis of a task requires the evaluation of the pre-task and post-task material to ensure a logical and practical flow of learning. It is true that a checklist for task evaluation cannot be universal because the context of learning, and needs and interests of learners must all be taken into consideration. However, a checklist can help teachers approach the class material critically and evaluate its present and

missing vocabulary learning principles. This checklist can serve as a basic preliminary design that teachers can adapt and contextualize on the basis of their learning and teaching environment.

### REFERENCES

- Alipour, A., Akhondy, N., & Sheybani, K. (2012). Effects of handedness and depth of processing on the explicit and implicit memory. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*.
- Almekhlafy, S. S. A., & Alqahtani, A. A. J. (2020). The visual memory development technique: A remedial and pre-reading activity to enhance EFL learners' motivation. In *Heliyon* (Vol. 6, Issue 3, p. e03627). Elsevier BV.
- Amiryousefi, M., & Ketabi, S. (2011). Mnemonic Instruction: A Way to Boost Vocabulary Learning and Recall. In *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* (Vol. 2, Issue 1). Academy publication.
- Chun, M. M., & Turk-Browne, N. B. (2007). Interactions between attention and memory. *Current Opinion in Neurobiology*, 17(2), 177–184.
- Congos, D. (2005). 9 Types of Mnemonics for Better Memory.
- Craik, F. and Lockhart, R. (1972). Levels of processing: A framework for memory research. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*, 11(6), pp.671-684.
- Dudukovic, N. M., DuBrow, S., & Wagner, A. D. (2009). Attention during memory retrieval enhances future remembering. *Memory & Cognition*, 37(7), 953–961.
- Fasih, P., Izadpanah, S., & Shahnavaz, A. (2018). The Effect of Mnemonic Vocabulary Instruction on Reading Comprehension of Students. In *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature* (Vol. 7, Issue 3, p. 49). Australian International Academic Centre.
- Hassim M, Bilbil M, Rasmy A (2007). Gateway to English 2. Nadia edition.
- Hudmon, A. (2006). Learning and memory. Philadelphia: Chelsea House.
- Lotfolahi, A. R., & Salehi, H. (2016). Learners' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Spaced Learning Schedule in L2 Vocabulary Learning. In *SAGE Open* (Vol. 6, Issue 2, p. 215824401664614). SAGE Publications.
- Mandler, G. (1967). Organization and Memory. *Psychology of Learning and Motivation*, 327-372.
- Marin-Garcia, E., Mattfeld, A. T., & Gabrieli, J. D. E. (2021). Neural Correlates of Long-Term Memory Enhancement Following Retrieval Practice. In *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* (Vol. 15). Frontiers Media SA
- Montoya, R., & Jhoan, M., (2017). Promoting engagement in the English language learning through the use of visual aids
- Murty, V. P., & Dickerson, K. C. (2016). Motivational Influences on Memory. In *Advances in Motivation and Achievement* (pp. 203–227).
- Pérez, L. & Alvira, R. (2017). The Acquisition of Vocabulary Through Three Memory Strategies. *Colomb. Appl. Linguist. J.*, 19(1), pp. 103-116.
- Kregiel, Bethany, "The Production Effect and Item-Order Encoding" (2014). Senior Honors Projects. 38.
- Thornbury, S. (2002). *How to Teach Vocabulary*. England: Pearson Education Limited, (pp. 24-26). Ur press.

- Tohidi, H., & Jabbari, M. M. (2012). The effects of motivation in education. In *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* (Vol. 31, pp. 820–824). Elsevier BV.
- Tokan, M. K., & Imakulata, M. M. (2019). The effect of motivation and learning behaviour on student achievement. In *South African Journal of Education* (Vol. 39, Issue 1, pp. 1–8). Education Association of South Africa.
- Steinmayr, R., Weidinger, A. F., Schwinger, M., & Spinath, B. (2019). The Importance of Students' Motivation for Their Academic Achievement – Replicating and Extending Previous Findings. In *Frontiers in Psychology* (Vol. 10). Frontiers Media
- Varela, M. A. (n.d.). Vocabulary retention in a spaced repetition longitudinal field study with high-school language learners. Swansea University.
- Whitescarver, Erin L., "Effect of mnemonics on the vocabulary acquisition and retention of high school students with learning disabilities" (2018). Theses and Dissertations. 2567.
- Zahedi, Y., & Abdi, M. (2012). The Impact of Imagery Strategy on EFL Learners' Vocabulary Learning. In *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* (Vol. 69, pp. 2264–2272). Elsevier BV.