Research Article

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Developing Learners' Vocabulary of English as a Foreign Language through Reading and Writing Activities and Strategies

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Abstract

Vocabulary is an important aspect of communication skills. What is often observed in a classroom of English as a foreign language in Albanian pre-university education is learners' written communication marked by low levels of linguistic accuracy and fluency; moreover, the English course book is the primarily published material used in the classroom. Considering the main aim of English language school program that is learning English for communicative purposes, this article aims at presenting a vast amount and variety of activities and strategies that foreign language teachers and learners can use for teaching and learning vocabulary effectively while building reading and writing skills. For this reason, some English course books used in Albanian pre-university education have been analyzed using deductive content analysis method and some target theory and research has been reviewed and then analyzed using an inductive content analysis method. The results show that the selected course books offer a variety of activities and strategies, but the target literature also suggests more other typologies of them. The listed activities and strategies in this paper can help foreign language teachers select and adapt the proper activity according to the teaching and learning goals, levels of learners' language proficiency and learners' needs; moreover, learners can enhance their linguistic knowledge and competence, as well as improve written communication skills of the target language. The study has potential limitations: the results are based on four EFL course books and some target studies. Further analysis of other course books and target literature can expand the target knowledge base. The research also offers practical methodological options for foreign language teachers to improve the quality of (vocabulary) teaching and learning.

Keywords: *vocabulary, aspect of word knowledge, course book, activities, strategies*

1. Introduction

Written communication is a very important aspect of human interaction. To communicate successfully we need, among other competences (pragmatic competence, discourse competence, strategic competence and fluency), linguistic competence (Hedge, 2000). Vocabulary, as studies (Ratnaningsih & Clara, 2021, Nation, 2005) have found, has a significant effect towards writing and reading skills. Further, vocabulary is seen as a crucial component of communication. The linguist David Wilkins in Thornbury (2008, p.13) strictly argues that "without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed".

Referring to Nation (2005) and Thornbury (2008), knowing and learning a lexical item for communicative purposes is multi-dimensional. The teacher and the learner should teach and learn respectively:

- its spoken and written *form*, considering the inconsistency between spelling and pronunciation in the English language; its word-parts;
- its form-meaning relations, concept-reference relation and its denotative and connotative *meaning*;
- its *use* in a sentence considering its grammatical features, its natural linguistic sequence in a phrase and the sociolinguistic factors that influence the language user's choice of the lexical item in a certain communicative situation.

Anderson and Freebody (1981) noted the importance not only of the extent of the word knowledge (or the 'depth' of vocabulary knowledge), but also of the number of words known by a language user (the 'breadth' of vocabulary knowledge). As Gonzalez-Fernandez and Schmitt (2017, p. 283) claimed the depth and the breadth of vocabulary knowledge are interrelated and contribute to one another.

There has been a large research on vocabulary learning and teaching, considering issues such as: implicit and explicit vocabulary teaching and learning, components of vocabulary teaching and learning, word-learning activities and strategies, conditions contributing to vocabulary learning, learning vocabulary in different contexts, resources for vocabulary learning (Nation, 2005; Thornbury, 2008; Webb & Nation, 2017; Barclay & Schmitt, 2019). Regardless of this broad research, based on my teaching experience and research, the commonly found strategies and techniques in English language classrooms related to vocabulary acquisition are:

- Writing unfamiliar words on the blackboard, providing a translation and then having learners copy them down (Fauziningrum et al., 2023; Khalilova, 2023), just as in the grammar-translation method of teaching where vocabulary is seen as an isolated linguistic element.
- Rare explicit attention that includes all the aspects of word knowledge and competence, but a pronunciation activity as well as a few questions about the vocabulary in a reading passage.
- Vocabulary lists relegated to the back of the chapter (Folse, 2004) or the course book.
- After presenting the new vocabulary, learners are asked to complete exercises on those words in their course or workbook.
- The course book was the only published material mostly used as a teaching aid in the English classrooms, based on the observations of the Albanian students of the professional master's degree in "Teaching for Upper Secondary Education in English Language" (during their two weeks of passive teaching practice in elementary and secondary public schools). This is also mentioned in the foreign language research (Litz, 2005; López Jiménez, 2009; Baleghizadeh & Aghazadeh, 2014; Nordlund, 2016; Aldukhayel, 2022). The reason of this fact, as Ur (1999) stated, the course book represents a carefully planned organizer and provider of language content, including readymade texts and tasks with possible appropriate level.

Because of such teaching and learning practice, learners' written communication, as Larsen-Freeman (2008) noted, is marked by low levels of linguistic accuracy and fluency and the need for communication competence arises.

Given the importance of the course book in second or foreign language teaching and learning, few studies (in Albanian context and abroad) have investigated course books and in particular, the vocabulary component of textbooks and the learning and teaching opportunities they provide (Seferaj, 2015; Bergström, D., Norberg, C., & Nordlund, M. 2022). The following studies focus on the treatment of second or foreign language vocabulary in different course books (as they are used in their countries) from different perspectives:

Papajani (2015), regarding the vocabulary in three course books used in Albanian high

secondary schools (Blockbuster 3, 4 and Wishes B2.1), pointed out just the contextualization of the new vocabulary.

Similarly, Yüksel, Köse, and Doğan (2023) found, among others, EFL course book needs improvement related to vocabulary exercises in more meaningful contexts.

López-Jiménez (2010), investigating the presentation and recycling of new vocabulary, found that they rarely appear in the second language course rationale.

Matsuoka and Hirsh (2010) found the need to supplement an ELT course book for upper-intermediate learners with an extensive reading program.

Bao (2023), analyzing EFL textbooks used with Chinese learners, found that the main weaknesses of the textbooks were the lack of explanation for word parts, concepts and references, settlements and constraints on use, while their strengths were the inclusion of explanations of grammatical functions and exercises related to spoken and written form, and contextual meaning.

So far analyses of English textbooks based on the multi-dimensionality of the vocabulary are few or missing at all (in the Albanian context). This study will fill the existing research gap by analyzing English textbooks according to word dimensions of form, meaning and use.

Another meaningful (to this study) but sad statement is that the activities which typically feature in course books have changed very little in the 50 years (Tomlinson, 2018). Therefore, this study, based on foreign language acquisition theory and research, will offer a modest summary of potential activities and strategies to be used in EFL classrooms for teaching and learning vocabulary successfully while building reading and writing skills for communicative purposes (Note 1). A broader knowledge of this issue has a positive advantage for foreign language teachers and learners in improving vocabulary teaching and learning in classroom-based settings and beyond.

2. Methodology

Considering the deficiencies of Albanian students and teachers in relation to vocabulary learning and teaching, the following questions arise:

1) What typologies of reading and writing activities and strategies related to vocabulary teaching and learning are suggested in English course books?
2) What other activities and strategies related to vocabulary teaching and learning can foreign language teachers and learners use in their classrooms?

To collect the data of activities used in the course books and suggested by theory and research, a deductive content analysis was used. The analysis process followed the stages of thematic analysis, which involved identifying themes, categories, and subcategories. The codes related to the study questions are predetermined (Vears & Gillam, 2022) and based on Nation's (2005) and Thornbury's (2008) framework of word knowledge and competence; they are presented in the table 1.

Referring to the second question, a literature review was conducted following a four-stage process, including research of preliminary sources, use of secondary sources, study of primary sources and synthesis of the literature (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, p. 117). Preliminary source research was conducted using the databases of Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), Scopus and Google Scholar. References within preliminary sources helped in choosing the primary material relevant to the topic. The content of the primary material related to the strategies of vocabulary teaching and learning was subject to an inductive content analysis process where the codes used to label the data are developed during the process of coding (Vears & Gillam, 2022).

Table 1: Types of activities and strategies used in developing EFL learners' word knowledge and competence

Reading and writing activities and strategies related to vocabulary teaching and learning	Category 1: Activities	Subcategory 1: Focus on form
		Subcategory 2: Focus on form and meaning
		Subcategory 3: Focus on meaning
		Subcategory 4: Focus on form, meaning and use
	Category 2: Strategies	Subcategory 1: A three-phase procedure
		Subcategory 2: Linguistic and background knowledge
		Subcategory 3: Use of graded readers
		Subcategory 4: Repetitions
		Subcategory 5: Exposing learners to intensive and extensive reading
		Subcategory 6: Dividing the text vocabulary into receptive (passive) and productive (active) ones
		Subcategory 7: Listening to a piece of classical music while reading a text
		Subcategory 8: Developing a set of writing strategies

Referring to the first question, the research materials are the following English language course books which have been used currently in teaching English in public Albanian secondary schools. All course books were designed for general EFL (i.e. not for intensive language study or specific purposes).

- Evans, V., & Dooley, J. (2011). *Upload 4*, Student's Book and Workbook. Express Publishing.
- Doff, A., Thaine, C., Puchta, H., Stranks, J., Lewis-Jones, P. (2015). *Empower B1* Pre-Intermediate, Student's Book and Workbook. Cambridge University Press.
- Mitchell, H. Q., & Scott, J. (2002). *Channel your English*, Intermediate, Student's Book. MM Publications.
- Evans, V., & Dooley, J. (2017). *Spark 2*, Student's Book and Workbook. Express Publishing.

Upload 4 (U) consists of four modules, with 10 units each (concentrating on Vocabulary, Reading, Grammar, Listening/Speaking, Everyday English and Writing), followed by Self-check, Culture Corner, Curricular Cut, Vocabulary Practice and Grammar Practice. The sections of Grammar, Listening/Speaking and Everyday English were not considered for gathering the target data.

Empower B1 (E) contains 12 modules divided into 4 units each [focusing on Vocabulary, Grammar, Pronunciation, Everyday English, Listening and Video, Reading, Speaking and Writing (skills)]; each module is followed by the sections: Review and Extension, and Word Power. The units in the workbook consist of the same sections. The sections of Grammar, Listening and Speaking were not considered for gathering the target data.

Channel your English (C) contains 15 units and a revision section after each three units. Each unit contains these sections: Vocabulary, Structures, Conversational English, Reading, Listening, Speaking and Writing. The sections of Structures, Listening and Speaking were not taken into consideration for gathering the target data.

Spark 2 (S)*:* The student's book contains eight units, each consisting of the following subunits numbered with the letters a-f: Reading (a), Vocabulary (a), Grammar (b), Skills (c), Everyday English (d), Across Cultures (e), Writing (f), Monster trackers and Fun Time. The work book contains the same number of units, each consisting of vocabulary(a), grammar (b), skills(c), Everyday English (d, e) and Writing (f); at the end of the book, there are the Vocabulary Bank and Translator's Corner. The sections of grammar and those that contain listening and speaking activities were not considered for gathering the target data.

Different book levels and publishing houses have purposefully been chosen as to give a wider view of the reading and writing activities and strategies related to vocabulary teaching and learning. But the choice of only four books may address the reader to potential biases. Given the fact that activities in course books have changed very little in the 50 years (Tomlinson, 2018), these four course

books could give a generalized view of the most common methodological options related FL teaching and learning; whereas the research of the most current ones in the FL theory and research would fulfill the living picture of vocabulary methodological options.

The aim of the research was not to compare which course book uses more or less varieties of activities, but to find out the whole varieties of activities that the selected course books offer to the teachers of English and to suggest other ones, possible to be used in teaching and learning a foreign language.

3. Findings and Discussion

English course books used in the Albanian secondary education do suggest a variety of activities related to vocabulary teaching and learning through reading and writing skills.

The following exercises relate most closely to the *form* of the lexical items: asking learners to check the word formation of some lexical items (in C); completing the table (for example with verbs followed by to-infinitive / -ing) (in E, C); completing the words with the missing letters (in S); unscrambling the words (in S).

There are also suggested exercises where the aspects of *form and meaning* are interrelated, such as: completing the phrase, the sentence or the text with the right form of the word or phrase (in E, C); labeling the pictures with the right word or phrase (in S, U); doing crosswords (in S); the use of highlighting and bolding in the sentence and text level (in E, C), [for example, there are given sentences that contain phrases written in bold; learners are asked to find the meaning of these phrases (in C)].

The use of highlighting devices (such as underlining, italics, bolding, asterisks and glossing) in the text is recommended to make the word form more salient, contributing to learners' consciousness raising skill. Moreover, inferring the meaning of the unknown words from the context is considered a necessary technique to check form-meaning relationship (Nation, 2005; Webb & Nation, 2017).

The following activities, suggested by the course books, relate most closely to the aspect of *meaning* of the lexical items: crossing the odd word out (in U); guessing the meaning of words or phrases (in E); matching words to form phrases (in S); matching the sentence halves, the phrase or the sentence with a picture or its meaning (in E, S, U); matching texts with pictures (in C); completing the gaps with a word or phrase that has the right meaning in a sentence or a text (in E, S, U); writing the definitions of the given phrases (in E); substituting a word or phrase with its synonym (in E, U); matching words to their opposites (in S, U); listing words under the headings; finding phrases or sentences in a text that are similar in meaning with the given ones (in S, C); translating words, phrases or sentences from the target language to their native language (in S); creating semantic maps or thinking trees for a given key word, topic or idea (in U).

Other exercises that can be used to focus on the aspect of meaning are as following (Nation, 2005; Gairns & Redman, 2004; Thornbury, 2008):

- Matching the lexical item with collocates;
- Crossing out the items which do not form correct collocations;
- Finding the lexical items in the text to match with definitions given after the text;
- Matching the lexical items with other meaning relations (besides those of synonyms and antonyms used in the course books) such as hyponyms and meronyms.

To focus on *different aspects* of word knowledge and competence (form, meaning and use), there are included the following activities in the selected course books:

Correcting mistakes (related to grammar, spelling, punctuation, capital letters) (in E, S, C); finding the word that should not be in the sentence (in C); putting the words (sentences) in the correct order to make sentences (a conversation) (in E); completing the phrase or the sentence or the text with the right word or phrase (in E, C, S, U); multiple choices: at the text level to check reading comprehension, while at the phrase or sentence level to check or practice word meaning or use (in E,

C, S, U); filling in the gapped text with the missing sentences or paragraphs (in E, S C); putting the given pictures in the correct order to form a story, then checking their order after reading the story (in S); matching the headings or summary sentences with paragraphs (in C, U); answering comprehension questions, or writing 'True or False' after reading a text (in E, C, S, U); making sentences with the given words or phrases (in S); changing the sentences to be true for the learners (in E); reading to check predictions (in C); reading and completing the notes in a fact file (in S); reordering the jumbled sentences or texts (in C); dictation by listening first and then filling in the gaps (in S); writing sentences or stories about the given situations using the target words (for example: -ed / -ing adjectives) (in E); using tables and diagrams to write meaningfully while transferring the information from a table (or a diagram) into a text (in U, E, S); other pre-writing activities (at the phrase, sentence or text level), such as answering the questions, organizing ideas, correcting or rewriting the sentences, completing the table and finding examples, connected to different writing skills, such as planning, generating idea, using editing for surface-level features like accuracy and appropriateness in terms of grammar, word choice, spelling and punctuation (in U, C, E, S); exchanging emails with their partners and checking for mistakes (in E); writing a quiz of their own (S); writing a short text collecting information using technology (S, U); writing a dialog (similar to the one in the course book) using the given instructions (in S, C); writing a short story with a given title, or beginning or ending with the given words (in C); writing a paragraph, an email, an article, an informal letter, a brochure for a place, a news report, a letter of application, a discursive composition or a transactional letter using the given words / phrases or based on an imaginary situations (in C, S, U).

In addition, considering foreign language acquisition theory and research (Gairns & Redman, 2004; Guo, 2012; Laufer & Osimo, 1991; Nation, 2005; Thornbury, 2008; Webb & Nation, 2017), the following activities can be used to develop vocabulary knowledge and competence while practicing reading and writing skills:

- Answering global and specific questions using the target words (where possible); finding the contexts where the target lexical items are used and discussing their meanings. Such activities aim at improving communication skills and strengthening the meaning-form connection as the answers may require repetition of part of the text or use of the text information in a creative way.
- Transforming sentences from one style or register to another to acquire the stylistic appropriacy of the vocabulary.
- Finding the difference between two passages to focus on both the linguistic and text features.
- Using a piece of reading text from an authentic source and asking learners to underline its social-cultural references that foreign language learners would not understand so as to focus on the aspect of use.
- Paraphrasing: learners can read sentences and then re-express them in writing, using a target given word, without changing the meaning of the sentence.
- Translation: learners translate sentences or short texts form their native language to the target language; the target vocabulary may be given.
- The second-hand cloze technique: learners place previously taught words into gaps in a text which summarizes the content of a previously studied text. Laufer and Osimo (1991) found that this technique facilitated long term retention of vocabulary.
- Correcting the facts: learners have to substitute the sentences that do not correspond to the picture facts.
- Writing the middle paragraph (when there are given the beginning and the end paragraph) can involve learners in elaborating their ideas around a topic.
- Predicting: watching a short movie sequence and the writing what comes next.
- Picture composition: learners write a story based on a description of the whole sequence of

pictures.

- Writing a dialogue based on a text involve learners in transforming: an affirmative sentence into a questioning one, a form of a text into another and focusing on their textual features.
- Writing a role play summarizing the storyline of the two main characters of the book learners have recently read.
- Reading like a writer: both the teacher and the learner work together through a reading text noting features of the text that typify the style of writing, such as the degree of formality of the vocabulary, the use of lexical chains and lexical cohesion.
- Guided semantic mapping involves the learners to develop a semantic map around a topic; the teacher introduces some target vocabulary items and together with the learners, they elaborate others to be used in their piece of writing (a poem, a story, an essay, etc.).
- The meaningful dictation: learners listen to a text and then they write it based on the information that they remember. The teacher encourages learners to use the target vocabulary by having them written on the blackboard.
- Issue logs involve learners in making a written report summarizing the information gathered on an interesting topic from newspapers, radio and television news, books, magazines, interviews or internet.

Teachers may compile a set of activities from different course books and other sources (including those presented in this article) and gather them in a corpus of activities. The exercises can be selected according to the learning goal of the activity, that is, the aspect of vocabulary knowledge that the exercise contributes to. Moreover, the activities can be adapted for different levels of learners' language proficiency.

It should be noted that the above activities (suggested in the course books or by the foreign language literature) need to be used with other speaking and / or listening tasks, following the three-phase procedure of Williams (1984, as cited in Hedge, 2000, p. 209) involving pre-, while-, and post-skill developing activities aiming at helping learners develop reading and other communicative skills. Generally speaking, such a strategy is used in the selected course books.

Regarding the effective strategies for vocabulary learning and growth through written communication, foreign language acquisition theory and research suggest: equipping learners with both linguistic and background knowledge, the use of graded readers, repetitions, exposing learners to intensive and extensive reading, dividing the text vocabulary into receptive (passive) and productive (active) ones, listening to a piece of classical music while reading a text, and developing a set of writing strategies. Some detailed information about them is given below:

- During the reading process, teachers need to equip their learners with both linguistic (including vocabulary) and background knowledge (which includes general world knowledge, sociocultural knowledge, topic knowledge and genre knowledge) as they are interacted in processing a text (Hedge, 2000). As Stahl, Jacobson, Davis and Davis (1989) noted that vocabulary knowledge affected the development of the microstructure of the text (or surface structure), while background knowledge was helpful in grasping the macrostructure of the text (or the deep structure). What is more, focusing on both linguistic and background knowledge (based on the teaching topic) creates opportunities for developing both the depth and the breadth of learners' vocabulary knowledge at different language proficiency levels. Generally speaking, such a strategy is used in the selected course books.
- Considering Albanian context of foreign language teaching, no graded readers are used. Graded readers are books of six levels that contain a limited vocabulary for each level, varying from 400 to 2500 words, and they have text coverage of at least 95% (Nation, 2005). Studies (Carver, 1994; Nation, 2005; Herman & Leeser, 2022; Laufer, 2020; Song & Reynolds, 2022) have shown that text comprehension improves as the text coverage by known words increases; most learners need 95-98% coverage to get sufficient comprehension of a text; a

text coverage level that is lower than 95% makes comprehension more difficult or impossible. In the latter case, for a successful reading, the activity of reading a text should be preceded by a direct study of the unknown vocabulary; the remaining new words can be learned through the techniques of guessing from the context or using a dictionary (Nation, 2005; Webb & Nation, 2017). This strategy contributes to the development of the breadth of learners' vocabulary knowledge and competence. When combined with a rich instruction of the vocabulary, it enriches the depth of learners' vocabulary knowledge as well.

- Studies have suggested that a frequency of more than ten repetitions is needed to develop full knowledge of a word (Webb, 2007), and reading about five books at each level help learners to meet most of the words of that level (Nation & Wang, 1999). Besides being involved in reading activities, repetition can be realized through different communicative activities employing other communicative skills (listening, speaking and writing). Since we focused only on reading and writing activities, we cannot discuss whether this strategy is (not) used in the selected course books. Considering only these two communication skills and their topics, learners rarely have any opportunity to repeat the vocabulary related to a certain topic. For example, *Spark 2* contains the vocabulary related to: every day and free-time activities, daily activities, jobs and qualities, writing a blog entry about a typical weekend (in the first module); historical figures, appearance and character, writing a biography (in the 2nd); celebrations and festivals, narrating past events (in the 3rd); rules, regulations, household chores, road safety, free time activities, writing an email about the rules in a summer camp (in the 4th); geographical features, means of transport, writing an informal email comparing two places (in the 5th); types of holiday, holiday activities, writing an informal email about your holiday (in the 6th); life experience, embarrassing moments, writing a survey report (in the 7th); places in cities, shops and markets, writing an email about your new house and neighborhood (in the 8th). As it can be seen, only the topic of the activities is repeated (it is found in the first, the fourth and the sixth module), while the other topics are not. The same is found even in the other selected course books. Moreover, the research has affirmed that 'vocabulary recycling is usually overlooked' in text books (López Jiménez, 2009, p. 65).
- Intensive reading creates opportunities to learners to pay attention to different linguistic aspects, including vocabulary. Differently, extensive reading aims either vocabulary growth (when the reading text contain 1% - 5% unknown lexical items) or fluency development (when the text contain little or no unknown vocabulary) (Nation, 2005). Using only the course book, learners are involved in intensive reading, but not in extensive reading, since the course books do not contain pages dedicated to extensive reading. Such a strategy should be changed; foreign language course books should involve extensive reading by including some pages from graded readers, considering learners' proficiency level, so as to contribute to both vocabulary growth and linguistic competence.
- The target new words need to be distinguished as: receptive (passive) to refer to those items which can only be understood in the reading or listening material, but not learned, because they will be in focus at a later time, when they are more necessarily used in the controlled practice activities and the communicative ones; and productive (active) to refer to lexical items which learners can recall and use accurately and appropriately in speech and writing (Doff, 1988; Gairns & Redman, 2004). When dealing with passive vocabulary, the teacher focuses quickly on the form-meaning relation, mostly by means of the translation technique, while in teaching active vocabulary, it is recommended a rich instruction (focusing on several aspects of word knowledge) (Nation, 2005, p. 95).

Such a distinction is not found in the selected course books. Even the following strategy is not used in Albanian foreign language classes.

- Listening to a piece of classical music while reading a text, like in the Desuggesotpedia

method of teaching, is considered necessary to activate the 'whole brain' of the learners and enhance their learning; on the conscious plane, the linguistic message is encoded, while in the sub-conscious one, other factors that affect the linguistic message are activated (Larsen-Freeman, 2008, p.79). In such a way, this strategy would contribute to the development of both the depth and breadth of learners' vocabulary knowledge. There have been studies investigating the positive effects of music on reading performance (Su, He & Li, 2023).

The above stated strategies can be applied at different levels of learners' language proficiency. It is the teachers' responsibility and learners' responsibility to make these strategies part of their teaching and learning routine.

It should also be noted that teachers, policy-makers and curriculum developers in Albania and beyond may refer to these findings of activities and strategies to improve the used course book and the (vocabulary) teaching and learning process.

4. Conclusion

Helping learners to acquire vocabulary for communication purpose is a real challenge for teachers considering the multi-dimensional character of the word knowledge and the inter-relationship between vocabulary growth and successful written communication skills.

Referring to all the course books analyzed, all in all, they do offer a variety of reading and writing activities focusing on different aspects of word knowledge and competence. The understanding and acquisition of learners' vocabulary is eased and enhanced through using activities that concentrate learners on the form (Matwangsaeng & Sukying, 2023), the meaning and the use of lexical items (Nation, 2005; Gairns & Redman, 2004; Webb & Nation, 2017). But, because of using only the course books, routine can make students lose interest and lead to boredom. The vast amount and variety of the activities and strategies presented in this paper may be used to replace or add the activities and strategies suggested in the course book appropriately for the aim they are designed to fulfill, helping teachers and leaners to focus concurrently on the development of vocabulary and written communication skills of reading and writing. The more learners are involved in reading and writing meaningfully, the more they encounter and use a wide range of vocabulary. Not only vocabulary knowledge can help reading and writing processes, but also these written communication skills can contribute to the growth of the depth and breadth of vocabulary knowledge.

The activities can be used at different phases of the lesson: presentation, practice, revision and testing. It is the teacher's responsibility to select the appropriate strategies and activities considering the goal of the activity, learners' proficiency level of the target language, their needs, and interests.

Although the paper has limitations since the results are based on four EFL course books and some target studies, we do recommend teachers and policy-makers in Albania and beyond to implement the suggested strategies and activities (in the way they are described) and make them part of their routine for having successful teachers and learners in and outside a foreign language classroom.

Further research on this topic considering other course books of English or other languages may give a wider view of the activities and strategies possible to be used in a non-monotonous foreign language classroom.

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