

**AN EVALUATION OF VOCABULARY TASKS IN MOROCCAN EFL TEXTBOOKS****UNA EVALUACIÓN DE TAREAS DE VOCABULARIO EN LIBROS DE TEXTO DE EFL MARROQUÍ SELECCIONADOS**CHAIMAE FARMATI\*<sup>1</sup>, MOHAMED YEOU\* & BOUCHAIB BENZEHAF\*  
\*CHOUAIB DOUKKALI UNIVERSITY (MOROCCO)**ABSTRACT**

A sufficient vocabulary knowledge is one of the key factors to success in language acquisition. In any EFL (English as a foreign language) context, textbooks are one of the first sources of exposure to English. Most certainly, this explains the vast amount of scholarly attention that has been invested in research on English textbooks' evaluation. In this regard, a wide array of studies has recently provided evidence suggesting that textbooks contain a number of issues, such as outdated content, lack of authenticity, overemphasis on grammar, insufficient practice, and unengaging material, to mention but a few. Such studies have adopted different approaches to evaluate the contents of EFL textbooks. However, very few studies have attempted to evaluate vocabulary tasks in Moroccan EFL textbooks and chart the progression of these tasks across consecutive educational levels. To contribute to this debate, the present study aims to evaluate vocabulary tasks across two Moroccan EFL textbooks. The corpus is analyzed using Nunan taxonomy. The study adopted a mixed-methods approach and used content analysis as an analysis tool. Findings revealed that the two textbooks contain some pedagogical inconveniences. The two textbooks contain 86 vocabulary tasks grouped in 19 different types although none features them all. Ticket to English 2 is the textbook that presents more diverse vocabulary tasks. Ticket to English 1 includes 6 sub-types of vocabulary tasks, while Ticket to English 2 features 10 different sub-types of vocabulary tasks. Also, several imperfections related to the sequencing, gradation, and recycling of vocabulary tasks were identified. Nonetheless, a remarkable development in the frequency of some vocabulary tasks types was observed across the two textbooks. These issues need to be redressed for optimal vocabulary learning outcomes. Therefore, based on these results, a number of pedagogical implications are underscored.

**Keywords:** EFL textbooks, Morocco, Nunan's taxonomy, Textbook evaluation, vocabulary tasks.

**RESUMEN**

Un conocimiento suficiente del vocabulario es uno de los factores clave para el éxito en el desarrollo del lenguaje. En la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera, los libros de texto son una de las primeras fuentes de exposición al inglés. Sin duda, esto explica la gran cantidad de atención académica que se ha prestado a la investigación sobre la evaluación de los libros de texto en inglés. En este sentido, una amplia gama de estudios ha proporcionado recientemente evidencia que sugiere que los libros de texto contienen una serie de problemas. Dichos estudios han adoptado diferentes enfoques para evaluar el contenido de los libros de texto de inglés como lengua extranjera. Sin embargo, muy pocos estudios han intentado evaluar las tareas de vocabulario en los libros de texto marroquíes de inglés como lengua extranjera y trazar la progresión de estas tareas en niveles educativos consecutivos. Para contribuir a este debate, el presente estudio tiene como objetivo evaluar tareas de vocabulario en dos libros de texto marroquíes de inglés como lengua extranjera. El corpus se analiza utilizando la taxonomía de Nunan (1999). El estudio adoptó un enfoque de métodos mixtos y utilizó el análisis de contenido como herramienta de análisis. Los resultados revelaron que los dos libros de texto contienen algunos inconvenientes pedagógicos. Los dos libros de texto no incluyen algunos tipos de tareas. Además, se identificaron varias imperfecciones relacionadas con la secuenciación, gradación y reciclaje de las tareas de vocabulario. No obstante, se observó un desarrollo notable en la frecuencia de algunos tipos de tareas de vocabulario en los dos libros de texto.

**Palabras clave:** Libros de texto de inglés como lengua extranjera, Marruecos, taxonomía de Nunan, evaluación de libros de texto, tareas de vocabulario.

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## 1. Introduction

Vocabulary represents one of the crucial components in foreign language development. It is both essential and problematic to language teaching curricula. It is essential because it is a key factor in developing learners' communicative competence (Alderson, 2005; Kwon, 2009), and problematic since vocabulary learning cannot be planned in advance, but advance but is rather determined by the occurrence of words in sentences, texts, and tasks (Nation, 2001, p. 481). In fact, vocabulary teaching has been subject of much debate. While some maintain that vocabulary learning is a mere repetition and drilling of a given list of vocabulary items, others argue that well-designed tasks, meaningful activities, authentic contexts, and real-life situations are key to fostering learners' language skills. Therefore, amidst this debate, questions related to the way vocabulary should be implemented in the curriculum are raised. This is largely apparent in the way vocabulary tasks are presented in language teaching textbooks.

Although textbooks remain at the heart of any ELT (English Language Teaching) program (Cunningsworth, 1995; O'Neill, 1982; Sheldon, 1988) by providing resources for both students and teachers and serving to manifest the official curriculum into concrete tasks, many researchers (Ait Bouzid et al., 2016; Jaafari, 2016; Litz, 2005; McDonough et al., 2013) postulate that language textbooks are very likely to contain issues related to their social, cultural, pedagogical, and linguistic content. This, in turn, can impede the teaching-learning process. These potential issues can only be identified and overcome by critically evaluating their content. Textbook evaluation is, therefore, a central practice to the optimization of the teaching-learning process.

In the Moroccan context, the way EFL textbooks present vocabulary to students does not only influence their performance outcomes, but it also shapes their attitudes towards the target language. Thus, given the paramount importance of vocabulary in foreign language development and the centrality of textbooks in any language teaching classroom, textbook evaluation becomes an urgent practice and an investment in the education system in Morocco. However, this practice has not yet received enough attention from Moroccan researchers (Ait Bouzid, 2017, p. 3).

It is also noted that there is a scarcity in the body of literature on textbook evaluation on vocabulary tasks. The majority of previous research studies tackle issues related to the representation of gender (Ait Bouzid, 2019; Jaafari, 2016), religion (Ait Bouzid, 2016a), culture and society (Ait Bouzid, 2016b; Elghazali, 2022), grammar (Ait Bouzid et al., 2019), citizenship (Ait Bouzid, 2020), as well as critical thinking (Es-Salhi & Elfatihi, 2019). Thus, a minute scrutiny and an in-depth evaluation of vocabulary tasks in Moroccan ELT textbooks is badly needed, and needed and can only yield better learning outcomes. For this reason, the present study aims to contribute to this line of research by investigating the vocabulary task types included in two Moroccan EFL public high school textbooks designed for two different consecutive educational levels and exploring the progression of these tasks across these two textbooks. Put differently, this paper addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the task types included in vocabulary lessons in two first- and second- year Baccalaureate EFL textbooks?
2. How do these textbooks present vocabulary tasks with regard to sequencing, gradation, and recycling?
3. To what extent do the vocabulary tasks in the two textbooks follow a clear pattern of progress across the two levels?

## 2. Literature review

Departing from the assumption that learning takes place when textbooks present a language that is slightly beyond the actual level of learners, Sun and Dang (2020) investigated the vocabulary component in 11 high school EFL textbooks in China and measured the vocabulary knowledge of 265 EFL Chinese students who used these textbooks. The findings of this study revealed that the vocabulary size of the participants does not correspond to the level of vocabulary included in the

textbooks. The vocabulary used in the reading passages in these textbooks is too challenging and is not suitable to the learners' current level of language proficiency. In this way, students may feel demotivated and frustrated, which is very likely to impede the language learning process.

Nordlund and Norberg (2020) carried out an analysis of seven EFL teaching materials (textbooks and workbooks) commonly used in Swedish primary schools. The researchers classified vocabulary activities into five main types, namely mechanical, open, closed, communicative or ambiguous. Findings uncovered that the majority of exercises in the textbooks are of the closed type which simply drive students to memorize words and their meanings instead of challenging their cognitive capacities and learning skills. Besides, even supplementary materials (workbooks) do not cover up the inadequacies of textbooks. Therefore, the researchers urged textbook writers to include a variety of activity types to enhance students' language learning.

Huda and Syaferi (2020), to cite another example, explored the task types included in two English textbooks, namely *When English rings a bell* and *English course for junior high school* currently used in teaching 7th grade Indonesian students. Using Nunan's (1999) typology of task types, the researchers classified 362 tasks into their corresponding categories. The results showed that the two textbooks contain all the various task types but in an imbalanced distribution. The most frequent types are linguistic and interpersonal tasks and the second dominant types are cognitive and affective tasks, while creative tasks are the least frequent types in the two textbooks. In light of these findings, the researchers invited textbook writers to evenly distribute the different task types throughout ELT textbooks.

In the same line, De Azevedo and Tomitch (2019), Hussin et al., (2016), and Nordlund (2016) analyzed the vocabulary activities of several EFL textbooks. The main research objectives of this study are to examine the presentation of vocabulary activities, the underlying learning objectives of these activities, and the recycling of new words. Creating a number of encounters with a word in a variety of situations can help language learners commit this item to memory and access it easily when the need for it arises. However, the study uncovered that ample opportunities to recycle a newly-learned vocabulary item are not offered.

Similarly, Cao (2018) employed a mixed-methods analysis to address the presentation of vocabulary activities in a coursebook entitled *Life A2-B1* designed to teach academic English for Vietnamese undergraduates. The findings of this evaluation revealed that the textbook does not provide students with a high frequency of AWLs (academic word lists) which is the crux of this textbook. The analysis also reveals that vocabulary exercises are most of the time structured around word-building, spelling, and gap-filling. This, in turn, provides evidence that the focus of most of the vocabulary activities in this textbook is laid on the form and meaning of words rather than the actual use of language.

In the Moroccan context, El Morabit (2020) evaluated the vocabulary of the reading comprehension texts in three EFL textbooks currently used in Moroccan public high schools. The researcher investigated whether the vocabulary included is suitable to the vocabulary knowledge of 106 Moroccan second-year baccalaureate students. Findings showed that there is a wide gap between the actual vocabulary size of the participants and the vocabulary load contained in their textbooks. That is to say, vocabulary in the reading comprehension texts of the three textbooks is beyond students' vocabulary knowledge. Students have an impoverished vocabulary repertoire and this can lead us to question the extent to which these students can fully understand the texts presented to them.

Additionally, Ait Bouzid's (2017) study was motivated by a desire to find out whether vocabulary lessons and activities in the same textbooks align with the principles of the Standards-based approach that guides the practice of English textbook designing in Morocco. Although the textbooks are designed for the same educational level, the study uncovered some differences.

Ticket to English 2 presents the highest number of 54 vocabulary exercises and 333 new vocabulary items, while Insights into English 2 offers only 20 vocabulary exercises and 71 new vocabulary items. Ait Bouzid (2017) also highlighted that most of the vocabulary activities are structured around multiple-choice questions, matching, and gap filling. In this way, the textbooks do not encourage students to practise English through communicative tasks.

Quite similarly, Laabidi and Nfissi (2016) conducted an evaluation of an EFL textbook entitled *Visa to the World*, specifically designed for common core students. Using a four-point Likert scale questionnaire, the researchers assessed the effectiveness of this textbook from the perspectives of 50 English language teachers who have a teaching experience using *Visa to the World*. As far as vocabulary content is concerned, the findings revealed that the textbook includes enough activities for teaching vocabulary. Another finding is that the presentation of vocabulary items is systematic and gradual, i.e., it moves from simple to complex.

Different studies have, thus, been conducted to evaluate the content of EFL textbooks from different perspectives. However, in spite of the great number of studies, few have investigated the types, sequencing, gradation, and recycling of vocabulary tasks across EFL textbooks designed for consecutive educational levels. The present study comes to fill this gap by attempting to evaluate the vocabulary tasks included in two Moroccan EFL textbooks

### 3. Methodology

As befits the objectives of the current research, this study adopted a mixed-methods design using content analysis as a mixed data analysis method that combines both quantitative and qualitative techniques (Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell, 2014; Webber, 1990). The main objective is to explore the vocabulary task types included in the vocabulary sections in two Moroccan EFL textbooks. The study also followed a cross-sectional design. This type of research design was employed to chart the frequency and occurrence of the number and types of vocabulary tasks in the textbooks under investigation.

#### 3.1. Materials

The present study aims to examine the vocabulary tasks included in the following two Moroccan EFL textbooks: *Ticket to English 1* (Hammani et al., 2006) and *Ticket to English 2* (Hammani et al., 2007). These two EFL textbooks are currently used to teach first- and second- year Baccalaureate levels at public high schools throughout the country. The choice of these textbooks is basically driven by a desire to chart the development of vocabulary tasks in EFL textbooks written by the same authors and for consecutive educational levels.

#### 3.2. Data analysis procedures

The two textbooks were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative analysis consists of making frequency counts of vocabulary tasks to identify the number and distribution of types included in the textbooks. The materials were analyzed using Nunan's taxonomy of task types composed of five macro-categories which can be broken down into different micro-types (see Table 1, below). This taxonomy is developed according to the learning strategies underpinning each task. The main task types are cognitive, interpersonal, affective, linguistic, and creative tasks (Nunan, 1999).

The purpose of the qualitative analysis is to identify the extent to which the vocabulary tasks align with sequencing, gradation, and recycling schemes. It aims to examine whether the two textbooks present vocabulary tasks from simple to complex and from easy to difficult and whether they present them in ways that allow learners to re-encounter newly learned vocabulary items in subsequent vocabulary lessons within and outside their respective units.

**Table 1**  
*Nunan's (1999) Taxonomy of Task Types*

<b>Cognitive tasks</b>	<b>Interpersonal tasks</b>	<b>Linguistic tasks</b>	<b>Affective tasks</b>	<b>Creative tasks</b>
<b>Classifying</b>	Co-operating	Conversational patterns	Personalizing	Brainstorming
<b>Predicting</b>	Role playing	Practicing	Self-evaluating	
<b>Inducing</b>		Using context	Reflecting	
<b>Note-taking</b>		Summarizing		
<b>Concept mapping/ Diagramming Inferencing</b>		Selective reading/ listening Skimming		
<b>Discriminating</b>				

According to Cunningsworth (1995), gradation involves the concept of progression with the view that there is a structured development of the learning load included in each unit in a given teaching material. Sequencing, however, simply refers to the way in which new language items are presented in a given textbook and how the components fit with one another. Besides, recycling involves that language learners need to meet language items several times in different contexts in order to use them as fluently as possible.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

### 4.1. Vocabulary task types in *Ticket to English 1* and *Ticket to English 2*

Vocabulary lessons are presented in different ways throughout the two textbooks. *Ticket to English 1* places vocabulary lessons under the heading "Vocabulary" immediately after the reading section in each unit. All the vocabulary lessons of this textbook revolve around the theme of their respective units. *Ticket to English 2*, on the contrary, presents vocabulary lessons under the heading "Expand your vocabulary" at the initial position of each unit, and they usually serve as an introduction to the theme of the unit.

Table 2 below presents the taxonomy of vocabulary tasks in the two textbooks. It reveals that the two textbooks contain 86 vocabulary tasks grouped in 19 different types although none features them all. It also shows that *Ticket to English 2* is the textbook that presents more diverse vocabulary tasks. *Ticket to English 1* includes 6 sub-types of vocabulary tasks, while *Ticket to English 2* features 10 different sub-types of vocabulary tasks.

The table further reveals that linguistic tasks are the most dominant vocabulary tasks as they appear 22 and 26 times in *Ticket to English 1* and *Ticket to English 2*, respectively. More specifically, the two sub-types of linguistic tasks, namely "practicing" and "using context" tasks, are the most dominant types of vocabulary tasks in the two textbooks. *Ticket to English 1* includes 14 "using context" tasks and 8 "practicing" tasks, while *Ticket to English 2* includes 14 "using context" tasks, 10 "practicing" activities, and 2 "selective reading" tasks in which students are required to read a number of paragraphs and figure out the meaning of some vocabulary items.

Furthermore, this table reveals that the second category of vocabulary tasks that is commonly identified in the two textbooks is cognitive tasks. *Ticket to English 1* features three various sub-types of cognitive tasks, namely, 4 "inducing" tasks, 4 "concept mapping" tasks and 3 "inferencing"

tasks. On another level, Ticket to English 2 features four different sub-types of cognitive tasks: 11 “inducing” tasks, 5 “inferencing” tasks, 4 “classifying” tasks, and 2 “concept mapping” tasks.

**Table 2**  
*Taxonomy of Vocabulary Tasks Included in Vocabulary Lessons*

	Ticket to English 1	Ticket to English 2	TOTAL
<b>Cognitive tasks</b>			
Classifying	0	4	4
Predicting	0	0	0
Inducing	4	11	15
Note-taking	0	0	0
Concept mapping	4	2	6
Inferencing	3	5	8
Discriminating	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Interpersonal tasks</b>			
Co-operating	4	3	7
Role playing	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Linguistic tasks</b>			
Conversational patterns	0	0	0
Practicing	8	10	18
Using context	14	14	28
Summarizing	0	0	0
Selective reading	0	2	2
Skimming	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Affective tasks</b>			
Personalizing	0	0	0
Self-evaluating	0	1	1
Reflecting	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Creative tasks</b>			
Brainstorming	0	3	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>

Table 2 also shows that the two textbooks include only one sub-type of interpersonal tasks, particularly “co-operating” vocabulary tasks. Ticket to English 1 includes 4 “co-operating” tasks, whereas Ticket to English 2 contains 3 activities of the same sub-type. “Role playing” vocabulary tasks, however, are absent in the textbooks although they are likely to foster language learners’ communicative competence through using the target language in life-like situations.

Another finding is that Ticket to English 2 comprises two other macro-categories of task types, specifically affective and creative tasks, while Ticket to English 1 does not include any. As far as affective tasks are concerned, Ticket to English 2 contains 1 “self-evaluating” task whereby students are required to evaluate themselves by checking their own answers of a given vocabulary task. Also, this textbook includes 3 “brainstorming” tasks in which learners are given a topic/issue and asked to brainstorm some relevant ideas.

The quantitative analysis of the vocabulary tasks identified in the two textbooks uncovers a number of strengths and weaknesses. One strong aspect of these vocabulary tasks is that they present rich and relevant lexis that has the potential of expanding the learner’s linguistic repertoire.

Another positive characteristic of these vocabulary tasks is that they present vocabulary items not as single words but in combinations of words. *Ticket to English 2*, for example, includes a number of tasks that introduce vocabulary items through collocations and idiomatic expressions. In this way, this textbook helps Moroccan students encounter and learn vocabulary items in a naturally occurring language (MNE, 2007).

Moreover, as Table 2 reveals, the most dominant sub-type of the linguistic vocabulary tasks in the two textbooks is “using context” tasks. These activities are intended to enable language learners to take into account the various contexts where a vocabulary item can be used and learn its different denotative and connotative meanings. For instance, the second task included in the vocabulary lesson in Unit 1 (see page 12) is a linguistic vocabulary task whereby students are required to read an incomplete paragraph. Then, based on the context, students choose the appropriate word from a given list of vocabulary items to complete the paragraph. In this way, students develop a vocabulary learning strategy to use context in order to learn the meaning(s) of vocabulary items.

In addition, the quantitative analysis of the types of vocabulary tasks included in the textbooks reveals that they are generally directed towards teaching and learning vocabulary inductively. As already mentioned, it is observed that “using context”, “inducing”, and “practicing” tasks are predominant in the two textbooks. These tasks require language learners to understand the context in which some vocabulary items are used, deduce their meaning and form, and then do some practice.

However, despite the considerable number of vocabulary tasks identified in the two textbooks, the second most frequent type of tasks are concerned with practicing vocabulary items, while tasks encouraging students to use these newly learnt vocabulary items in their oral or written productions are not very frequent. Some vocabulary tasks focus particularly on the reception of vocabulary items as they encourage students to read about vocabulary items (their definitions, synonyms, antonyms, collocations) more than the use of vocabulary items communicatively.

To illustrate, the two textbooks include a total of only 7 interpersonal vocabulary tasks, particularly “co-operating” tasks. The main purpose of these tasks is to allow students to collaborate with one another, share their ideas and experiences, and negotiate meaning in the target language. They also help learners reduce their anxiety in the teaching-learning classroom and increase their motivation to learn the target language (Celce-Murcia, 2001).

These findings are congruent with De Azevedo and Tomitch (2019) and Nordlund and Norberg (2020), since they argue that the majority of vocabulary tasks in the textbooks analyzed drive students to learn and practise language in a mechanical way instead of providing authentic situations that would foster their communicative competence. This also goes hand-in-hand with the findings of Cao (2018), who points out that the focus of most of the vocabulary tasks in EFL textbooks is on the form and meaning of vocabulary items rather than on the actual use of language in real-life situations.

In line with Ait Bouzid (2017), the second issue is concerned with the scarcity, if not the marginalization, of some vocabulary task types in the two textbooks. *Ticket to English 1*, for instance, does not contain any instances of creative and affective vocabulary tasks. It also does not include other sub-types of vocabulary tasks, namely “classifying” and “role playing” which go under cognitive and interpersonal macro vocabulary task types, respectively. A more frequent implementation of these tasks in the two EFL textbooks would have certainly had a significant impact on Moroccan learners’ vocabulary development. Creative tasks, for example, help students challenge their mental capacities as they drive them to process new knowledge, recall it from memory, and use it appropriately later on (Nunan, 1989).

Affective tasks can also be really effective in teaching and learning foreign languages. It needs hardly to be said that students' attitudes can either enhance or impede language development. Language learners who have positive attitudes towards a given foreign language, are more likely to be more self-confident, more active in the classroom, and more willing to communicate in the target language than their counterparts (Dörnyei, 2005; Ellis, 2015). Thus, affective tasks are crucial in the teaching-learning process as they do not only allow students to use a given language, but also encourage them to take positive attitudes towards this language.

#### 4.2. Sequencing, gradation and recycling across textbooks

The sequencing of vocabulary tasks is comparatively stable throughout the ten units of the two textbooks. They usually start with one or two vocabulary tasks that demand a cognitive effort on the part of students. The main concern of these tasks is to encourage learners to either deduce certain rules or to think about vocabulary items that are closely related to a given concept. Then, students are provided with a vocabulary task in order to practise what they have learned. In *Ticket to English 1*, for instance, Unit 4, first starts with a vocabulary task whereby students are asked to think of vocabulary items that are associated with the word "waste" since the general topic of this unit is on "environment and ecology". After that, they are provided with a list of words which they need to define based on the context. Finally, students are provided with a task to practise the use of vocabulary items they have already defined.

However, some problems related to sequencing of vocabulary lessons can be identified particularly in *Ticket to English 2*. For instance, the lesson of "prefixes" introduced in the last unit of this textbook (see page 143) could have been more useful to the students if it had been presented earlier alongside "suffixes" in Unit 5. Students are introduced to "prefixes" five units after they had been introduced to "suffixes". Dealing with these two lessons in the same unit, or each one of them in two consecutive units, would be more helpful for students to grasp the ways in which they are used.

As far as gradation is concerned, the two textbooks display a moderate, not a systematic, increase in the number of both vocabulary tasks and the items that these tasks introduce in each lesson of the units constituting the two textbooks. For instance, the vocabulary tasks contained in Units 1, 2, and 3 in *Ticket to English 1* present 11, 14, and 27 new vocabulary items respectively, whereas Unit 8 of the same textbook presents only 8 new vocabulary items. This indicates that this textbook does not really succeed in maintaining a structured development of vocabulary load across its ten units.

Besides, the two textbooks present more vocabulary task types that require a considerable amount of cognitive effort from students as we move from one unit to another. *Ticket to English 2*, for example, presents four vocabulary tasks in Unit 3; one task is cognitive, namely "inferencing" as well as three linguistic vocabulary tasks that give practice on the previously learned vocabulary items. Unit 8 of the same textbook, however, presents six vocabulary tasks; these include (a) three cognitive tasks, particularly "inducing", "inferencing", and "classifying" and (b) three other linguistic tasks, i.e., two "using context" tasks and one "practicing" task. This shows that there is an increase in the number of vocabulary tasks from one unit to another, especially in the number of vocabulary tasks that demand more cognitive efforts from language learners. So, although the gradation of vocabulary task types included in the two textbooks under study does not flow smoothly from simple to complex within each unit, it can still be described as relatively progressive from one unit to another.

Furthermore, while recycling is crucial to vocabulary development, most coursebook writers and designers fail to effectively implement it in language teaching textbooks. *Ticket to English 2* places vocabulary lessons at the beginning of each unit, whereas *Ticket to English 1* starts its units with reading lessons. In this way, the two textbooks provide learners with various opportunities to



recycle the newly learnt vocabulary items in listening, functions, grammar, and writing lessons only if the teacher is aware of the significant impact of recycling on vocabulary development. However, students using these two textbooks are practically given a chance to re-encounter vocabulary items only in the review section that follows each two units. This, in fact, is very insufficient for mastering a foreign language.

This qualitative analysis of the vocabulary tasks contained in the two textbooks unveils a number of issues. As indicated by Sun and Dang (2020), the gradation of vocabulary tasks is quite random in most EFL textbooks. Language learning occurs on a developmental continuum. That is to say, students progress in their language learning when there is a systematic and principled advancement in the language input they are exposed to. The present study, however, reveals that the two textbooks do not really respect the basic requirements regarding gradation, especially within each unit. The presentation of vocabulary task types does not move from easy to difficult throughout each unit of the two textbooks.

In many vocabulary lessons, students are required to start with one or two vocabulary tasks that demand a lesser cognitive effort than that required in the following tasks. In *Ticket to English 1*, for example, the theme of Unit 1 revolves around “education”. The vocabulary lesson included in this unit starts with a cognitive “concept-mapping” task that requires students to come up with lexis that is closely related to the theme of the unit, i.e., “education”. Then, learners are provided with two linguistic “using context” tasks whereby they rely on context to practise the use of a set of vocabulary items. Nevertheless, it is noted that there is a remarkable progress in the number of vocabulary tasks and their types from one unit to another across the two textbooks.

In line with the findings of Hussin et al. (2016) and Nordlund (2016), another issue is concerned with the scarcity and even the absence of vocabulary tasks that allow the recycling of vocabulary items. The more frequently language learners encounter new words, the more likely they are to recall these words and use them in their daily conversations (O’Loughlin, 2012; Schmitt, 2008). However, the two textbooks rarely provide opportunities for encountering some of the newly learnt items in the vocabulary tasks of subsequent units. This problem is mainly caused by the nature of the vocabulary items that are related to the theme of the unit. As each unit seems to be self-contained in the sense that it tackles a theme that is totally different from the preceding and the following units, learners do not have ample opportunities to recycle vocabulary items, wasting thus all the effort and time invested in practicing those vocabulary items that were initially introduced to students. As a result, the two textbooks do not provide enough vocabulary tasks that reinforce learners’ retention of newly learned vocabulary.

### 4.3. *Task types across levels*

A significant development is observed in the number of vocabulary lessons included in each textbook. *Ticket to English 1* includes 10 vocabulary lessons; this constitutes less than the third of the vocabulary lessons included in *Ticket to English 2*, which contains 42 lessons. In this way, first year Baccalaureate students, using *Ticket to English 1*, are generally initiated to some basic vocabulary lessons such as word formation and ordinary/strong adjectives as well as to lexis related to different themes. On another level, second year Baccalaureate students, using *Ticket to English 2*, are exposed to various vocabulary lessons since they are supposed to sit for a national exam in English.

In the same token, there is also a remarkable progress in the presentation of vocabulary tasks and the items introduced in the vocabulary lessons of the two textbooks. *Ticket to English 1* includes 32 vocabulary tasks that present 160 vocabulary items, whereas *Ticket to English 2* contains 54 vocabulary tasks that introduce 332 vocabulary items. Additionally, a development is observed in the difficulty of the vocabulary items introduced in vocabulary lessons that tackle the same theme. For instance, Unit 1 in *Ticket to English 1* and Unit 3 in *Ticket to English 2* deal with the same topic,

i.e., “Education” and “Formal, Informal and Non-Formal education”, respectively. While the first textbook presents 11 vocabulary items, the second one presents 24 vocabulary items that are more advanced and difficult in comparison with the ones included in Ticket to English 1, as illustrated in Table 3 below.

**Table 3**

*Distribution of Vocabulary Items in Units 1 and 3 in the Two Textbooks*

	<b>Ticket to English 1</b> (Unit 1: Education)	<b>Ticket to English 2</b> (Unit 3: Formal, Non-formal, and Informal education)
Vocabulary items	Degree, Scholarship, Graduate, Abroad, Research, Break, Timetable, Courtyard, Notebook, Pencil case, Laboratory.	Formal education, Non-formal education, Informal education, Vocational education, Special education, Inclusive education, Gifted education, Basic education, Boarding school, Literacy, Portfolio, Critical thinking, Problem solving, Dropouts, Compulsory, Skill, Note taking, E-learning, Brainstorming, Gifted, Active learning, Universal values, Cooperative learning, Partnership.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>24</b>

Table 3 shows that the vocabulary items presented in Unit 1 in Ticket to English 1 are very basic in comparison to the vocabulary items that Unit 3 in Ticket to English 2 introduces to students. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a systematic gradation regarding the number of vocabulary items as well as the number and types of vocabulary tasks across the two textbooks.

However, as far as vocabulary lessons are concerned, it is noted that there is no systematic gradation from one educational level to another. In fact, the selection of vocabulary lessons in Ticket to English 2 does not establish a linear progression as it does not build on lessons that have been taught using Ticket to English 1. To illustrate, although some of the lessons included in Ticket to English 2, such as suffixes, are intended to improve students’ mastery of some necessary rules, this textbook does not take into account that these lessons were introduced very insufficiently in Ticket to English 1, that is, in the first year Baccalaureate.

Moreover, as stated previously, it is noticed that there is substantial progress in the presentation of certain vocabulary task types across the two textbooks. As shown in Table 4 below, Ticket to English 1 includes 11 cognitive vocabulary tasks, 4 interpersonal vocabulary tasks, 22 linguistic vocabulary tasks, and no affective or creative vocabulary tasks; whereas Ticket to English 2 contains 22 cognitive vocabulary tasks, 3 interpersonal vocabulary tasks, 26 linguistic vocabulary tasks, 1 affective vocabulary task, and 3 creative vocabulary tasks.

Cognitive tasks are more prevalent in Ticket to English 2, i.e., it includes more “classifying”, “inducing”, “inferencing”, “concept mapping” vocabulary tasks, while Ticket to English 1 contains very few similar tasks, with the complete absence of “classifying” tasks. This shows that students are required to put in a more cognitive effort in vocabulary learning as they move from one educational level to a more advanced one.

Interpersonal tasks are not very frequent in the two textbooks. Ticket to English 1 contains 4 interpersonal tasks, whereas Ticket to English 2 includes 3 interpersonal tasks. The seven tasks are all “co-operating” vocabulary tasks, whereas “role playing” tasks are absent in the two textbooks. In “co-operating” tasks, students are required to cooperate with their peers to accomplish a given task. As far as interpersonal tasks are concerned, no remarkable development is observed

in the presentation of this type of tasks across the two textbooks. Thus, Moroccan students are not provided with enough activities that help them use language communicatively.

**Table 4**

*Distribution of Macro Vocabulary Task Types across the Two Textbooks.*

	<i>Ticket to English 1</i>	<i>Ticket to English 2</i>
Cognitive tasks	11	22
Interpersonal tasks	4	3
Linguistic tasks	22	26
Affective tasks	0	1
Creative tasks	0	3

Linguistic tasks are also dominant in both Ticket to English 1 and Ticket to English 2. The two textbooks feature the same sub-types, namely “practicing” and “using context” vocabulary tasks. Although there is no remarkable development in the frequency of linguistic tasks across the two textbooks, they both provide students with various opportunities to practise the use of newly learned vocabulary items but only in a written mode.

Finally, Ticket to English 1 does not feature any affective tasks, while Ticket to English 2 includes only one affective vocabulary task, namely “self-evaluating”, whereby students evaluate their own answers. Similarly, creative vocabulary tasks are absent in Ticket to English 1 and insufficiently present in Ticket to English 2, i.e., only three creative tasks, namely “brainstorming”. Therefore, although Ticket to English 2 comprises some types of vocabulary tasks that are ignored in Ticket to English 1, both creative and affective tasks are not implemented in an ample way that would ensure an effective vocabulary development, in particular, and a successful language learning, in general.

In fine, the two textbooks show a gradual increase in the frequency of vocabulary task types that allow students to guess the meaning(s) of certain vocabulary items, induce a given rule from a set of examples, and ultimately get some practice. However, vocabulary tasks that help students enhance their communicative skills through interacting in the target language are not given their fair amount of importance in the two textbooks.

## 5. Conclusions and implications

The present study was an attempt to evaluate the vocabulary tasks of two Moroccan EFL textbooks currently used in teaching first- and second- year Baccaalaureate students in public high schools. Its aim was to explore the types of vocabulary tasks as well as their sequencing, gradation, and recycling. The findings confirmed that the two textbooks include various instances of pedagogical inconveniences with regard to vocabulary tasks. These issues need to be redressed for optimal vocabulary learning outcomes. Therefore, based on these results, a number of pedagogical implications need to be underscored.

Efforts need to be stepped up in the assessment, revision, and evaluation of EFL textbooks before, while and after they are used in the actual teaching-learning process. Thus, textbook designers should be engaged in a continuous process of textbook evaluation. In this respect, presentations, workshops, and demonstration lessons should be conducted to allow textbook designers to learn the different types of language learning tasks and their underlying pedagogical purposes. They also need to be trained in how various vocabulary task types can be adequately and sufficiently implemented in foreign language teaching materials.

Additionally, in relation to the findings of the present study, vocabulary lessons should create a progressive development of learning. For instance, lessons in Ticket to English 2 should build and continue on what students have learned in previous years. That is, first year Baccaalaureate

students using Ticket to English 1 should be gradually introduced to the vocabulary lessons they will be taught in their second year. In this way, the two textbooks can scaffold students' vocabulary learning in a systematic and fruitful way. Also, textbook designers should also ensure better and ample recycling opportunities in order to help students retain newly learned vocabulary items. Recycling vocabulary tasks should not only be included in a review section at the end of each two units, but rather across the whole textbook.

Finally, Moroccan ELT teachers are urged to engage in evaluating the textbooks they use, particularly vocabulary tasks, in order to identify their limitations. It therefore follows that teachers can make the necessary adaptations and design supplementary materials that can offset the possible pedagogical inconveniences. More specifically, Moroccan EFL teachers are called upon to design vocabulary tasks that allow for better recycling opportunities. Teachers should make sure that students re-encounter the basic and important vocabulary items in a variety of meaningful tasks throughout the school year. Also, Moroccan EFL teachers should make sure to diversify the types of vocabulary tasks with the view of helping students expand their vocabulary knowledge and boost their communicative skills.

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