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VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES:

First-Year EFL-LMD Students' Case Study

University of Abdelhamid Ibn Badis (Mostaganem)

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This dissertation is dedicated to

*My beloved parents: Mrs. Dounia & Hamidouche
Sadek*

My dear brothers: Lyes & Ben

My spiritual sister: Ms. Nawel Bougherara

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Abstract:

Learning a language entails learning its vocabulary. Nonetheless, vocabulary learning is considered as a common source of difficulty for foreign language learners (Meara, 1980; McCarthy, 1988). It has been highlighted as the most challenging obstacles that students have to overcome (Singleton, 1999; Schmitt, 2000). The present research is an exploratory case study that focuses on exploiting the vocabulary learning strategies that first year EFL LMD students frequently use and perceive useful to enlarge their repertoire. It also aims at showing the approaches they employ in order to promote their vocabulary acquisition. Seventy random under-graduate students were asked to fill in a questionnaire, were submitted to a survey and a vocabulary test. Besides to this, an examination of copies and classroom observation were done. Three pioneer theories are relied on to analyse the data gathered namely, Schmitt's taxonomy (1997, 2000), Sanaoui classification (1995), and Clouston research (1996). The results show that vocabulary learning strategies are perceived as very useful by students though they are not often used. Concerning the approaches students adopt while learning vocabulary, the majority of them are classified under the unstructured approach which corresponds to what is referred as 'poor learners'. In order to encounter these difficulties, some pedagogical implications are suggested to raise students' autonomy towards using vocabulary learning strategies.

Keywords: Vocabulary learning strategies, categories, field study, EFL learners.

الملخص:

تعلم لغة يستتبع تعلم و هضم مفرداتها التي تعتبر حصنا حصينا و منيعا بالنسبة للمتعلمين (Meara, 1980; McCarthy, 1988). ينصب هذا البحث حول الطرق المستعملة و التي يراها كفيلة و ملمة عند طلاب السنة الأولى جامعي، تخصص انجليزية بجامعة عبد الحميد ابن باديس- مستغانم- لتعلم المفردات و التوسع في عالمها. وللتعمق في ميدان البحث الخاص بالمفردات، تم أخذ عينة متكونة من سبعين طالبا تم استفسارهم واستجوابهم بأسئلة كتابية و متابعتهم داخل القسم لقياس مدى استعمالهم و ادراكهم لطرق التعلم. كما تم الاعتماد في هذا البحث على ثلاث مقاربات أساسية (1997, 2000) Schmitt, (1995) Sanaoui, (1996) Clouston و عليه تبين أن الطلاب يرون تعلم و اكتساب المفردات يتطلب استعمال طرق إلا أنهم يستغنون عنها. كما تبين أن أغلبية الطلاب ضعفاء ضعف عام مرده عدم استعمال هذه الطرق المؤدية الى هضم و استيعاب دراسة المفردات. و لقد تم اقتراح عدة طرق تعتبر كفيلة لإنجاح المتعلم و التي تتمثل في الاعتماد على الذات من باب الحكم الذاتي و استخدام استراتيجيات تعلم المفردات.

Résumé:

Apprendre une langue implique l'apprentissage de son vocabulaire. Néanmoins, l'apprentissage du vocabulaire est considéré comme une source de difficulté pour les apprenants de langue (Meara, 1980; McCarthy, 1988). Il a été souligné comme l'obstacle le plus difficile que les étudiants doivent surmonter (Singleton, 1999; Schmitt, 2000). Cette recherche est une étude exploratoire qui s'intéresse aux stratégies d'apprentissage que les étudiants d'Anglais en première année utilisent et perçoivent utile, pour élargir leur vocabulaire. Cette recherche vise également à montrer les approches qu'ils emploient afin de promouvoir l'acquisition du vocabulaire. Soixante-dix étudiants de premier cycle ont été invités à remplir un questionnaire, un sondage et un test de vocabulaire. Ils ont également été observés lors de leurs cours. Trois théories pionnières sont invoquées pour analyser les données recueillies, la taxonomie de Schmitt (1997, 2000), le classement de Sanaoui (1995), et la recherche de Clouston (1996). Les résultats montrent que les stratégies d'apprentissage du vocabulaire sont perçues comme très utile par les étudiants mais elles ne sont pas souvent utilisées. En ce qui concerne les approches que les étudiants adoptent lors de l'apprentissage du vocabulaire, la majorité d'entre eux sont classés sous l'approche non structurée (les apprenants faibles). Quelques implications pédagogiques sont proposées à la fin de cette recherche pour accroître l'autonomie des étudiants vers l'utilisation des stratégies d'apprentissage du vocabulaire.

Mots clés : Les stratégies d'apprentissage du vocabulaire, les approches.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms:

COG	Cognitive Strategies
DET	Determination Strategies
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
FL	Foreign Language
FSL	French as a Second Language
LLS	Language Learning Strategies
LMD	Licence, Master, Doctorate
L₁	Mother Tongue
L₂	Second language

List of Tables:

Table 1.1: Components of Learning Strategies (Wenden & Rubin, 1987)

Table 1.2: Language Learning Strategies Definitions

(Adapted from Issariya Tassana-ngam's work, 2004)

Table 1.3: Language Learning Strategies Taxonomy (Oxford, 1990:17)

Table 1.4: Vocabulary Learning Strategies Taxonomy (Gu & Johnson 1996)

Table 2.1: Vocabulary Learning Strategies Taxonomy (Schmitt 1997: 207)

Table 2.2: Semantic Grid

Table 3.1: Results of the Teachers' Responses

Table 3.2: Test Results

Table 3.3: Determination Strategies Survey Results

Table 3.4: Social Strategies Survey Results

Table 3.5: Memory Strategies Survey Results

Table 3.6: Cognitive strategies survey results

Table 3.7: Metacognitive Strategies Survey Results

Table 3.8: Expressions Used by Semi-structured Students

Table 3.9: Expressions Used by Unstructured Students

Table 3.10: Expressions Used by Structured Students

List of Figures:

Figure 1.1: Language Learning Strategies Taxonomy (Oxford, 1990:15)

Figure 1.2: Vocabulary Learning Strategies Taxonomy (Nation 2001)

Figure 2.1: A Sample of Nation's Vocabulary Levels Test

Figure 2.2: Semantic Map (Oxford & Crookall, 1990)

Figure 2.3: Affixes and Root

Figure 2.4: Vocabulary Learning Strategies Classification (Schmitt, 2000: 135)

Figure 2.5: Structured Vs Unstructured Approach (Sanaoui, 1995: 24)

Figure 3.1: The Students' English Proficiency and its Reason

Figure 3.2: The Student's Rate of Participation

Figure 3.3: The Reasons for the Lack of Participation

Figure 3.4: The Students' Choice of the Four Skills

Figure 3.5: Results of the Teachers' Responses

Figure 3.6: The Teachers' Choice of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Figure 3.7: Vocabulary Levels Test Results

Figure 3.8: Determination Strategies Survey Results

Figure 3.9: Social Strategies Survey Results

Figure 3.10: Memory Strategies Survey Results

Figure 3.11: Cognitive Strategies Survey Results

Figure 3.12: Metacognitive Strategies Survey Results

Figure 3.13: The Students' Vocabulary Approaches

Figure 3.14: Dictionary Information

Appendices:

Appendix N°1: Students' Questionnaire

Appendix N°2: Teachers' Questionnaire

Appendix N°3: Vocabulary Levels Test

Appendix N°4: Vocabulary Learning Strategy Survey

Appendix N°5: Sample of Exam Copies

Appendix N°6: The Most/Least Used Categories and Strategies of Vocabulary Learning

Appendix N°7: The Most/Least Useful Categories and Strategies of Vocabulary Learning

CONTENTS :

Dedications	III
Acknowledgements	IV
Abstract	V
List of Abbreviations and Acronyms	VIII

List of Tables	IX
List of Figures	X
Appendices	XI
Contents	XII
Introduction	01
<i>Chapter One: Research Background</i>	
Introduction	05
1.1 Communicative Approach	05
1.2 Language Learning Strategies	06
1.2.1 Strategy Definition	06
1.2.2 Learning Strategy Definition	07
1.2.3 Language Learning Strategies Definition	09
1.2.4 Language Learning Strategies Classification	11
1.3 Vocabulary Learning Strategies	15
1.3.1 Vocabulary Definition	15
1.3.1.1 Receptive Vs Productive Vocabulary	16
1.3.1.2 Breadth and Depth of Vocabulary knowledge	17
1.3.2 Vocabulary Learning Strategies Definition	18
1.4 The Importance of Vocabulary Learning strategies	19
1.5 Taxonomies of Vocabulary Learning Strategies	20
1.6 Types of Vocabulary Learning Strategies	25
1.6.1 Translation	25
1.6.2 Use of Dictionaries	26
1.6.3 Reading	27
1.6.4 Guessing from Context	29
Conclusion	30

Chapter Two: Research Methodology

Introduction	32
2.1 The Participants' Profile	32
2.2 The Purpose of the Study	33
2.3 The Corpus	34
2.3.1 The Questionnaires	34
2.3.2 Classroom Observation	35
2.3.3 Vocabulary Levels Test	37
2.3.4 Vocabulary Learning Strategies Survey	38
2.3.5 Examination Sheets Analysis	39
2.4 Schmitt's Taxonomy	40
2.4.1 Discovery strategies	42
2.4.1.1 Determination Strategies	43
2.4.1.2 Social Strategies	43
2.4.2 Consolidating strategies	44
2.4.2.1 Memory Strategies	44
2.4.2.2 Cognitive Strategies	48
2.4.2.3 Metacognitive Strategies	50
2.5 Sanaoui's Classification	52
2.6 Clouston's Research	54
Conclusion	55

Chapter Three: Data Analysis and Interpretations

Introduction	57
3.1 The Questionnaires' Results	57
3.1.1 The Students' Questionnaire Results	57
3.1.2 The Teachers' Questionnaire Results	60
3.2 The Vocabulary Levels Test's Results	62
3.3 The Vocabulary Learning Strategy Survey's Results and Interpretation	63
3.3.1 Determination strategies	64
3.3.2 Social strategies	65
3.3.3 Memory strategies	66
3.3.4 Cognitive strategies	69
3.3.5 Metacognitive strategies	70
3.4 The Examination Sheets Analysis	71
3.5 Interpretation of the Results	74
3.6 Suggestions	79
3.6.1 Study of the Teaching Context	80

Introduction

Foreign language acquisition involves vocabulary acquisition and several learning processes. Vocabulary acquisition routes are expressed by the implicit learning hypothesis and explicit learning hypothesis (Ellis, 1994). The former came from Krashen's views (1989) on Second Language Acquisition which means enquiring language naturally, automatically and without conscious operations (Ellis, 1997). The explicit learning hypothesis, on the other hand, stresses the role of learners as active processors of information, who by using vocabulary learning strategies can enhance vocabulary acquisition (Ellis, 1994).

Vocabulary learning strategies are a subset of language learning strategies which in turn are part of general learning strategies (Nation, 2001). The main benefit of these learning strategies is to enable learners to take more control of their own learning and more responsibility in their studies (Nation, 2001; Scharle & Szabó, 2000). Students can acquire a large amount of vocabulary and simplify their learning process by using vocabulary learning strategies (Ranalli, 2003).

Despite its crucial position, vocabulary has traditionally been the Cinderella of the second/foreign language acquisition field (Schmitt, 1997; Segler, Pain and Sorace, 2002; Fan, 2003). After decades of neglect, vocabulary learning is now receiving more attention due to the arrival of the communicative approach (Jones, 1995; Laufer, 1997). Nonetheless, vocabulary is considered as the most challenging aspect in learning a target language (Schmitt, 2000; Meara, 2002). Numerous studies have been conducted on that arena by Gu & Johnson (1996), Porte (1998), Nation (2001). Among others, Ahmed (1989) and Sanaoui (1995) attempted to elicit the approaches students adopt to the task of vocabulary learning, whereas, Schmitt (1995, 1997, 2000) and Fan (2003) tried to identify the most/least used and useful vocabulary learning strategies.

Although research on vocabulary acquisition is increasing, a small number of studies have been encountered investigating the usage of vocabulary learning strategies by Algerian EFL learners. Consensus is lacking over issues such as the use and usefulness of vocabulary learning strategies for Algerian university students, and the approaches adopted to deal with vocabulary. To obtain further information about each of these issues, the present study has been conducted.

Therefore, the main purpose of the current study is to investigate the use and perception of vocabulary learning strategies and categories by 1st year EFL LMD university students of Mostaganem. It also aims to determine the approaches students adopt to enlarge their vocabulary repertoire.

To investigate the objectives above, the following research questions are addressed:

1. What are the most and least frequently used vocabulary learning strategies?
2. What are the most and least useful vocabulary learning strategies according to students' perception?
3. Which approaches do EFL LMD students adopt while learning vocabulary?

To explore these questions, the following hypotheses are put forward:

1. Concerning the first question, it is expected that 1st year EFL LMD students learn vocabulary through the frequent use of *determination* category (using dictionaries: bilingual/monolingual). The least available used category is the *social* (interacting with a native speaker).
2. Regarding the second question, it is predicted that *memory* category is the most useful to learn vocabulary (connect words to personal experience). The least supposed useful category is the *cognitive* (verbal/written repetition).
3. Concerning the third question, it is expected that the majority of students adopt the structured approach to enlarge their vocabulary repertoire.

In order to collect insightful data, five instruments have been used. First, two questionnaires have been handed out on a random basis –no preselection– to ten EFL teachers and seventy students. Besides being amenable, the questionnaire provides general background about the participants. Second, learners' behaviour has been observed during numerous class sessions. Classroom Observation extends beyond the act of seeing, it also includes the usage of other senses such as hearing and temper (Maldez, 2003). Third, a standardized vocabulary levels test adopted from Nation's research (2001) has been used. It assesses students' vocabulary knowledge at two levels (2,000 and 3,000). Fourth, a survey adopted from Bennett's dissertation (2006) has also been administered to students. It is equipped with 38 vocabulary learning strategies classified under six different categories (determination, memory, discovery social, consolidation social, cognitive, and metacognitive). Finally, 100 examination sheets have been analysed, too. These sheets are used to obtain a clear picture about students' capabilities of vocabulary productive use.

The data gathered from the above materials are examined according to three main theories. The first theory is Schmitt's taxonomy (1997, 2000) about vocabulary learning strategies. It is used to answer the first and second research questions (i.e. identify the most/least used and useful categories and strategies of vocabulary learning strategies). This taxonomy is considered as the most detailed to date. The second and third theories are respectively Sanaoui's classification (1995) and Clouston's research (1996). These two theories are used to answer the third research question, (i.e.) classify students' approaches (structured, semi-structures, unstructured).

In this context, the present work has been divided into three chapters. Chapter one introduces the research background. It defines first the main concepts upon which this case study is based. It starts by defining language learning strategies and its components then vocabulary learning strategies. Chapter two is about research methodology and it embodies two parts. Part one presents the subjects' profile, elicits the major reason for carrying out this research and introduces the corpus. Part two examines the theories used and their relevance. Chapter three discusses by illustrating the results obtained from

the data and suggests some pedagogical implications to promote student's autonomy.

Chapter One: Research Background

Introduction

2.1 Communicative Approach

2.2 Language Learning Strategies

2.2.1 Strategy Definition

2.2.2 Learning Strategy Definition

2.2.3 Language Learning Strategies Definition

2.2.4 Language Learning Strategies Classification

2.3 Vocabulary Learning Strategies

2.3.1 Vocabulary Definition

2.3.1.1 Receptive Vs Productive Vocabulary

2.3.1.2 Breadth and Depth of Vocabulary knowledge

2.3.2 Vocabulary Learning Strategies Definition

2.4 The Importance of Vocabulary Learning strategies

2.5 Taxonomies of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

2.6 Types of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

2.6.1 Translation

2.6.2 Use of Dictionaries

2.6.3 Reading

2.6.4 Guessing from Context

Conclusion

Introduction:

Chapter one introduces the main theoretical frame work and the learning strategies upon which the present study is based. Before embarking on a discussion about the various aspects of vocabulary learning strategies and language learning strategies, an overview of communicative approach is initiated first. The vocabulary acquisition field is now receiving more attention since there is an increased focus on meaning within the communicative approach (Vemmer 1992, Ellis 1994, Lawson & Hogben 1996). Since this approach is based on communication, vocabulary is an indispensable element. Learners need vocabulary to communicate and understand others.

Language learning strategies and some important components are then defined followed by some basic classification systems. After that, a variety of vocabulary learning strategies and several taxonomies are discussed in detail. At the end of this chapter, some vocabulary learning strategies types are selected as the most commonly used by EFL LMD learners to define.

1.1 Communicative Approach:

The communicative approach, also known as communicative language teaching (CLT) emerged first in the early 1970's as a response to the audio-lingual method (Habermas 1970, Hymes 1971). Unlike the latter, the communicative approach is holistic rather than behaviouristic (Richards & Rogers, 1986). It initially prioritizes communicative competence over accurate

grammar. Grammar is embedded in the lesson and highlighted and focused upon once the context has been set. As Littlewood states, *“One of the most characteristic features of communicative language teaching is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language”* (1981: 01).

Besides, CLT makes use of real-life situations that necessitate communication and its emphasis on learners' needs and interests. Teachers in the communicative approach become active facilitators of their students' learning by talking less and listening more (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). In order to communicate, one needs to use a language, a fact that entails using language learning strategies.

1.2 Language Learning Strategies:

The concept of language learning strategies (LLS) has been defined differently by several researchers. There is no consensus on a definition due to different interpretations of the terms *strategy* and *learning strategy* in the literature (Wenden, 1987). To proceed through a reasonable hierarchy, the concepts 'strategy' and 'learning strategy' are introduced first, then LLS are defined.

1.2.1 Strategy Definition:

Strategies are seen as helpful tools that students adapt for solving learning problems. According to Brown, *“Strategies are those specific ‘attacks’ that we make in a given problem”* (1987: 89). This statement closely matches Gagné's (1965: 02) point of view, since he sees strategies as specific methods of approaching a problem or a task mode of operating for achieving a particular end.

Macaro defines the term strategy as a mental process with a cognitive perspective arguing that *“Strategies are not simply knowledge but contain a mental action that can be described. It is almost self-evident that the action component of a strategy ought to be describable by someone, especially a teacher or researcher”* (2004: 04). Takala, in the other hand, determines the word 'strategy' as, *“the behaviours that the learners engage in during learning that are*

intended to influence cognitive and affective processing" (1996, as cited in Kristiansen 1998: 44). Therefore, it can be said that consciousness, purpose or goal-orientation are essential parts in any definition of strategy.

Nevertheless, Ellis (1994) asserts that the concept of strategy is vague, fuzzy and not easy to tie down. He proposes another general definition of strategy combining both mental and behavioural activities, "*...a strategy consisted of mental or behavioural activity related to some specific stage in the overall process of language acquisition or language use*"(1994: 529). Ellis also listed the main characteristics of strategies as follows:

1. Strategies refer to both general approaches and specific actions or techniques used to learn a second language.
2. Strategies are problem-oriented, the learner deploys a strategy to overcome some particular learning problems.
3. Learners are generally aware of the strategies they use and can identify what they consist of if they are asked to pay attention to what they are doing/thinking.
4. Strategies involve linguistic behaviour (such as requesting the name of an object) and non- linguistic (such as pointing at an object so as to be told its name).
5. Linguistic strategies can be performed in the first language and in the second language.
6. Some strategies are behavioral while others are mental. Thus some strategies are directly observable, while others are not.
7. In the main, strategies contribute indirectly to learning by providing learners with data about the second language which they can then process. However, some strategies may also contribute directly to learning (for example, memorization strategies directed at specific lexical items or grammatical rules).
8. Strategy use varies considerably as a result of both the kind of task the learner is engaged in and individual learner preferences.

(Ellis, 1994: 532)

1.2.2 Learning Strategy Definition:

Learning strategies have been defined variously since they are connected to several areas of language learning. They have also a direct effect upon learning. Rubin gave an explicit definition stating that learning strategies are, "*any set of operations, steps, plans, routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval and use of information, that is, what learners do to learn and do to regulate their learning*" (1987: 19).

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) see learning strategies as mental or behavioural processes. They define them as *"the special thoughts or behaviour that learners use to comprehend, learn or retain new information"* (1990: 01). In contrast, Nunan restricts learning strategies to the mental processes only. He claims that *"learning strategies [...] are the mental processes which learners employ to learn and use the target language"* (1991: 168).

Many researches agree on the fact that learning strategies are deliberately and controllably done. Pressley and McCormick (1995: 28) argue that learning strategies are consciously "controllable" as a means for learners to achieve their learning goals. As Cook describes it, *"Learning strategy is a choice that the learner makes while learning or using the second language that affects learning"* (2001:126).

By the same token, Brown (1994: 279) refers to learning as learner's conscious/deliberate processes toward target language forms, grammatical rules, and awareness of their own process. Learning is also seen as a relatively permanent change in behaviour, which potentially occurs as a result of reinforced practice. Jeffries (1990) defines learning as an

... activity in which an individual or group of learners study on their own, possibly for a part of parts of a course, without direct intervention from a tutor. This can involve learners in taking greater responsibility for what they learn, how they learn, and when they learn. It can also lead to learners being more involved in their own assessment. Learning is likely to be most effective when at least some supports are available.

(Jeffries, 1990: 07)

Tarone sees learning strategies from another perspective and defines it as, *"An attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language to incorporate these into one's interlanguage competence"* (1983: 67). It means that learners tend to use learning strategies to promote their communicative skill and convey information effectively. Both accuracy and fluency are indispensable parts. This statement quite matches Ellis's definition, since he asserts, *"A learning strategy is a device or procedure used by learners to develop their interlanguages. It accounts for how learners acquire and automatise L2 knowledge"* (1994: 712).

Oxford (1990) goes further saying that students who utilize effective strategy will be able to learn independently or autonomously. She states,

Learning strategies are strategies which contribute to the development of the language system which the learner constructs and affect learning directly. Students who use effective strategies are better able to work outside the classroom by themselves, once the teacher is not around to direct them or provide them with input.

(Oxford, 1990: 09)

Wenden and Rubin on the contrary, set up the following components to learning strategies.

<i>Components of Learning Strategies</i>
1- They are specific actions or techniques.
2- They can be observable/ behaviourable or non-observable/ mental.
3- They are problem-oriented.
4- They can contribute directly or indirectly to learning.
5- They may be consciously employed and become automatized.
6- They are changeable.

**Table 1.1: Components of Learning Strategies
(Wenden & Rubin, 1987: 07)**

Anderson (2005), on the other hand, lists five important developments that contribute to the success of learning strategy:

- 1) The identification, classification, and measurement of language learning strategies.
- 2) The distinction between language use and language learning strategies.

- 3) The relationship between strategy use and target language proficiency.
- 4) The transferability of strategies from L1 tasks to TL tasks.
- 5) The explicit instruction of language learning strategies.

Since the concepts of 'strategy' and 'learning strategy' have been introduced, Language Learning Strategies could be defined now.

1.2.3 Language Learning Strategies Definition:

Language learning strategies have become widely recognized in the field of language acquisition due to the extensive research of Rebecca Oxford. She is one of the pioneers in the field of language learning strategies. She sees language learning strategies as behaviours or actions which learners use to make language learning more successful, self-directed, and enjoyable.

Oxford gives the most useful and clear definition stating,

...Language Learning Strategies are... operations employed by learners to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information...; specific actions, steps, or techniques that students use to improve their progress in developing L₂ skills. These strategies can facilitate the internationalization storage, retrieval or the use of the new language.

(Oxford,
1992: 08)

Meanwhile, Richard and Platt see language learning strategies as both behavioural and mental defining them as, "*Intentional behaviour and thoughts used by learners during learning so as to better help them understand, learn, or remember information*"(1992: 209). It means that LLS are deliberately used as conscious movement toward a specific goal. Berry (1997: 22) adds that LLS are useful for both successful and unsuccessful learners, since they help them learn the language effectively. They also assist learners to become more self-directed, better in language proficiency, language performance, and more self-confident.

Rausch acknowledges the importance of language learning strategies stating, "*Excessive investigation has shown the importance of LLS in making*

language learning more efficient and in producing a positive effect on learners' language use" (2000: 01). However, the effectiveness of LLS depends on the context in which they are used and their combination with other strategies (Schmitt and McCarthy, 1997).

Concerning the features of language learning strategies, Oxford illustrates them as follows,

- 1) Contribute to the main goal, communicative competence,
- 2) Allow learners to become more self-directed,
- 3) Expand the role of teachers,
- 4) Are problem-oriented,
- 5) Are specific actions taken by the learners,
- 6) Involve many aspects of the learner, not just the cognitive,
- 7) Support learning both directly and indirectly,
- 8) Are not always observable,
- 9) Are often conscious,
- 10) Can be taught,
- 11) Are flexible,
- and 12) Are influenced by a variety of factors.

(Oxford, 1990: 09)

Although most researchers agree on the fact that language learning strategies are consciously used, they become later habitual or automatic and finally no longer within the learner' conscious awareness. The following table summarizes some common Language Learning Strategies criteria based on definitions given by several researchers.

Scholars	Behaviour contribute directly to learning	Consciousness	Deliberate, intentional	Device or procedures	Deliberate, intentional	Facilitate the acquisition, storage, retrieval or use of information	Lead to autonomous learning, self-directed	Mental processes (not observable)	Not only cognitive but also social, affective, metacognitive	Observable	Problem related	Process contributes directly to learning	Specific actions, or techniques, tools	Success related
Rubin (1987)	✓						✓					✓		
Wenden (1987)	✓	<	<		<	✓	✓	✓	✓	<	<		✓	
O'Malley &		<							✓					

Chamot (1990)														
Oxford (1990)	✓	<				✓	✓	✓	✓	<			✓	<
Cohen (1990)	✓	<	<		<	✓			✓			✓	✓	<
Ellis (1994)	✓			<				✓	✓		<	✓	✓	<

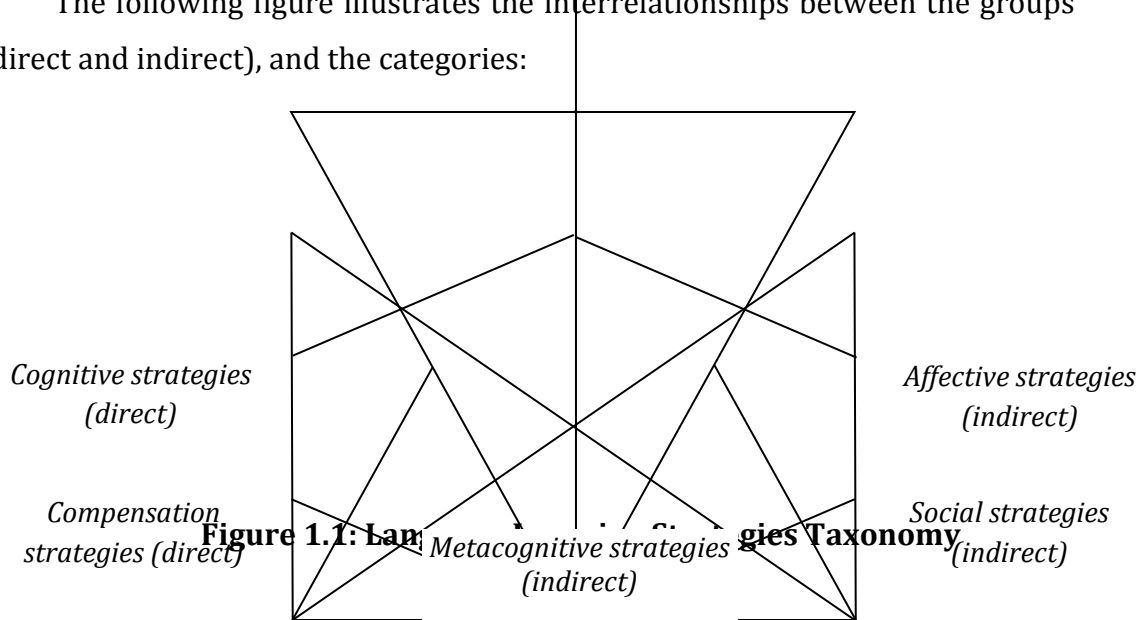
Table 1.2: Language Learning Strategies Definitions
(Adopted from IssariyaTassana-ngam’s work, 2004)

1.2.4 Language Learning Strategies Classification:

A number of researchers attempted to set up a classification system to language learning strategies (LLS). Rubin (1981) for instance, categorized LLS into two broad groups, *direct* and *indirect* strategies. The direct strategies break down into six strategies namely clarification/verification, monitoring, memorization, guessing/ inductive, inference, deductive reasoning, and practice. The indirect strategies embody two strategies: creating opportunities for practice and production tricks. Another classification proposed by Brown and Palinscar (1982) consists of *metacognitive* and *cognitive* strategies. Inspired by this system, O’Malley and Chamot (1990) have added another category named socioaffective strategies.

Nonetheless, one of the first attempts at providing a truly comprehensive and complete overview with a hierarchical ordering of language learning strategies is Oxford (1990). She identified two main groups to language learning (*direct* and *indirect*) which broke down into six major categories of language learning strategies (cognitive, metacognitive, memory, compensation, affective, and social). Direct strategies are used directly to learn a target language, and indirect strategies are used indirectly and support learning without involving the target language directly.

The following figure illustrates the interrelationships between the groups (direct and indirect), and the categories:



Language learning strategies are described by Oxford as, "*actions taken by second and foreign language learners to control and improve their own learning and are keys to greater autonomy and more meaningful learning*" (1990: ix). According to her, language learning strategies are important since they create active and self-

directed involvement and aims at developing communicative competence. Hence, she classified and defined the categories of language learning strategies as follows:

1. *Cognitive strategies (direct)* enable the learner to use the language material in direct ways, understand and produce new language by many different means.
2. *Metacognitive strategies (indirect)* are used to manage the learning process. They allow learners to control their own cognition to coordinate the learning process.
3. *Memory strategies (direct)* help students store and retrieve new information.
4. *Compensation strategies (direct)* allow students to overcome their knowledge gaps to continue the communication.
5. *Affective strategies (indirect)* help learners in regulating their emotions, motivation and attitudes.
6. *Social strategies (indirect)* enable learning through interacting with others and understanding target culture. (Oxford, 1990: 09)

The following table provides Oxford's taxonomy from *direct* to *indirect* strategies, its categories, subcategories, and set of specific strategies:

<i>Categories</i>	<i>Subcategories</i>	<i>Set of strategies</i>	
<i>Memory Strategies</i>	a. Creating mental linkage	1. Grouping	
		2. Associating/Elaborating	
		3. Placing new words into a context	
	b. Applying images and sounds	1. Using imaginary	
		2. Semantic mapping	
		3. Using key words	
		4. Representing sounds in memory.	
	c. Reviewing well	1. Structured review	
	d. Employing action	1. Using physical response or sensation	
		2. Using mechanical technique	
	<i>Cognitive Strategies</i>	a. Practicing	1. Repeating
			2. Formally practicing with sounds and writing systems
3. Recognizing and using formulas and patterns			
4. Recombining			
5. Practicing naturalistically			
b. Receiving and sending messages		1. Getting the idea quickly	
		2. Using resources for receiving and sending messages	
c. Analyzing and reasoning		1. Reasoning deductively	
		2. Analyzing expressions	
		3. Analyzing contrastively (across languages)	
		4. Translating	
		5. Transferring	
d. Creating structure for input and output		1. Taking notes	
		2. Summarizing	
		3. Highlighting	
<i>Compensation Strategies</i>		a. Guessing intelligently	1. Using linguistic clues
	2. Using other clues		
	b. Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing	1. Switching to the mother tongue	
		2. Getting help	
		3. Using mime or gestures	
		4. Avoiding communication partially or totally	
		5. Selecting the topic	
		6. Adjusting or approximating the message	
		7. Coining words	
		8. Using a circumlocution or synonym	
	<i>Metacognitive Strategies</i>	a. Centring your learning	1. Overviewing and lining with already known material
			2. Paying attention
			3. Delaying speech
b. Arranging and planning your learning		1. Finding out about language learning	
		2. Organizing	
		3. Setting goals and objectives	
		4. Identifying the purpose of language task (purposeful listening /reading/ speaking/ writing)	
		5. Planning your task	

		6. Seeking practice opportunities
	c. Evaluating your learning	1. Self-monitoring 2. Self-evaluating
<i>Affective Strategies</i>	a. Lowering your anxiety	1. Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or mediation
		2. Using music
		3. Using laughter
	b. Encouraging yourself	1. Making positive statements
		2. Taking risks wisely
		3. Rewarding yourself
	c. Taking your emotional temperature	1. Listening to your body
		2. Using checklist
		3. Writing a language learning diary
4. Discussing your feelings with someone else.		
<i>Social Strategies</i>	a. Asking questions	1. Asking for clarification or verification
		2. Asking for correction
	b. Cooperating with others	1. Cooperating with peers
		2. Cooperating with proficient users of the new language
	c. Empathizing with others	1. Developing cultural understanding
		2. Becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings

Table 1.3: Language Learning Strategies Taxonomy (Oxford, 1990:17)

In contrast, Cohen (1998) identifies only four language learning strategy types: cognitive, metacognitive, affective and social strategies. Cohen (1998) describes cognitive strategies as strategies used in identification, grouping, retention and storage of language material. The strategies also include the “*language use strategies of retrieval, rehearsal and comprehension or production of words, phrases and other elements of language*” (Cohen, 1998: 07). He also states that metacognitive strategies allow the learners to control their own learning and use of the language. According to him, affective strategies are used to regulate emotions, motivation and attitudes such as reducing anxiety and self-encouragement. Social strategies include the actions the learner chooses to take in order to interact with other learners or native speakers of the language.

In the light of what has been mentioned above, it can be said that language learning strategies are steps taken by learners to enhance language learning and develop language competence. Nonetheless, there are other learning strategies used to learn vocabulary named vocabulary learning strategies.

1.3 Vocabulary Learning Strategies:

Research on vocabulary learning has increased at a fast rate since the 1980’s (Ellis, 1994, Lawson & Hogben, 1996). Although a number of studies

have been conducted on this topic, not many researchers have attempted to define or clarify these terms. In this section, the concept of vocabulary is introduced and studied first in details. Vocabulary learning strategies are then defined.

1.3.1 Vocabulary Definition:

Vocabulary is essential in learning a foreign language, and learners should be aware of the fact that learning strategies can help them learn vocabulary successfully. As Zimmerman states "*vocabulary is central to language and of critical importance to the typical language learner*" (1997: 05). Vocabulary is defined by Hatch and Brown (1995) as a list or a set of words for a particular language used by individual speakers of that language. Following this definition, the term 'word' is used to refer to vocabulary.

The definition of *word* is described by Carter as, "*the basic stability of a word according to the fact that a word is a word if it can stand on its own as a reply to a question or as a statement or exclamation*" (1998: 05). Carter and McCarthy (1988:18) add that a word is a *freestanding unit*. According to their intuitive basis of word, *speaking* and *speak* are considered words, but not '*ing*'. The concept word includes both *content* (i.e. noun, adjective, and so on) and *function* words (i.e. preposition, conjunction, and so on).

Many researchers have also emphasized the importance of words in communication. As McCarthy states,

No matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wider range of meanings, communication in an L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way.

(McCarthy, 1990: viii)

Vermer adds, "*Knowing words is the key to understanding and being understood. The bulk of learning a new language consists of learning new words*" (1992:147). Similarly, Bowen & Marks stress words value saying,

Words are the basic of language, and thus the basic of communication. Without words, it is possible to know

everything about the grammatical structure of a language, but yet to be unable to make a single utterance.

(Bowen & Marks, 2002: 106)

Though the definitions of *word* are convenient and commonly applied in vocabulary research, one should keep in mind that vocabulary learning is more than studying words individually. It can be measured by the following dimensions.

1.3.1.1 Receptive Vs Productive Vocabulary:

Learning a word means knowing it receptively and productively. It is widely believed that people learn words receptively first and later achieve productive knowledge (Schmitt, 2000). For instance, understanding a word while listening or reading is seen as receptive (passive) knowledge, whereas using a word while speaking or writing is known as productive (active) knowledge. Sidsel (1989) gives the following definition that distinguishes between the receptive and productive vocabulary,

Words that are internalized and can be readily produced are said to be in the student's active vocabulary, words which could not be readily produced but could be understood are said to be their receptive (passive) vocabulary.

(Sidsel, 1989: 64)

Nation (2001) makes a clear distinction between receptive and productive knowledge of a word. According to him, receptive knowledge means that learners are able to recognise the word when they hear or read (see) it. They also understand its meaning in the context it has occurred. He adds that receptive knowledge is gained from experience. Productive knowledge, on the other hand, means that learners are capable of pronouncing and spelling the word correctly and producing it in different contexts (through writing or speaking). It is also agreed among researchers that learners' vocabulary repertoire contains a much larger receptive knowledge than the productive one (Aitchison 1987, Nation 2001). Therefore, it is imperative for students to repeat and practice the vocabulary that they have learnt to internalize the language.

1.3.1.2 Breadth and Depth of Vocabulary knowledge:

Vocabulary learning can also be viewed in two other dimensions, breadth and depth (Wesche & Paribakht, 1996; Read, 2000; Qian, 2002). Hunt and Beglar (2005) refer to breadth of vocabulary knowledge as the quantity of vocabulary items known by an individual (i.e., one's vocabulary size). According to Nation (2001), knowing an item means more than knowing its meaning (concepts, referents, associations), but its form (spelling, pronunciation, word parts) and use as well (functions, collocations, constraints). Vocabulary breadth can be calculated in terms of recognition, recall or production of vocabulary items. Nation and Waring linked breadth of knowledge with the question "*How much vocabulary does a second language learner need?*" (1997: 06).

Depth of vocabulary knowledge, on the other hand, refers to how the quality of vocabulary knowledge is (Hunt & Beglar, 2005) and how well one knows a word. Similarly, Read describes it as "*the quality of the learner's vocabulary knowledge*" (1993: 357). Depth of vocabulary deals not only with meaning, but with morphology, phonology, syntax, sociolinguistic aspects, differences between written and spoken uses, and strategies for approaching unknown words (Wesche and Paribakht, 1996:16).

1.3.2 Vocabulary Learning Strategies Definition:

Vocabulary learning strategies are clearly related to language learning strategies. As stated by Nation, "*Vocabulary learning strategies are a part of language learning strategies which in turn are a part of general learning strategies*" (2001: 217).

O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 07) also point out that vocabulary learning strategies are used most frequently and are probably the most well-known type of language learning strategies.

Sökmen (1997:237) summarizes that vocabulary learning strategies are basically actions made by learners to help themselves understand the meaning of a word, learning it and remembering it later. Similarly, Catalán states,

Knowledge about the mechanism (processes, strategies) used in order to learn vocabulary as well as steps or actions taken by students (a) to find the meaning of unknown words (b) to retain them in long-term memory (c) to recall them at will, and (d) to use them in oral and written mode. (Catalán, 2003:56)

In addition, vocabulary learning strategies play a vital role in the process of language learning, since they make learning more self-directed. Nation (2001,

as cited in Magda Kadubiec's Blog) claims that a large amount of vocabulary can be acquired with the help of vocabulary learning strategies and that the strategies prove useful for students of different language levels. As he states,

Most vocabulary learning strategies can be applied to a wide range of vocabulary and are useful at all stages of vocabulary learning. They also allow learners to take control of learning away from the teacher...

(Nation, 2001: 222)

Schmitt links the definition of vocabulary learning strategies to the learning process. He claims that learning is *"the process by which information is obtained, stored, retrieved and used... Therefore vocabulary learning strategies could be any which affect this broadly defined process"* (1997: 203). Nation, on the other hand, has opted for listing the characteristics of vocabulary learning strategies as follows:

- Involve choice, i.e. there should be several strategies to choose from.
- Be complex, i.e. there should be several steps to learn.
- Require knowledge and benefit from training.
- Increase the efficiency of vocabulary learning and vocabulary use.

(Nation, 2001: 217)

1.4 The Importance of Vocabulary Learning Strategies:

The principal benefit obtained from vocabulary learning strategies is that they enable learners to take more control of their own learning process (Scharle & Szabó, 2000, Nation 2001). Nation (op. cit.) also believes that vocabulary learning strategies prove to be useful for learners of different language levels since these strategies help them acquire a large amount of vocabulary. Hence, vocabulary learning strategies foster *"learner autonomy, independence, and self-direction"* (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989: 291). Besides, some linguists identified the importance of learners' independence in the process of vocabulary learning (Gairns & Redman 1986, Ranalli 2003).

Nonetheless, Schmitt (2000) and Cameron (2001) emphasize the need to help learners by training them in using vocabulary learning strategies to learn words on their own. A number of researchers advocate his opinion concerning vocabulary instruction to help learners master useful strategies and acquire words even outside their classes (Oxford & Scarcella 1994). As Sökmen argues, “*It is not possible for students to learn all the vocabulary they need in the classroom*” (1997: 225). Cunningsworth (1995: 38), on the other hand, regards helping learners develop their own vocabulary learning strategies as “*a powerful approach*”, which can be based on sensitization to the systems of vocabulary, encouragement of sound dictionary skills and reflection on effective learning techniques.

Ideally, learners should be made aware of the efficient vocabulary learning strategies, so that they could freely and consciously choose the ones suitable for them. However, it is important to bear in mind that a strategy that works well for one student may completely fail with another and that for a concrete learning situation one strategy may work better than another. Brown and Payne (1994) have identified five steps in the process of learning vocabulary in a foreign language namely, (a) having sources for encountering new words, (b) getting a clear image, either visual or auditory or both, of the forms of the new words, (c) learning the meaning of the words, (d) making a strong memory connection between the forms and the meanings of the words, and (e) using the words. Consequently, all vocabulary learning strategies, to a greater or lesser extent, should be related to these five steps (Fan, 2003: 223).

1.5 Taxonomies of Vocabulary Learning Strategies:

Although research on vocabulary learning strategies is quite recent, several taxonomies and classifications have already been proposed. One of the pioneer researchers in that field is Ahmed (1989). He administered four instruments (learn 14 new words, think-aloud, observation and interview) among 300 Sudanese EFL learners. He introduced the two notions of *good* and *poor* learners. His main purposes were to elicit the approaches students used while dealing with their vocabulary learning and detecting whether there were any differences in the strategies exploited by good and poor learners.

Another basic classification of vocabulary learning strategies has been proposed by Gu and Johnson (1996). In their study they focused on relationship between strategies, vocabulary size and language proficiency. They used a questionnaire to study the vocabulary learning strategies of 850 non-English

major Chinese students at the University of Beijing. Their questionnaire included a total of 91 vocabulary learning strategies divided into eight dimensions: beliefs about vocabulary learning, metacognitive regulation, guessing strategies, dictionary strategies, note-taking strategies, rehearsal strategies, encoding strategies, and activation strategies. These strategies are all further divided into smaller categories (table 1.4).

<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Categories</i>
<i>Beliefs about vocabulary learning</i>	Identify different attributes about vocabulary learning Ability to learn languages
<i>Metacognitive regulation</i>	Selective attention Self-initiation
<i>Guessing strategies</i>	Using background knowledge/wider context Using linguistic cues/immediate context
<i>Dictionary strategies</i>	Dictionary strategies for comprehension Extended dictionary strategies Looking-up strategies
<i>Note-taking strategies</i>	Meaning-oriented note-taking strategies Usage-oriented note-taking strategies
<i>Rehearsal strategies</i>	Using word lists Oral repetition Visual repetition
<i>Encoding strategies</i>	Association/Elaboration Imagery Visual encoding Auditory encoding Using word-structure Semantic encoding

	Contextual encoding
<i>Activation strategies</i>	Using new words in different contexts Remembering lists by picturing them in specific locations.

**Table 1.4: Vocabulary Learning Strategies Taxonomy
(Gu & Johnson, 1996: 643)**

Gu and Johnson had three main purposes while conducting their research: the students' beliefs about vocabulary learning, the strategies favoured by the learners as well as the relationship between the strategy use and learning outcomes in English. They ended with the conclusion that learners use a wide range of strategies.

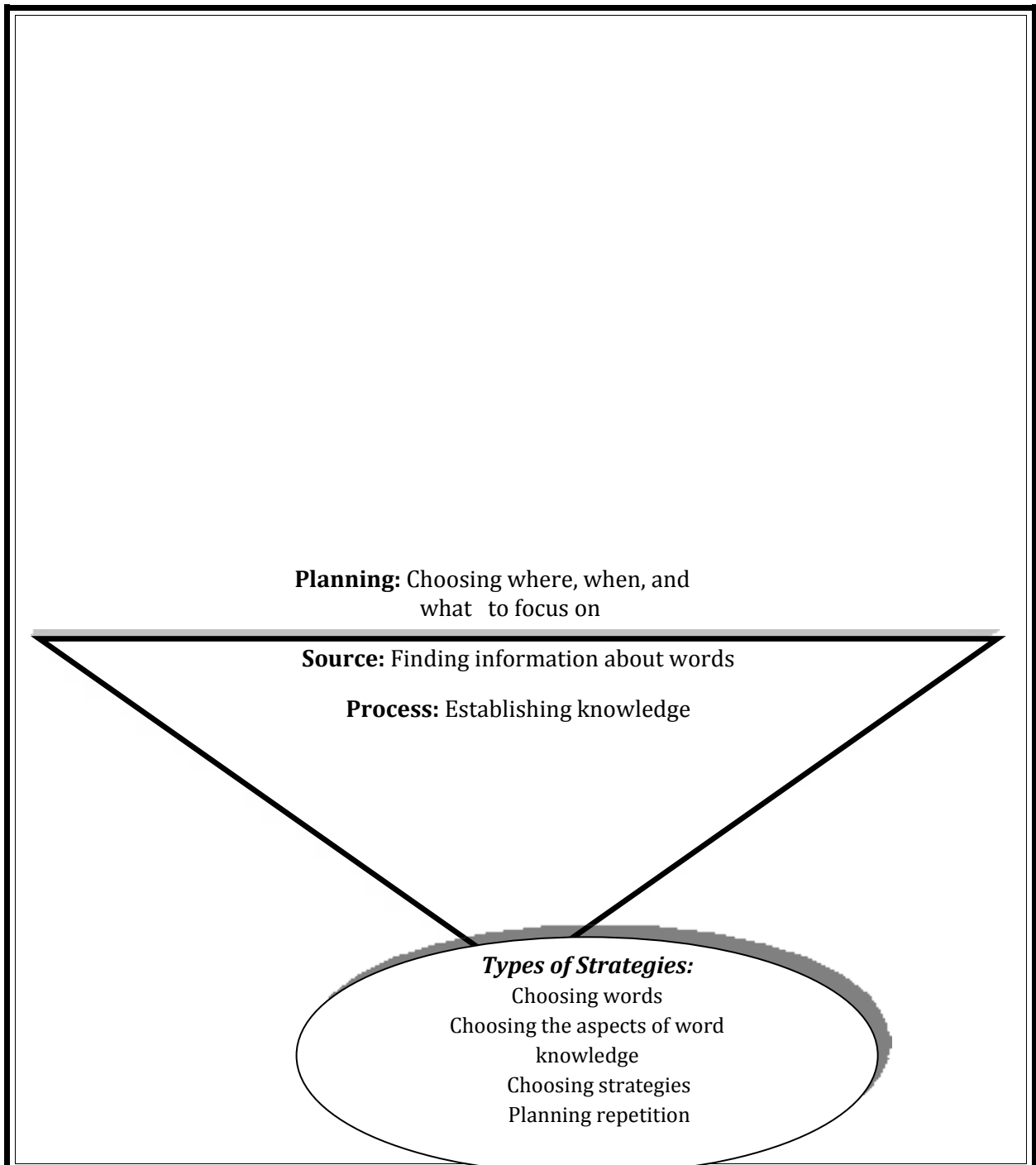
Differently from the above classifications of vocabulary learning strategies, Nation's (2001) taxonomy does not derive from any research results but is purely based on theory. Besides being practical and easy for learners to comprehend and use effectively, Nation's taxonomy reduce the complexity by separating aspects of vocabulary knowledge (what is involved in knowing a word) from sources of vocabulary knowledge and learning processes. Hence, it raises learners' awareness as well as choices of strategies that they need to select to enhance their vocabulary learning. It encompasses three broad categories namely: planning, source, and processes.

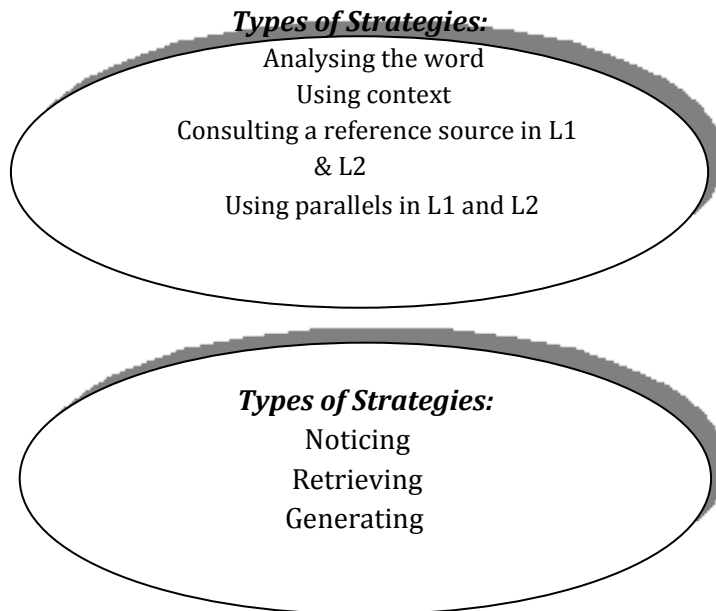
1. *The planning category* involves deciding on where, how, and how often to focus attention on the vocabulary item. O'Malley and Chamot state, "*Planning is a key metacognitive strategy for second language acquisition...*" (1990: 47).

2. *The source category* entails getting information about the word. This category involves four strategies, analysing words, using context, consulting a reference source, and using parallels in L1 and L2. The first two strategies help learners guess the meaning of unknown words. The third strategy entails both animated (teachers, classmates) and unanimated (dictionaries, glossaries) references. The last strategy implies using the structure and cognate words of L1 to remember the target words.

3. *The process category* includes establishing word knowledge through noticing, retrieving, and generating strategies. Noticing is related to recording strategies such as writing a word down in a notebook, repeating the word orally or

visually. Retrieving, on the other hand, is seen as superior to noticing. It involves recalling items met before and learnt earlier. Meanwhile, generating deals with word analysis, semantic mapping, creating context and collocations.





**Figure 1.2: Vocabulary Learning Strategies Taxonomy
(Nation, 2001: 23)**

One of the famous recent studies on vocabulary learning strategies is Fan's research (2003). She conducted a large scale study with 1,067 first year university students in Hong Kong. Her main purposes were as follows:

- 1- Determining the strategies exploited most/least frequently and the ones considered most/least useful by the students.
- 2- Detecting any differences between the frequency of use and usefulness of the strategies.
- 3- Finding out the strategies used by proficient students.
- 4- Finding out strategies suitable for learning high and low frequency words.

In order to investigate the above goals, Fan used two instruments namely, a vocabulary test to determine the proficiency of the students in English vocabulary; and a questionnaire to examine vocabulary learning strategies. She organized 56 vocabulary learning strategies into nine categories (management, sources, guessing, dictionary, repetition, association, grouping,

analysis and known word). Her results showed that though students perceived vocabulary learning strategies as useful, they did not use them very often.

Another recent research is Sahbazian's study (2004) conducted with [934 EFL Turkish university students](#). The aims of the study were examining the vocabulary learning strategies that Turkish students used and finding out whether certain variables (studying another foreign language, gender, educational background... etc) have an impact on their vocabulary strategies choice. The students were asked to complete a questionnaire of 35 item vocabulary learning strategies translated into Turkish. The results showed that memory and [discovery strategies](#) were [perceived](#) to be [used](#) with [high frequency by students](#). These results were justified by the impact of traditional teaching in Turkish on students' learning process.

Schmitt (1997: 200) notes that even though many studies have been made about language learning strategies and vocabulary learning, only a few of them have discussed vocabulary learning strategies. The majority of the researches that have been done on that field typically concentrate only on individual or small number of strategies.

1.6 Types of Vocabulary Learning Strategies:

There are several strategies to learn vocabulary. However, only four strategies have been selected to define as the most commonly used among EFL LMD students. Each of the following strategy fits a specific role, and it differs according to students' style and task. However, it is important to mention that the usefulness of these strategies is difficult to justify because there is no evidence from research supporting the assumption that strategies could be applied universally (Schmitt, 1997:236).

1.6.1 Translation :

Learning vocabulary through translation is a cognitive strategy that learners use to comprehend, remember and produce the target language by referring to their mother tongue (O'Malley at Al 1985, Prince 1996, Horwitz 1998). Translation is also seen as a facilitator in language learning process, in the sense that it saves time for both teachers and learners. As Gairns and

Redman assert, "A short explanation in the student's mother tongue may be enough to understand the meaning" (1990: 75).

However, translation is not always an efficient strategy to learn a foreign language and students should not rely only on it to learn vocabulary. This statement can be clarified by the following, " Translation is one way but not the only way for learning vocabulary" (Ibid, 75). Besides, there is no real mother tongue equivalent translation and this show clearly in Oxford's example,

Elton reads the word "beau-frère" and "belle-sœur" in French. He tries to understand them through literal translation, but they just come out as "handsome brother" and "beautiful sister"! Later he discovers that they mean "brother-in-law" and "sister-in-law".

(Oxford, 1990: 85)

By the same token, translation is considered as an effective strategy in vocabulary learning if it is used in a genuine way. For instance, the teacher may use translation to explain particular aspects of the language such as cultural differences, polysemy, or syntactic structures since the students have some difficulties to cope with it.

Meanwhile, an excessive dependence on L_1 may be also misleading for learners. As Thornbury argues,

An over-reliance on translation may mean that learners fail to develop an independent L_2 lexicon, with the effect that they always access L_2 words by means of their L_1 equivalents, rather than directly.

(Thornbury, 2002: 77)

1.6.2 Use of Dictionaries :

Dictionary look up is a determination strategy that students primarily use in a receptive or a productive skill in language learning. A dictionary consultation mainly happens during the process of reading and writing, since the students likely have insufficient time to consult a dictionary during speaking and listening. Dictionaries serve multiple functions namely: decoding for comprehension while reading and listening, encoding for production while writing and speaking, and intentional learning of new vocabulary (Scholfield,

1982). Nation, in the other hand, cites three major purposes for dictionary use:

- 1- Comprehension (decoding), e.g. looking up new words met while listening, reading or translating.
- 2- Production (encoding), e.g. looking up new words for speaking, writing or translating.
- 3- Learning, e.g. choosing new words to study.

(Nation, 2001: 281-282)

There are two types of dictionaries: bilingual and monolingual. Both of these dictionaries have their strengths and weaknesses for developing vocabulary knowledge. Bilingual dictionaries improve the reading comprehension of lower proficiency L2 learners and assist vocabulary learning at all levels of proficiency (Knight, 1994; Hulstijn, Hollander, and Greidanus, 1996). Their definitions are also short and easy to understand. However, bilingual dictionaries may include too short information in their entries, and they can contribute to an overreliance on one-to-one word translation (Baxter 1980, Tang 1997).

In contrast, monolingual dictionaries are used to build learners' vocabulary knowledge using reliable sentence examples that provide information about meaning, grammar and usage (Harvey & Yuill, 1997) as well as spoken versus written lexis and collocations. Their major weakness is that learners must know 2,000 words or more to understand the definitions.

Interest in consulting dictionaries has increased and dictionaries are considered as a primary source of lexical information for learners. As Thornbury states, "*the role of dictionaries in vocabulary learning has been reassessed. As sources of words, and of information about words, they are unequalled*" (2002: 60). Besides, research findings have shown that the majority of students that use dictionaries led to increase vocabulary knowledge (Luppescu & Day 1993, Knight 1994).

However, Ellis (1995b) observations demonstrated that traditional dictionaries (especially bilingual ones) do not provide a complete coverage of word meanings. In addition, students may get confused with the multiple

meanings that a word may have. Underhill (1980) proposed a good idea which is scanning all the definitions before deciding the one that fits the meaning. After choosing reasonably the sense of the definitions, the students still face the obstacle of *“understanding the definition and integrate it into the context where the unknown was met”* (Scholfield, 1982: 190). It means that vocabulary learning from dictionaries is an error-prone process which requires both cognitive sophistication and careful attention.

1.6.3 Reading :

Reading is considered as one of the most important strategies to learn vocabulary and it is both efficient and pleasant. According to Krashen’s theory, vocabulary is effortlessly and incidentally acquired through reading, he argues, *“A brief silent reading period is more effective for vocabulary growth than intensive vocabulary situations”* (1986). Besides, self-selected voluntary reading is seen as being so pleasant that readers often report being addicted to it (Nell, 1988; Robinson and Godbey, 1997). Krashen further asserts that free voluntary reading *“may be the most powerful educational tool in language education”* (2003: 2).

However, successful reading comprehension depends on directed cognitive effort, referred to as metacognitive processing. According to Alexander & Jetton, *“the reader must purposefully or intentionally or willfully intense to learn vocabulary while reading”* (2000: 295). They also add that during reading, metacognitive processing is expressed through strategies, which are procedural, purposeful, effortful, willful, essential, and facilitative in nature. This means that students need to monitor and check their comprehension while reading.

In the same token, Al Melhi has found that skilled readers use reading strategies such as underlining, guessing, reading twice, use of metacognitive awareness, and their self-confidence. These strategies help them to encounter the same words repeatedly in context and its spelling can be better assimilated which results in increasing their vocabulary knowledge.

There is ample evidence that reading also serves to increase language and literacy development (Krashen, 1988; S.Y. Lee, 2005). For instance, Koda (1989) revealed high correlations between vocabulary knowledge and reading, while other researchers (Coady, Magoto, Hubbard, Graney, & Mokhtari, 1993) found

an increase in TL reading proficiency can be attributed to increased proficiency in vocabulary. As Stahl and Nagy (2006) assert,

One can think of this relationship in terms of a circle: Having a bigger vocabulary makes you a better reader, being a better reader makes it possible for you to read more, and reading more gives you a bigger vocabulary. This circular relationship tends to increase differences over time. On the positive side, better readers tend to read more, acquire bigger vocabularies, and become even better readers. On the negative side, poorer readers tend to read less, fail to develop large vocabularies, and find reading to be increasingly difficult as the vocabulary demands of the text they have to read become greater.

(Stahl and Nagy, 2006:

13)

Reading may not, by itself, be enough to guarantee students' reaching the highest levels of competence in another language or results in dramatic increases in vocabulary growth over short periods of time (Waring & Takaki, 2003). But there is no question that it is effective in terms of vocabulary and language development (Krashen, 2004).

1.6.4 Guessing from Context :

Guessing from context is a determination strategy which is seen as a major technique that characterizes the reading process. Learning the meaning of a word through its use in a text is a very efficient way to build up vocabulary. For instance, giving learners information about the topic or the passage where the word has occurred results in significant higher scores on guessing the nonsense word (Adams, 1982).

Guessing from context is also highly related to incidental learning (intentional or unplanned learning). As Nation declares, "*Incidental learning via guessing from context is the most important of all sources of vocabulary learning*" (2001: 232). He *also* stresses the importance of the guessing strategy by saying, "*Because of the importance of guessing from context, it is worthwhile for both teachers and learners to spend time working on guessing strategies*" (2001: 233).

Meanwhile, Nagy (1997: 64) states that students should have three types of knowledge to accomplish a successful guessing: linguistic, world, and

strategic knowledge. Concerning the linguistic knowledge, the higher students' language level, the more effectively they are able to guess unknown words. The world knowledge involves knowledge of the subject and the conceptual structure of the topic in general. The strategic knowledge implies training students in guessing.

However, some studies have suggested that learners may make wrong guesses, and this is probably due to their heavy reliance on word form (Laufer & Sim 1985). According to Laufer, there are four factors that complicate the guessing process of unknown words for students:

1. Nonexistent contextual clues (the clues are completely missing).
2. Unusable contextual clues (the clues are related to unknown words).
3. Misleading or partial clues (the clues provide wrong/general guesses).
4. Suppressed clues (the clues do not match the reader's background knowledge of the subject matter).

(Laufer, 1985: 28)

Besides, Sökmen (1997: 237) sees many potential problems with guessing from context such as being a really slow process which may result in errors and it does not guarantee the store of words in a long-term memory. Thus, the most difficult part of the guessing strategy is to make learners delay using word form clues until after using contextual information (Nation 2001).

Nation & Coady suggest the following steps that should be kept in students' mind while checking the guess:

1. Check that the part of speech of the guess is the same as the part of speech of the unknown word.
2. Break the unknown word into parts and see if the meaning of the parts relate to the guess.
3. Substitute the guess for the unknown word. Does it make sense in context?
4. Look in a dictionary.

(Nation & Coady, 1988: 104)

Conclusion:

In this chapter, some of the most relevant theoretical works have been examined. It has introduced communicative language teaching first since it arouses vocabulary attention. Then, language learning strategies and some major taxonomies have been tackled. Vocabulary learning strategies definition and some pioneer classifications, taxonomies and types have been discussed at the end.

The next chapter is about methodology. It sheds light on the reasons for carrying out this research and the instruments used for collecting data. It also inspects the main theories that this study relied on.

Chapter Two: Research Methodology

Introduction

2.1 The Participants' Profile

2.2 The Purpose of the Study

2.3 The Corpus

2.3.1 The Questionnaires

2.3.2 Classroom Observation

2.3.3 Vocabulary Levels Test

2.3.4 Vocabulary Learning Strategies Survey

2.3.5 Examination Sheets Analysis

2.4 Schmitt's Taxonomy

2.4.1 Discovery strategies

2.4.1.1 Determination Strategies

2.4.1.2 Social Strategies

2.4.2 Consolidating strategies

44 2.4.2.1 Memory Strategies

2.4.2.2 Cognitive Strategies

2.4.2.3 Metacognitive Strategies

2.5 Sanaoui's Classification

2.6 Clouston's Research

Conclusion

Introduction:

Chapter two is about methodology. It elicits the main reasons and logical basis that intend to guide this investigation. It encompasses two parts: the first one introduces the major factors that undertake this research. It describes the subjects' profile first, and then indicates the purpose of the study and its limitation. This part also lists the instruments used in collecting data namely, questionnaires, classroom observation, vocabulary levels test, vocabulary learning strategies survey, and examination sheets evaluation.

Part two examines thoroughly the main theories relied on in this study. These theories are discussed respectively as follows, Schmitt's taxonomy (1997, 2000), Sanaoui's classification (1995), and Clouston research (1996).

2.1 The Participants' Profile:

The subjects chosen for carrying out this research study are seventy advanced 1st EFL LMD university students, ranging in age from 17 to 24 at Abd

Elhamid Ibn Badis University, in Mostaganem. They are all Algerian, coming from different towns and secondary schools, but share the same academic instruction. Their streams differ from literary to scientific. Their first and second languages are respectively Arabic and French. The sample includes students of mixed abilities who have been learning English for at least five years.

The students are trained throughout a three years program to accomplish their degree of Licence. Those students have 13 credits in English during their academic year. Thus, they are facing a huge range of new vocabulary to deal with. These students have been chosen because they are novice in the university with no experience in dealing with great amount of English vocabulary

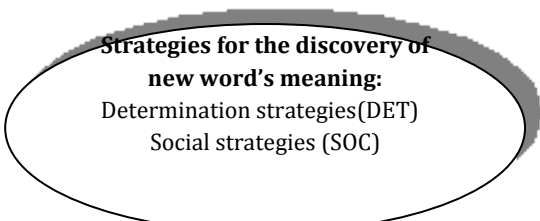
However, it is crucial to point out that English is learned just in the classroom for a limited period of time each week, in the EFL context. Thus, EFL LMD students have no immediate opportunities and facilities to exercise or practise their English. Such context does not encourage language learning strategies in general, or vocabulary learning strategies in particular.

It is therefore meaningful to investigate learning strategy use by EFL students. In an EFL context, much can be learned from carefully studying the ways students adopt to manage the amount of vocabulary.

2.2 The Purpose of the Study:

Vocabulary learning strategies are implicitly taught in most EFL classes (Oxford & Crookall, 1990). EFL teachers argue that vocabulary acquisition will in fact take care of itself (Krashen, 1987) and no need to teach it explicitly or individually. Hence, students are left alone dealing and wandering with the vocabulary learning process.

The principal objective of the present study is, therefore, determining the most/least frequently exploited categories and strategies of vocabulary learning by EFL LMD university students. This study aims also at identifying the categories and strategies considered the most/least useful by students. Schmitt's taxonomy (1997, 2000) of vocabulary learning strategies is relied on to identify the most/least used and useful categories and strategies.



**Strategies for the discovery of
new word's meaning:**
Determination strategies (DET)
Social strategies (SOC)

Furthermore, this research study investigates and elicits the approaches that EFL LMD students adopt while dealing with the vocabulary learning task. Students' approaches are classified according to Sanaoui's classification (1995) and Clouston research (1996). To sum up, this dissertation is intended to provide an insight into the vocabulary learning strategies that EFL LMD students use and consider useful even if they do not often resort to them. It also evokes the effects of using these strategies upon their English learning process.

However, it is important to point out that this study targets a specific population of EFL students and the results obtained cannot be generalized over all EFL learners. Besides, this research neither looks at the factors that may affect students' vocabulary learning strategies choice, nor treats the way vocabulary should be taught in EFL classes.

2.3 The Corpus:

To collect insightful data, multiple instruments have been adopted to generate a more comprehensive picture of the strategies used by EFL learners. Those instruments are namely questionnaires for teachers and learners, classroom observation, vocabulary levels test, vocabulary learning strategies survey and examination sheets.

The questionnaires, vocabulary levels test and survey have been handed out to the same proportion of students by October 2010 where the majority of them had just joined the university, whereas examination sheets analysis and classroom observation were realized in June 2010 and January 2011 with another proportion to reach a wider audience. The results gathered from these instruments are accurately reported here.

2.3.1 The Questionnaires:

A questionnaire is seen as a good way to access learner's opinion (Brace, 2004). Besides making questions engaging and varied, it aims at gathering the appropriate data from a specific population (Nation, 1997). In this study, the questionnaire is used as the first step of data collection because it is amenable to analysis and minimizes bias in formulating and asking questions.

Taking into account the mutual sharing between students and teachers at the level of language learning, two questionnaires have been designed: students' questionnaire and teachers' questionnaire. The respondents have been chosen at random, in other words, they have not been selected according to their

expertise or their knowledge. Before filling in the questionnaire, they have been carefully told that the questionnaire is used only for a specific case study and they are assured that their answers will be anonymous and private, in order to make them more comfortable while responding.

The students' questionnaire (Appendix n°1) was randomly administered to seventy (70) students, 2010/2011 term. The questionnaire consists of eight questions, simply phrased with multiple answers to choose in order to facilitate and control students' responses. No open question is asked in order to avoid deviation and misunderstanding. The questions asked are managed to provide general information about the students and their attitude towards vocabulary.

The teachers' questionnaire (Appendix n°2) is made up of seven questions. It was randomly dispensed to ten (10) EFL teachers from the Department of English in Ibn Baddis University. The questionnaire is composed of series of open and closed questions in order to get wider responses and give the teachers a chance to express their own opinions and share their experiences. The teachers' questionnaire aims at showing their attitude towards teaching vocabulary in classrooms. It also helps finding out which activities promote vocabulary learning and enhance strategy use.

2.3.2 Classroom Observation:

After the administration of the questionnaire, classroom observation has been done to get more specific and reliable data. Observation is considered as a traditional method of data collection in which the situation of interest is watched and the relevant facts, actions and behaviours are noted (Lake, 2011). The students' behaviour has been observed during classes by attending eight hours of various credits in June 2010 and three other hours in January 2011, with different proportion of the same level.

During classroom interaction, it was noticed that learners' vocabulary is poorly organized in terms of fluency and misuse of synonyms. The majority of them could barely formulate correct sentences. The students asserted that they were frustrated and pressured by the amount of new words that they had to learn.

It has also been detected that students have the tendency to use vocabulary learning strategies randomly whenever coming across a new word.

The most frequently used strategies are dictionaries (bilingual/monolingual), and translation into Arabic or French. The students reported that they worried about their learning process because they felt the necessity to use and learn new words in English course.

However, the most important thing that was remarked is that the majority of learners remained silent or simply listened during the course while the same few learners participated and interacted with the teacher. The first impression was that students were shy or simply did not know what to respond. Ironically, as soon as the task is solved or the course ended, the students burst in a storm of talk in Arabic as if they had finally found an outlet for their voices. Hence, the problem did not lie in students' shyness or in their answers but in their lack of vocabulary. The students were afraid of making mistakes and being laughed at. They considered their vocabulary as a handicap that prevented them from interacting with the others.

The above observation matches exactly Meara's statement which indicates, "*...learners themselves readily admit that they experience considerable difficulty with vocabulary*" (1980: 221). Interestingly, learners sometimes prefer showing their reactions through facial expressions (smile; nod their head for agreement or disagreement) rather than using words. This is justified again by their limited vocabulary repertoire.

Besides what has been noticed at the level of learners, the majority of teachers seldom teach vocabulary learning strategies. Though it is agreed among researchers that without vocabulary there is no communication (McCarthy, 1990: viii), some teachers think that there is no need to teach it since it can take care of itself (Krashen, 1987:81). Nation (2001:222) asserts that the learners' control of the strategies should be monitored and the teacher is responsible for giving feedback to them. He (op.cit.:223) also points out that although teaching strategies is time consuming, it is necessary for students to feel confident in order to use the strategy well.

However, teachers' few hours of class time on teaching vocabulary can be justified by their unfamiliarity and novice in that arena. Since vocabulary has been neglected in the past decades and has recently attracted more attention, providing teachers with the principal concepts and equipping them with the pedagogical 'know-how' of vocabulary teaching techniques is not an easy task. As Sökmen states, "*With this shift in emphasis, the classroom teacher is faced with*

the challenge of how best to help students store and retrieve words in the target language" (1997: 237). Concerning the teachers' time spent on vocabulary teaching, it has been noticed that they have the tendency to teach words separately rather than teaching vocabulary learning strategies though the opposite would be more effective.

As Nation states,

It is clear that if a teacher wants to help learners cope with low frequency vocabulary, it is far better to spend time on strategies that the learners can use to deal with these words than to spend time on individual words.

(Nation, 1990: 159)

By the same token, he also adds,

Strategies which learners can use independently of a teacher are the most important of all ways of learning vocabulary. For this reason it is worthwhile ensuring that learners are able to apply the strategies and that they get plenty of help and encouragement in doing so. By mastering a few strategies learners can cope with thousands of words.

(Nation, 1990: 159)

Therefore, EFL teachers should focus more on teaching learners how to use vocabulary learning strategies, and then apply them to any words learners want to learn independently.

2.3.3 Vocabulary Levels Test:

In addition to what has been observed and the questionnaires, a vocabulary levels test (Appendix n°3) has been conducted. A test is a means of trial intended to measure one's ability and knowledge in a given area (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989: 176). From a testing standpoint, several researchers such as Schmitt (2000) and Nation (2001) have tried to develop efficient techniques of measuring vocabulary learning.

In this study, Nation standardized vocabulary levels test has been selected to be used since it assesses learners' vocabulary knowledge at several frequency levels (1,000; 2,000 and 3,000 levels). It also estimates how many words learners know and how well those words are known. As Nation asserts, *"The original purpose of this test is to indicate whether high-frequency words have*

been learned and also to measure the learning of low-frequency words” (2001: 21). The test originally includes 140 items and determines the learners' vocabulary size in a range of 0 to 14000. Each item in the test has a score value of 100. In this study, each item receives a score value of 1 instead of 100. However, it is important to mention that Nation's test has been reduced in this research. The 1,000 level which is in a different format was not included in this test because the questions are for beginner learners and not advanced ones. The 2,000 and 3,000 levels questions have also been reduced because when administering them for the first time the students refused to answer due to its size. The selected words used in this test have been chosen in terms of occurrence in classes and students' familiarities.

Nation's test has been randomly handed out to 70 students, 2010/2011 term. The students have been presented with groups of six words, three of which must be matched to their definitions.

The following figure illustrates a sample of the test:

1 business	
2 clock	_____ part of a house
3 horse	_____ animal with four legs
4 pencil	_____ something used for writing
5 shoe	
6 walls	

Figure 2.1: A Sample of Nation's Vocabulary Levels Test (2001: 417)

2.3.4 Vocabulary Learning Strategies Survey:

Besides the test, a vocabulary learning survey (Appendix n°4) adapted from Bennet (2006) has been randomly dispensed to 70 students to investigate

in depth the strategies used. According to Scheuren, "...the word 'survey' is used most often to describe a method of gathering information from a sample of individuals, in order to learn something about the larger population from which the sample has been drawn..." (2004: 09). It also allows the collocation of a large amount of data in a relatively short period of time and ensures validity and reliability.

The survey is based largely on two previous works, Schmitt (1997) and Fan (2003). Fan for instance, presented learners with a list of 60 vocabulary learning strategies and asked them to answer the following questions:

- 1) How frequently do you use the strategy stated?
- 2) To what extent do you think the strategy is or may be useful to you?

The learners are asked to select their responses from five-point scales. The available answers are: *never*, *seldom*, *sometimes*, *often* and *very often*; and *not useful*, *not sure it is useful*, *quite useful*, *very useful*, and *extremely useful*. This survey offers a reasonable variety of responses and is simple for the learners to answer it.

Schmitt's taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies is both clear and extensive. Thus, this taxonomy has become the strategies source to be surveyed, of which 38 were selected. These 38 strategies are classified under five different categories namely, determination, memory, social, cognitive, and metacognitive. The five categories fall under two groups (discovery and consolidation strategies).

2.3.5 Examination Sheets Analysis:

In order to obtain a clear picture of each student's capabilities of productive use of vocabulary, 100 examination sheets have been analysed. A sample is given in Appendix n° 5. The students' sheets are also seen as an ideal source of freely-composed writing in this study.

The modules tested are "*Origins of languages*" and "*Linguistics*" (2008-2009). These two modules have been selected since the students were asked to write essays or short paragraphs using their own styles while answering questions. The examination sheets are analysed according to three previous studies namely: Schmitt (2001), Sanaoui (1995) and Clouston (1996). Schmitt's taxonomy looked at the vocabulary learning strategies that learners used while

writing. Sanaoui's and Clouston's works classify students into three categories: structured, semi-structured and unstructured to see the way they approach vocabulary learning.

2.4 Schmitt's Taxonomy:

Since the present research aims at exploiting the vocabulary learning strategies used and perceived useful by EFL students, Schmitt's taxonomy is relied on to classify the strategies obtained from the subjects' responses. There are several significant research studies that have investigated the use and usefulness of vocabulary learning strategies among learners. However, Schmitt's taxonomy (1997, 2000) is the most elaborate and extensive classification of vocabulary learning strategies to date. It is also the only taxonomy that clearly illustrates each individual vocabulary learning strategy. He views his taxonomy "as a dynamic working inventory which suggests the major strategies" (1997: 204).

Schmitt's taxonomy has been organized in the framework of two systems. First, he has based it on Oxford's (1990) language learning strategies classification because of its practicality in language learning strategies. He states, "Of the more established

Strategies for the Discovery of a new word's meaning	
DET	Analyse part of speech.
DET	Analyse affixes and roots.
DET	Check for L ₁ cognate.
DET	Analyse any available pictures or gestures.
DET	Guess from textual context.
DET	Bilingual dictionary.
DET	Monolingual dictionary.
DET	Word lists.
DET	Flash cards.
SOC	Ask teacher for an L ₁ translation.
SOC	Ask teacher for paraphrase or synonym of new word.
SOC	Ask teacher for sentence including the new word.
SOC	Ask classmate for meaning.
SOC	Discover new meaning through group work activity.

Strategies for consolidating a word once it has been taught	
MEM	Study word with a pictorial representation of its meaning.
MEM	Image word's meaning.
MEM	Connect word to a personal experience.
MEM	Associate the word with its coordinates.
MEM	Connect the word to its synonyms and antonyms.
MEM	Use semantic maps.
MEM	Use 'scales' for gradable adjectives.
MEM	Peg Method.
MEM	Loci Method.
MEM	Group words together to study them.
MEM	Group words together spatially on a page.
MEM	Use new words in sentences.
MEM	Group words together within a storyline.
MEM	Study the spelling of a word.
MEM	Study the sound of a word.
MEM	Say new word aloud when studying.
MEM	Image word form.
MEM	Underline initial letter of the word.
MEM	Configuration.
MEM	Use keyword method.
MEM	Affixes and roots (remembering).
MEM	Part of speech (remembering).
MEM	Paraphrase the word's meaning.
MEM	Use cognates in study.
MEM	Learn the words of an idiom together.
MEM	Use physical action when learning a word.
MEM	Use semantic feature grids.
MET	Use English-language media (songs, movies... etc)
MET	Testing oneself with word lists.
MET	Use spaced word practice.
MET	Skip or pass new word.
MET	Continue to study word over time.
SOC	Study and practice meaning in a group.
SOC	Teacher checks students' flash cards for word lists for accuracy.

Strategies for consolidating a word once it has been taught	
COG	Verbal repetition.
COG	Written repetition.
COG	Word lists.
COG	Flash cards.
COG	Take notes (in class).
COG	Use vocabulary section in your textbook.
COG	Listen to tape of word lists.
COG	Put English labels in physical objects.
COG	Keep a vocabulary notebook.

**Table 2.1: Vocabulary Learning Strategies Taxonomy
(Schmitt 1997: 207)**

Catalán lists the following advantages for using Schmitt's taxonomy as a research instrument:

- It can be standardized as a test;
- It can be used to collect the answers from students easily;
- It is based on the theory of learning strategies as well as on theories of memory;

- It is technologically simple;
- It can be used with learners of different ages, educational backgrounds and target languages;
- It is rich and sensitive to the variety of learning strategies;
- It allows comparison with other studies, among them Schmitt's own survey.

Schmitt (1997: 217) conducted his research on a representative sample of 600 Japanese students coming from different prestige levels (low, medium, high). The subjects comprise four different groups of learners: junior high school, high school, university and adult students. These students had taken and were still taking EFL classes. The main purpose of his research was finding out the most/least used strategies as well as what learners consider the most/least helpful strategies. Schmitt used his own taxonomy of fifty-eight (58) vocabulary learning strategies as a research instrument to identify these strategies.

According to Schmitt, there are two main strategy groups; namely discovery and consolidation strategies. These groups embed six categories: determination, discovery social, consolidation social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies. The strategies categories further broke down into smaller strategies. Originally, the two groups were divided into categories and smaller strategies units to validate the questionnaire.

2.4.1 Discovery strategies:

Discovery strategies are used to obtain initial information and finding out the meaning of a word when encountered for the first time. It consists of two categories namely, determination (knowledge of the language, contextual clues, or reference materials) and social strategies (asking someone else).

Interestingly, there are a number of strategies that can be used for both discovery and consolidation strategies. In fact, Schmitt (1997: 206) claims that nearly all discovery strategies could be applied as consolidation ones. Nonetheless, he listed only the most obvious strategies in both groups of the classification. Below, the two discovery categories are defined with some important vocabulary learning strategies types.

2.4.1.1 Determination Strategies:

Determination strategies are used to discover a new word's meaning without recourse to another person's expertise (Schmitt, 1997: 205). This category facilitates gaining knowledge of a new word. One commonly used way of learning a new word is analyzing its parts.

However, the risk that learners may face is obtaining an incorrect or inappropriate meaning for the given context. Hence, Clark and Nation (1980) suggested to leave word analysis as the last resort and also recommended breaking the unknown word into prefix, root, and suffix first, if possible.

Word lists strategy is ranked the eighth in this category. There are two kinds of word lists called unpaired list and paired word list. The former is offered alone, without any native language equivalents and the latter includes the L2 words to be remembered and L1 equivalents as well. A number of researchers (Hudson 1982, Carrell 1984, Swaffar 1988) stated that paired lists are inadequate for vocabulary learning because the learners will not be able to use the new words communicatively without further assistance. Nonetheless,

Cohen & Apeh (1980), and Carter (1987) claimed that paired lists might be helpful for lower-level language learners.

Flashcards is the ninth strategy in the determination category. This strategy means writing down the TL word on the front of a card and writing its L1 meaning on the back. These cards help learners get familiar with the new word and its meaning. Despite the beneficial use of flashcards, this strategy is limited in value and seldom used among students. To make this strategy more effectively used, Oxford & Crookall (1990) suggested writing the new words in complete, within its context (sentence) on the cards.

2.4.1.2 Social Strategies:

Social strategies entail the use of interaction with other people to improve language learning (Schmitt, 1997: 210). This category is cited under both discovery and consolidating groups. Generally, teachers are the ones who provide learners with definition of new words by giving them its translation, for instance, or synonyms. Otherwise, learners can get help from their classmates or native speakers.

2.4.2 Consolidating strategies:

Consolidating strategies help learners memorize the words once it has been taught or encountered. It includes four categories namely, social, memory, cognitive and metacognitive strategies.

2.4.2.1 Memory Strategies:

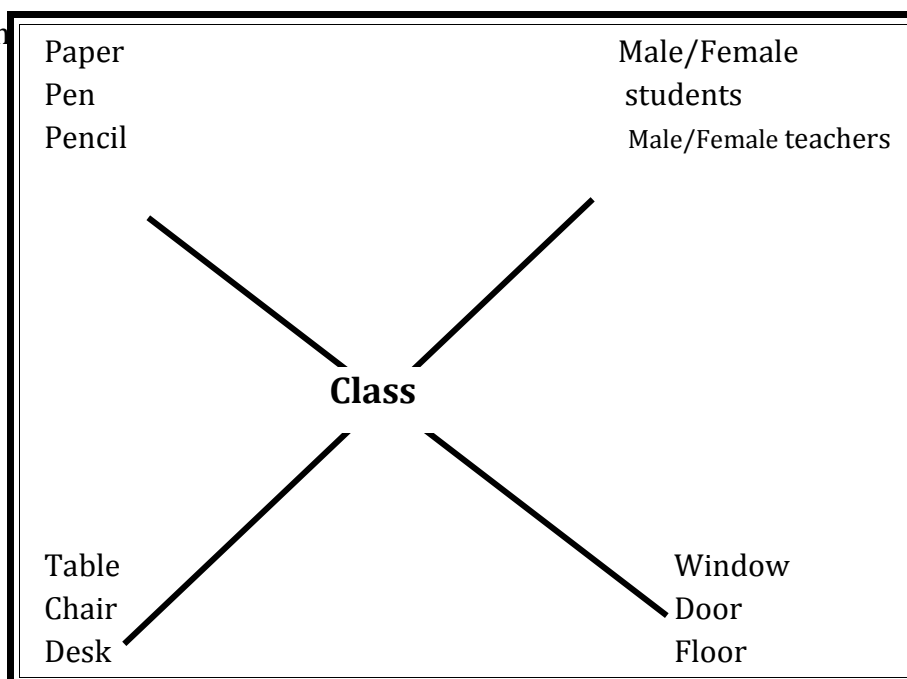
Memory strategies (also known as mnemonics) are seen by Schmitt as “*approaches which relate new materials to existing knowledge*” (1997: 205). It relates the word to be retained with some previously learned knowledge. Memory strategies have a long dating back history (Oxford 1990: 38). Ahmed (1989: 10) sees this category as being purely mechanical (repeating, writing). It requires an “*elaborative mental processing*” (Schmitt, op. cit.: 212). Fan (2003: 226), from the other hand, divided memory strategies into four groups: repetition, association, grouping and analysis. She assigns the first group as mechanical techniques and the remaining as ‘deep’ strategies. Hence, it can be concluded that there are two kinds of memory strategies (mechanical and deep). Based on Cohen and Apeh (1981) opinions, Schmitt (op. cit.: 201)

argues that mechanical strategies (shallower) might be more suitable for beginners and deeper ones could be more beneficial for higher level students.

In memory category, new words can be learned by picturing their meaning instead of definitions. By making a word's image meaning, learners can create their own mental images and even associate new words with a personal experience. This strategy has been shown to be effective (Webber, 1978).

Semantic mapping (also called grouping) consists of brainstorming associations about a word and presenting it diagrammatically (Sökmen 1997: 250). Beheydt (1987) and Nation (1990) suggested that vocabulary should always be presented in a semantic organized way. Schmitt (1997: 121) argues that this strategy enables learners to represent different sense relationships (e.g. synonymy, antonymy, coordination) schematically. According to Sökmen (1997: 251), semantic mapping works better with low than high frequency vocabulary and is, therefore, suitable for advanced learners.

When using a semantic map, learners need to think about words related to the target word. Then, these words are listed by categories around the target word in the



**Figure 2.2: Semantic Map
(Oxford & Crookall, 1990)**

There is also the *semantic feature analysis* strategy. It reinforces vocabulary that is essential to understand important concepts in a text (Anders & Bos, 1986). This strategy helps students develop word associations and extends their content knowledge. It can serve as a purpose for reading as well as an activity that allows students to monitor comprehension if used during reading.

The teacher provides students with a grid in which essential vocabulary words are listed vertically and features/ideas are listed horizontally. Students are asked to complete the grid by indicating with a check mark (✓) or minus sign (--) whether each word possesses the mentioned features or is related to the ideas.

The table below is a completed grid that has been used among students where they were asked to read a text about the last three presidents of United States (Conner, 2006).

	Republican	Democrat	Former Governor	Former Vice-President	2 Full Terms in Office
Bush sr.	✓	--	--	✓	--
Clinton	--	✓	✓	--	✓
Bush jr.	✓	--	✓	--	--

Table 2.2: Semantic Grid

The peg method is another memory strategy. It consists of linking unrelated items with a set of ‘pegs’ or ‘hooks’ by making them rhyming or digits. This strategy is very useful for memorizing words lists. Then learners have to associate words to be remembered with these “pegs” to form an image. Thompson, I. (1987: 44) and Schmitt (1997: 213) gave the following examples to illustrate best the peg method process. Students are required to remember a

rhyme first, e.g. 'one is a bun, two is a shoe, three is a tree'. Then, these new words need to be linked with the 'peg' words and create images. For example, if the first word to be remembered is "table," then learners may imagine a bun resting on a table. When the rhyme is later recited, this image arouses and comes up with the target words.

The loci method is another useful method for remembering unrelated words. This strategy requires learners to picture a familiar place such as a 'room', and then mentally locate the first item to be memorized in the first place (room), the second item in the next place, and so forth. To recall the items, learners need to take an imaginary tour around the landmarks, the 'room' for instance, and retrieve the items that were mentally placed there (Wenden & Rubin, 1987). Thompson, I. (1987: 45) proposed another similar grouping strategy called the finger method. It consists of associating new words with fingers (ibid.).

The keyword method was developed by Atkinson (1975: 821). It denotes a mother tongue word that sounds like some part of the foreign word. The memorization passes through two stages when employing keyword strategy. Students need to find a suitable keyword first (create an acoustic link), then form a mental image linking the two words (create an imagery link) (Schmitt 1997: 214).

Gu (2003:55) gives the following example to illustrate best the keyword method. For instance, if learners want to study the English word 'hippo', it can be acoustically associated with the Estonian word 'hüppab' (jumps). Then, learners can create an image of a jumping hippo. Later, the stimulus of the foreign language word should activate the keyword sound, which bring up the image created and result in the retrieval of the real meaning.

A number of researchers have proved that the keyword strategy is highly effective for students of different ages at different levels of achievement, mostly for immediate recall of words (Atkinson 1975, Avila & Sadoski 1996, Hulstijn 1997, Nation 2001). Nonetheless, Hall, Wilson, and Patterson (1981) state that the keyword method is most useful to less experienced learners, such as the young. Avila & Sadoski (1996: 392) and Hulstijn (1997: 210) argue that this strategy works well only with a small number of words (concrete words). In contrast, Van Hell & Mahn (1997: 508) claim that it is efficient with abstract word.

Affixes and root use is another memory strategy. An affix is a morpheme added to a word in order to change its meaning or function. It entails two parts (prefix and suffix). A prefix means adding a morpheme to the beginning of a word (e.g. impossible→ im- + possible, unlucky→ un- + lucky). A suffix, in contrast, comes at the end of a word (e.g. quietly→ quiet + ly, useful→ use + ful). The English language contains only prefix and suffix, whereas some other languages have another possibility which is infix. It means insert morphemes in the middle of a word. A root, on the other hand, is defined as a lexical content morpheme that cannot be analyzed into smaller parts.

The following figure demonstrates morphemes components.

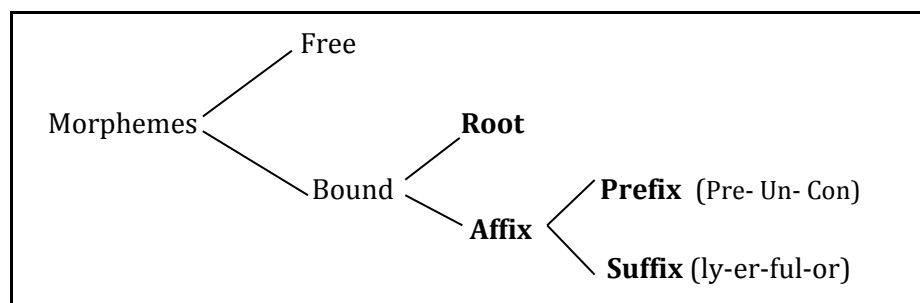


Figure 2.3 : Affixes and Root

2.4.2.2 Cognitive Strategies:

The definition of cognitive strategies was adopted from Oxford as “*manipulation or transformation of the target language by the learner*” (1990: 43). This category encompasses nine vocabulary learning strategies. **Note-taking strategy** is one of those strategies. It is a traditional strategy of recording new vocabulary, which is seen suitable for different learners in terms of ages and language levels. Schmitt (1997: 208) relates taking notes to notebook and flash cards strategies. The latter are the two most common forms of note taking.

The use of vocabulary **notebook** strategy is advocated by a number of researchers (Gairns & Redman 1986, Lewis 1997, McCarthy 1990). In Ahmed’s study (1989) about vocabulary learning strategies, he has found out

that note-taking strategy is common among learners and both 'good' and 'poor' learners used it. Fowle (2002: 380), on the other hand, concludes that notebooks have proved to be an effective tool not only for aiding students' vocabulary learning but also for promoting the use of several other vocabulary learning strategies as well as learner independence.

There are several ways for noting down words in a vocabulary notebook. For instance, storing target language vocabulary in long lists with their mother tongue equivalence is not recommended. Though it encourages learning words in a fixed order, it discourages the independent recall of every word (Nation 2001: 307). Hence, students will memorise words in a certain order and will be eventually unable to recall their meanings if the order is changed.

List learning does not allow the re-ordering of words or adding more space when needed. Lewis (1997: 78) adds that this strategy does not cater for students' needs of students. *Schmitt and Schmitt (1995: 133) provide the following procedure that learners may adopt while using vocabulary notebook strategy. First, word pairs are written down and learned. Second, the translation pairs are enriched by semantic maps for instance, example sentences, illustrations or derivative information. Besides, vocabulary notebooks may come in different formats and organization (by alphabet, theme, topic) to suit learners' needs. It is the teacher's task to expose students to numerous ways of organizing their vocabulary learning notebooks.*

The second form of note-taking strategy is using **word cards**. The latter has already been mentioned and defined in determination category. Nation (2001: 301) lists several benefits of using word cards. For instance, the strategy is suitable for learning both high and low frequency words. He argues, "*It is focused, efficient and certain*" (op. cit.: 300). Lee (2005: 48) adds that using the strategy for learning words individually can also be exploited in classroom conditions. The word cards can be used with different activities such as categorizing words, creating oral or written stories, peer-testing, and so forth.

Nonetheless, the word cards strategy has been disapproved for various reasons. Nation (2001: 297) summarizes his criticism as follows. First, word cards lack wider context, which leads to difficult memorization. Second, it cannot be employed in communication. Third, it does not promote

vocabulary growth. Though Nation disagrees with all the above mentioned criticism, he (op. cit.: 301) views word cards as a complement strategy to enhance other vocabulary learning strategies. In addition, he (op. cit.: 305) puts forward the following recommendations:

- ❖ Use recall (look at the word and retrieve its meaning and vice versa).
- ❖ First learn receptively (look at the word, recall its meaning), then productively (look at the meaning, recall the word).
- ❖ Change the cards order constantly and have more difficult words near the beginning to give them more attention (the words at the beginning and end of a list are remembered better)
- ❖ Repeat the words aloud (especially for productive use).
- ❖ Use the word in a phrase or sentence as the context gives extra information about the word.
- ❖ Process the word deeply and thoughtfully (e.g. by using a mnemonic aid) to ensure long-term retention.

2.4.2.3 Metacognitive Strategies:

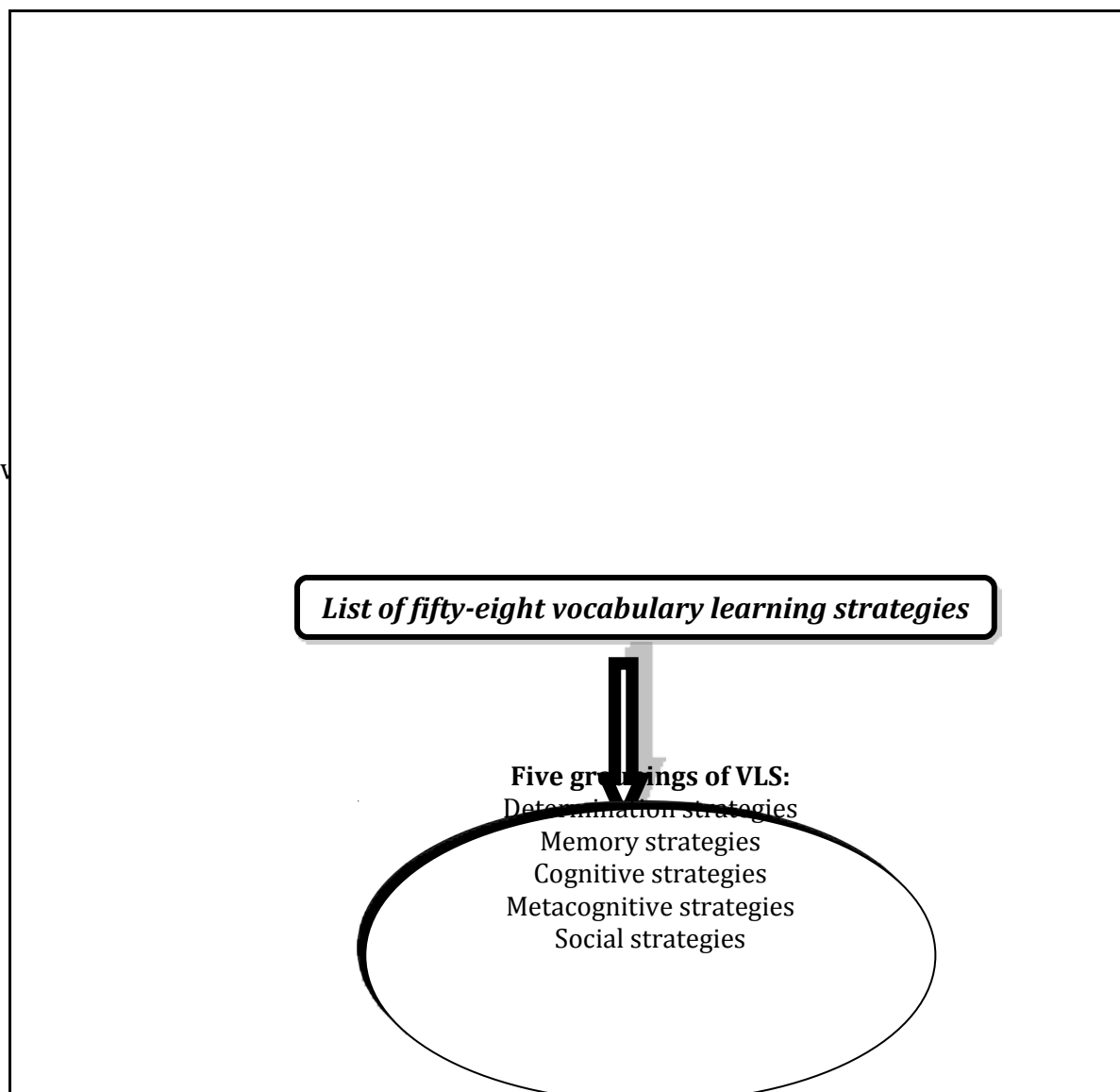
Metacognitive strategies are seen as a conscious overview of the learning process. Oxford argues that metacognitive strategies “*provide a way for learners to coordinate their own learning process*” (1990: 136). Students use these strategies to make decisions about planning, monitoring, or evaluating the best ways to study (Schmitt, 1997: 205).

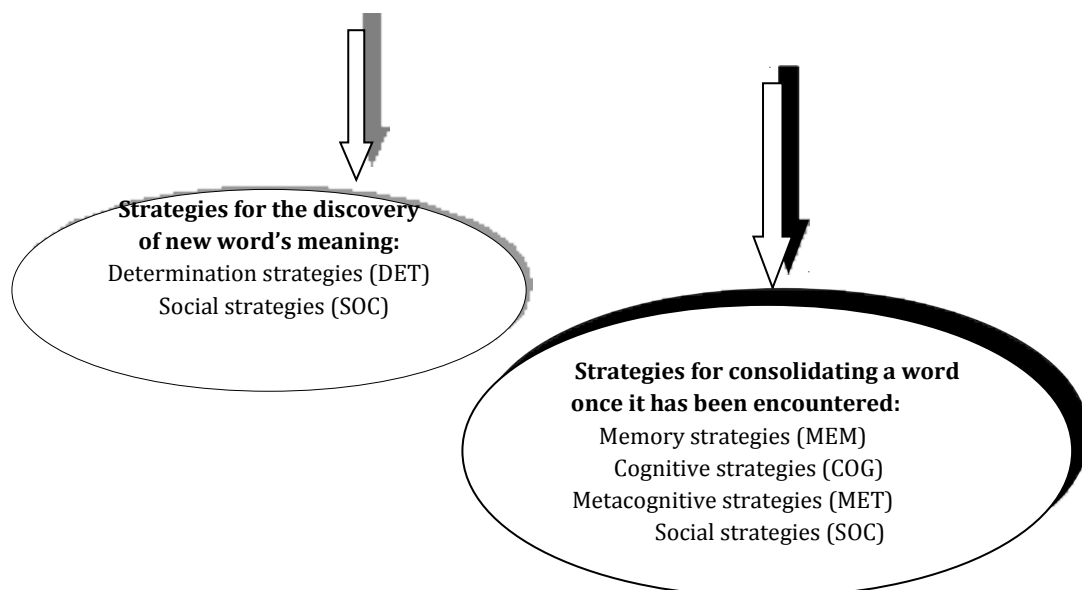
According to Schmitt (op. cit.: 216), there are various strategies that learners may use to direct their vocabulary learning process. For instance, learners could enlarge their vocabulary repertoire through exposure to the various mediums of foreign language (books, the Internet, films) as well as communicate with native speakers. Students can also test themselves, which helps them assess the suitability of their vocabulary learning strategies they employ (Thompson. I, 1987: 47). Students may even pay conscious attention to organizing the practice time of words. According to Nation (2001: 76), ***spaced practice*** (also called repetition or expanding rehearsal) lead to more secure learning of words than assembled repetition. Hence, instead of repeating words for *endless minutes*, it would be more beneficial and wiser to spend

that time repeating them at intervals. In Schmitt's (1997: 221) study, the respondents ranked the strategy of 'continue to study over time' among the most helpful strategies.

Since the five groups and some strategies of vocabulary learning have been examined, it is important to mention that some strategies appear under more than one category. For instance, word list and flash card share the value of both determination strategies and cognitive strategies. This is mainly because both strategies have flexible characteristics and assist learners to discover the meaning of a new word, and also to memorise the new word once taught or encountered.

Schmitt states in regard to the problem of learning strategies classification, "In practice, it was quite difficult to decide where to draw the line between different strategies in their numerous variations" (1997: 204). Consequently, it can be said that a clear-cut of vocabulary learning strategies taxonomy has not been yet devised.





**Figure 2.4: Vocabulary Learning Strategies Classification
(Schmitt, 2000: 135)**

Schmitt's results have shown that the most used and the most beneficial strategies are: bilingual dictionary, verbal/written repetition, saying a new word aloud, studying a word' spelling, and taking notes in class.

Another result worth noting is that the strategy patterns use may change over time from 'shallower' to 'deeper' ones as the learners get older or become more proficient in the TL (Schmitt, 1997: 200). Learners may also be willing to try out new strategies if they are instructed or introduced to them. Thus, some strategies may prove to be more efficient and popular in certain age groups.

2.5 Sanaoui's Classification:

Sanaoui's classification (1995) is the second theory relied on in this research study. It is used to identify the approaches that EFL students adopt while learning vocabulary. Sanaoui (op. cit.: 15) conducted three consecutive studies (in 1990, 1992, 1993), where she resorted to ethnographic interviewing. She looks at how adult L₂ learners approach the task of vocabulary learning. She also has demonstrated the links between vocabulary learning strategies and the success in acquiring and retaining vocabulary items.

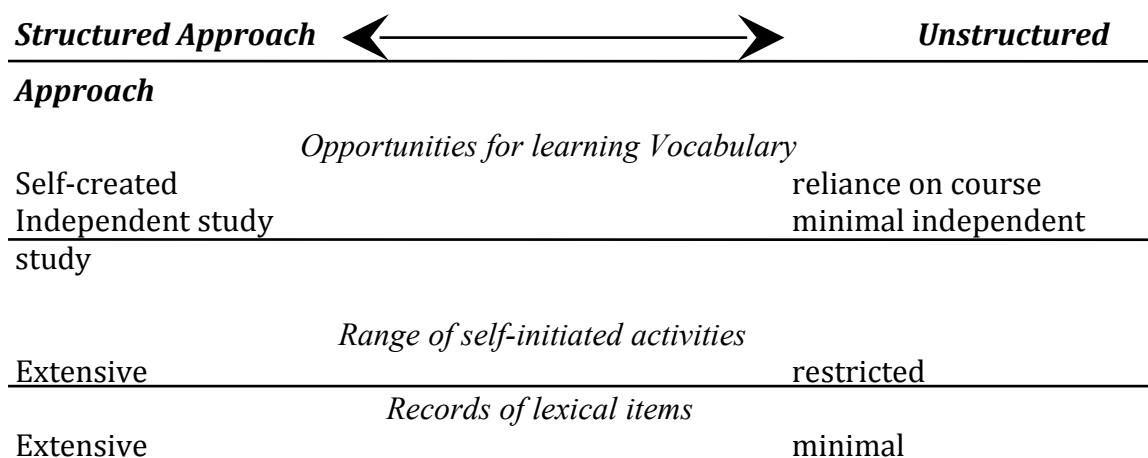
The first study that Sanaoui directed was with 50 beginning and advanced ESL university students. She asked them to observe their daily vocabulary learning and report the approaches they used. The second study was with four ESL learners and the third one was with eight FSL students. The first two

studies were administered in an intensive ESL program, in a vocabulary course university context. The last study was conducted in a continuing education program, in a French conversation course.

Sanaoui's results (1995) have showed that students in the above three studies follow two distinct approaches of vocabulary learning, conceptualized *structured* and *unstructured*. The students that use *structured approach* have the tendency to organize their vocabulary learning task by keeping systematic records of new words (Višnja Pavi I Taka, 2008: 65). They review their vocabulary both inside and outside classes. They also set particular goals for themselves, and create opportunities for their vocabulary learning (such as watching movies or listening to music in English, reading English language magazines, newspapers, and books).

In contrast, the students who have adopted *unstructured approach* do not take any of the above steps. They seldom create opportunities for their vocabulary learning. They rarely or never review words they were learning. They made minimal written records and rely mainly on the course material. They also spend less than three hours on self-initiated activities (Sanaoui, 1992: 72). The two approaches differ along five dimensions.

The following figure summarizes their main characteristic features.



(Tend to be systematic)		(tend to be ad hoc)
	<i>Review of lexical items</i>	
Extensive		little or no review
	<i>Practice of lexical items</i>	
Self-created opportunities in and outside classroom		Reliance on course

**Figure 2.5: Structured Vs Unstructured Approach
(Sanaoui, 1995: 24)**

Sanaoui has also administered a questionnaire she designed herself to 74 FSL students in order to demonstrate the effect of structured and unstructured approaches on vocabulary knowledge. When comparing students' responses with the approaches they used, the results showed that learners following structured approach were more successful in acquiring new vocabulary items than those who used an unstructured approach. She argued,

Learners who had a structured learning approach were more successful in retaining vocabulary taught in their class than learners who had an unstructured learning approach. The research suggests that helping learners gain control over processes for managing their own learning of lexis is an important step in vocabulary learning and teaching in the L2 classroom.

(Sanaoui, 1995: 26)

Nonetheless, Sanaoui's classification does not cover the learners' different strategy use patterns. Further, it does not tackle the question of what if a learner falls in another approach which is between the structured and unstructured approaches.

2.6 Clouston's Research:

Sanaoui's study interested and has inspired Clouston, since the latter often deals with ESL university students. Thus, Clouston (1996) decided to replicate partly her research. He carried out a small case study of 14 ESL students preparing for academic study in Canada. In order to collect data, he used a questionnaire and a vocabulary test modeled from Sanaoui. The main purposes of Clouston's research are describing the strategic approach to vocabulary learning and determining the correlation between vocabulary learning strategies and learning outcomes (Pavi I Taka, 2008: 65). Besides, he wanted to accomplish three main things. First, demonstrate to students that some casual things that they daily do (such as watching TV or listening to music) can be used

to enlarge their vocabulary repertoire. Second, enhance the strategies that students frequently use (such as keeping written records and reviewing them). Third, he wanted a springboard to discuss vocabulary learning strategies.

Similar to Sanaoui's results, Clouston's results also have revealed two groups: structured and unstructured. However, half of his participants have displayed mostly structured characteristics but do not meet all the five criteria. Therefore, Clouston (1996) has come out with a third approach labeled *semi-structured*. This latter is used to classify the students who meet four of the structured criteria. For instance, students who practice inside and outside the classroom, review words and create hours on self-initiated learning activities but do not keep written records, are classified as semi-structured learners.

Conclusion:

Chapter two has discussed the unfolding of this research study. The first part has disclosed the participants' profile and the main purposes for conducting this research. It has also introduced the instruments used to collect data. The second part has examined the main theories relied on in this study. These theories are namely Schmitt's taxonomy, Sanaoui's classification, and Clouston's study.

Since the theoretical and methodological backgrounds of this research study have been introduced, the next chapter discusses the results obtained and answers the research questions. It also outlines some useful suggestions.

Chapter Three: Data Analysis and Interpretations

Introduction

3.1 The Questionnaires' Results

3.1.1 The Students' Questionnaire Results

3.1.2 The Teachers' Questionnaire Results

3.2 The Vocabulary Levels Test Results

3.3 The Vocabulary Learning Strategy Survey Results and Interpretation

3.3.1 Determination strategies

3.3.2 Social strategies

3.3.3 Memory strategies

3.3.4 Cognitive strategies

3.3.5 Metacognitive strategies

3.4 The Examination Sheets Analysis

3.5 Interpretation of the Results

3.6 Suggestions

3.6.1 Study of the Teaching Context

3.6.2 Selection of the Teaching Materials

3.6.3 Focus on Learner-Centred Approach

3.6.4 Dictionary Use

3.6.5 Group Work

3.6.6 Games Use

3.6.7 Use of Computers and the Internet

Conclusion

Introduction:

Chapter three analyses the results that have been gathered from the research tools mentioned in the previous chapter. The corpus used provides the following data: the questionnaires and observation give general information about the subjects and the situation investigated. The vocabulary levels test shows how students react when encountering familiar and unfamiliar words. The vocabulary learning strategies survey supplies answers for the first and second research questions. Students' responses are classified based on Schmitt's taxonomy (1997, 2000). Then, examination sheets analysis answers the third research question. The students' approaches are set up based on Sanaoui's classification (1995) and Clouston's (1996) research.

This chapter concludes by interpreting the results and compares them with other previous studies. It also suggests some interesting vocabulary learning activities such as games that may promote students' motivation and facilitate their vocabulary learning process. It will equip them with the adequate strategies so that they could properly take control over their learning.

Appendix n°6 demonstrates from the most to the least frequently used categories and strategies of vocabulary learning. Appendix n°7 exhibits the most and least useful categories and strategies of vocabulary learning reported by students.

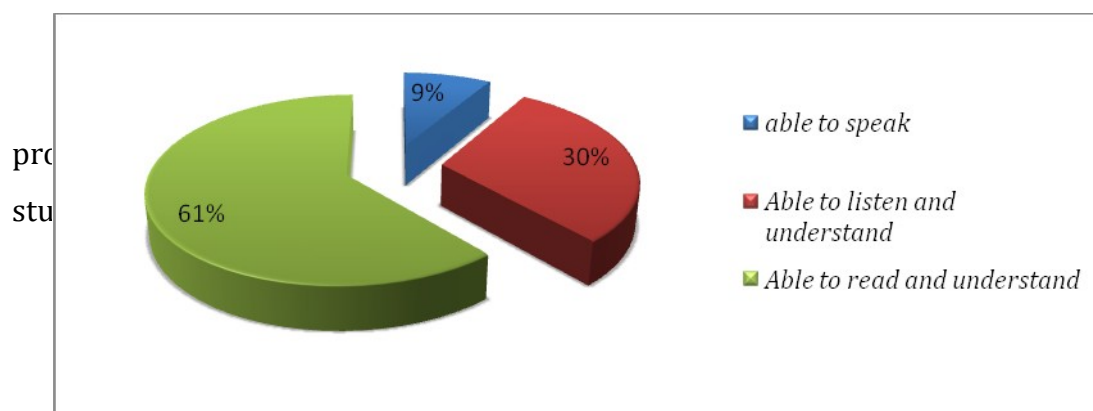
3.1 The Questionnaires' Results:

Two questionnaires have been designed to collect insightful data, the first one is for students (Appendix n°1) and the second is for teachers (Appendix n°2). The results of each questionnaire are calculated in percentages and then drawn in graphics. The data are reported below.

3.1.1 The Students' Questionnaire Results:

The questionnaire has been randomly handed out to 70 students, 2010/2011 term. With regard to the first part of this questionnaire, the data show that the majority of students have been studying English for at least five years.

Concerning the students' choice about the English language 84% of them



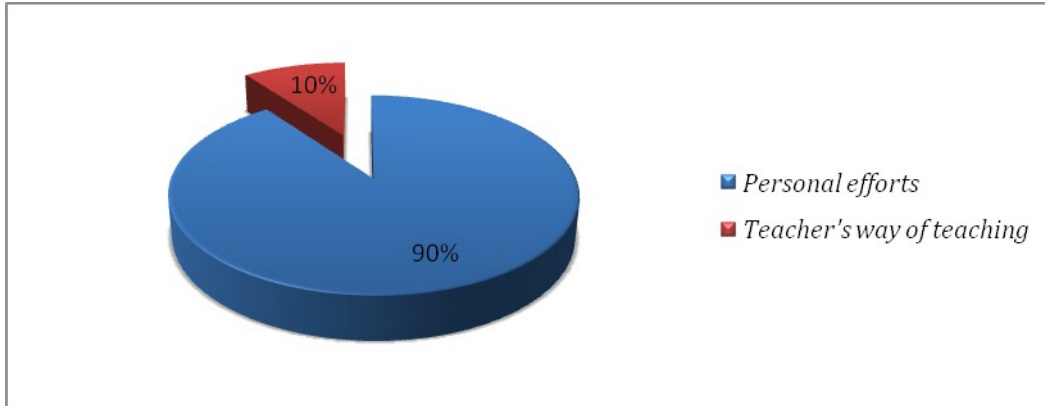


Figure 3.1: Students' English Proficiency and its Reason

One noteworthy question concerns the students' opinion towards the importance of vocabulary in learning English. All of them have declared that learning vocabulary is extremely important. Interestingly, in terms of taking part in the classroom discussion, more than half of the students (53%) have reported that they *never* participate. Only 29% *sometimes* participate whereas 18% *always* participate.

The following figure shows the students' rate of participation during classroom lectures.

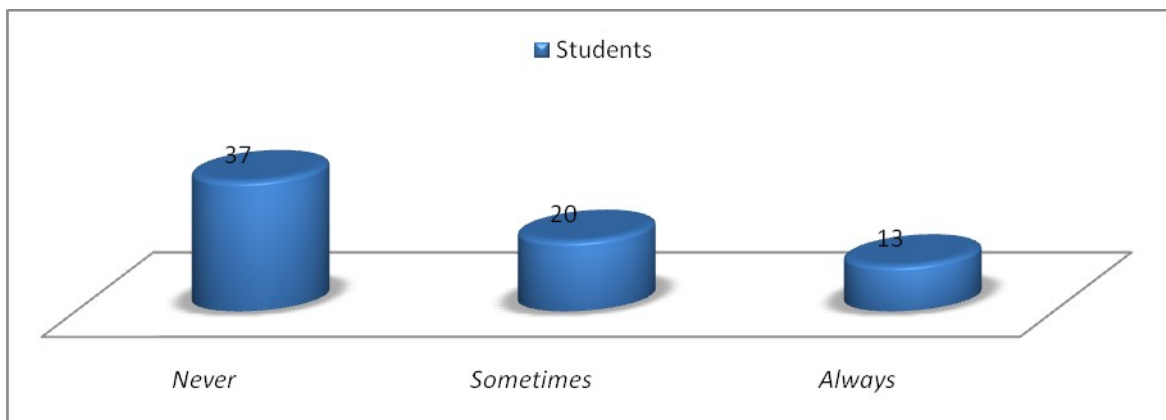


Figure 3.2: Students Rate of Participation

The above answers are justified by the students' lack of vocabulary (70%) and fear of making errors (24%). These answers match to a large extent what has been observed during classroom interaction. The figure below shows the reasons behind the students' rare participation.

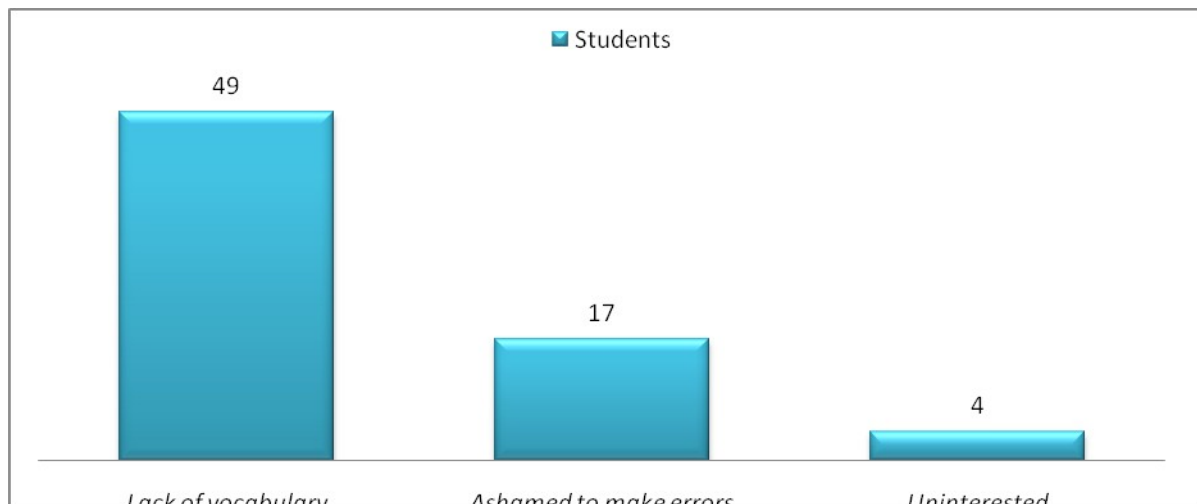


Figure 3.3: Reasons for the Lack of Participation

Concerning the last question which deals with the degree to which the four skills are related to vocabulary learning, 51% of the students responded that they prefer to learn vocabulary through *reading*, whereas only 04% like *writing*. Surprisingly, 29% of the students prefer using *speaking* to learn new words and 16% like to use *listening*.

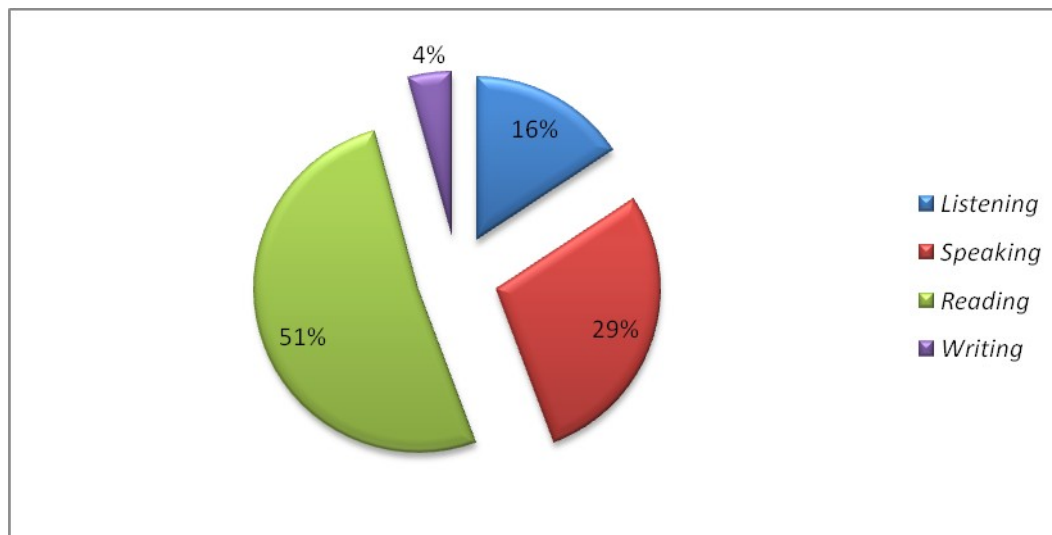


Figure 3.4: Students' Choice of the Four Skills in Vocabulary Practice

3.1.2 The Teachers' Questionnaire Results:

The questionnaire has been randomly administered to ten EFL teachers from the Department of English in Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University. The first

two questions, which are intended to gather general information about the teachers reveal that their experience in teaching varies from three to ten years and even the modules that they are in charge of differ too. Then, the teachers are asked about their students' vocabulary level, the majority (60%) have replied that it is weak and the others (40%) see it average. However, the majority of teachers (67%) have asserted that they do not teach vocabulary learning strategies. Only three teachers do teach strategies through context since it helps students to enrich their vocabulary and improve their language. The following table and figure summarize the teachers' responses:

Average	Weak	Yes	No
Students' vocabulary level	04	06	/
Teaching strategies	/	/	03

Table 3.1: Results of the Teachers' Responses

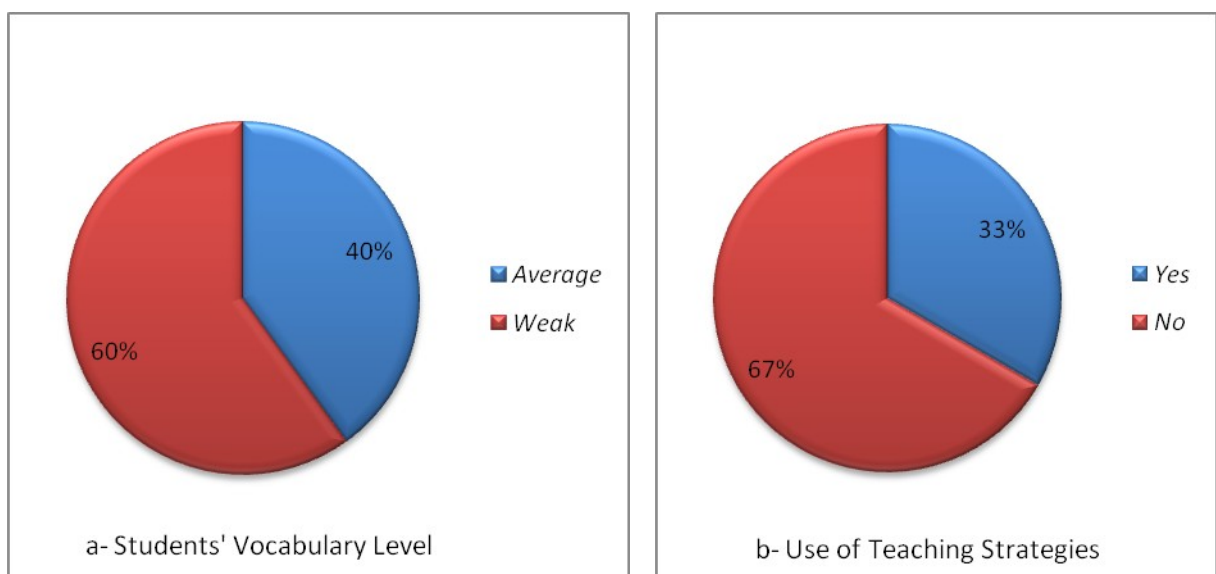


Figure 3.5: Results of the Teachers' Responses

Concerning the vocabulary learning strategies that are the most useful for the students, the majority of teachers have opted for reading and guessing from context. In contrast, asking others and translation are not advocated among teachers (figure 3.6). Interestingly, in terms of suggesting other strategies, only one teacher proposed another strategy which is summarizing.

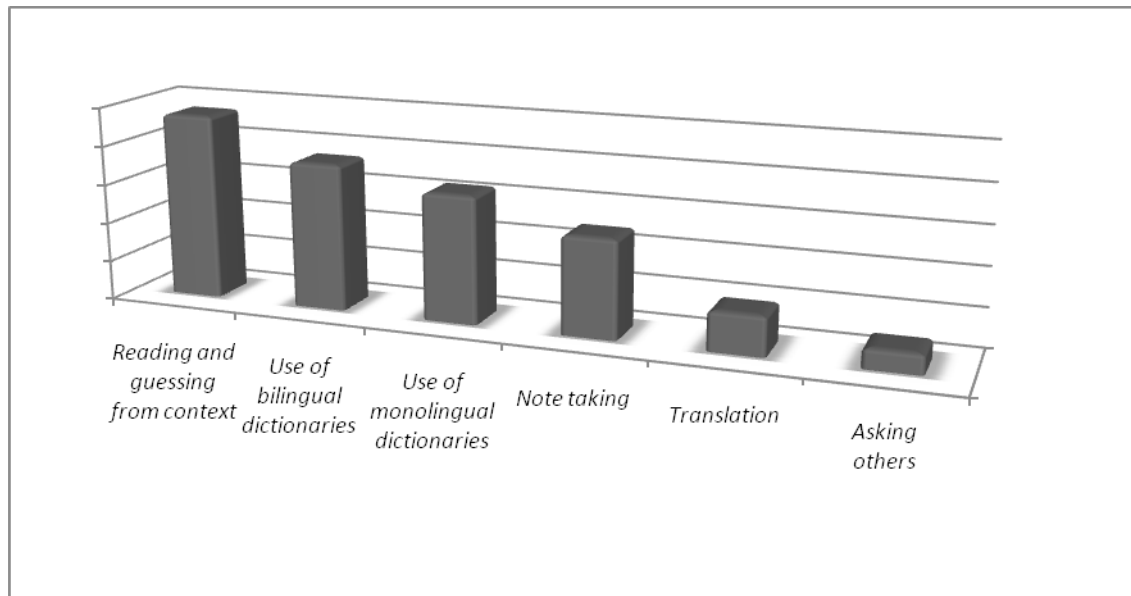


Figure 3.6: The Teachers' Choice of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

With regard to the last question and relying on the teachers' experience, they advise different kinds of activities to teach vocabulary efficiently. The majority suggest using dictionaries, pictures, reading (books, articles, journals), whereas the others see that listening to music by using song lyrics is more beneficial because the students are more interested and involved. These activities vary and depend on the module that teachers are in charge of. For instance, teachers in charge of *Listening Comprehension* and *Oral Expression* modules prefer using songs with lyrics to introduce better vocabulary. In contrast, teachers of *Origins of languages*, *Morphosyntax* and *Written Expression* are more likely to use dictionaries and reading texts while teaching vocabulary.

3.2 The Vocabulary Levels Test Results:

Soon after students joined the University and the lectures started, the vocabulary levels test (Appendix n°3) has been carried out. 70 randomly selected students were asked to complete questions on vocabulary at the 2,000

and 3,000 levels. Test's responses are totaling into mean. Each correct answer is given 1 point.

The 2,000 level questions predictably received the highest mean score of 0.92. The majority of the students (93%) answered correctly and succeeded to match the right words with their appropriate meanings. The students agreed that this level was easy to fill simply because the majority of words were familiar, i.e. seen or heard before. They have also added that these words are generally encountered in their daily life (classroom, books, TV).

In contrast, the 3,000 level questions received a low mean score of 0.42. The majority of students were clearly confused by the unknown words and only 42% responded correctly. However, it is important to mention that the students who succeeded to fulfill the test correctly had recourse to dictionaries. Besides, in both levels, students interacted and even copied each other responses.

The results of the test are illustrated in the following table and figure.

<i>Word</i>	<i>Word</i>	<i>2,000 level</i>	<i>Word</i>	<i>3,000 level</i>	<i>Word</i>	<i>3,000 level</i>	
<i>s</i>	<i>H</i>	0.84	<i>s</i>	<i>a</i>	0.18	<i>i</i>	0.82
	<i>I</i>	0.98		<i>b</i>	0.67	<i>j</i>	0
	<i>J</i>	1		<i>c</i>	0.15	<i>k</i>	0.88
	<i>K</i>	0.94		<i>d</i>	0.25	<i>l</i>	0.12
<i>A</i>	<i>L</i>	0.91	<i>e</i>	0.91	<i>m</i>	0.97	
<i>B</i>		<i>M</i>	1	<i>f</i>	0.08	<i>n</i>	0.04
<i>C</i>	<i>N</i>	1	<i>g</i>	0.38	<i>o</i>	0.21	
	<i>O</i>	1	<i>h</i>	0.64			
<i>D</i>		0.9					
<i>E</i>		0.41					
<i>F</i>		1					
<i>G</i>		1					

Table 3.2: Test Results

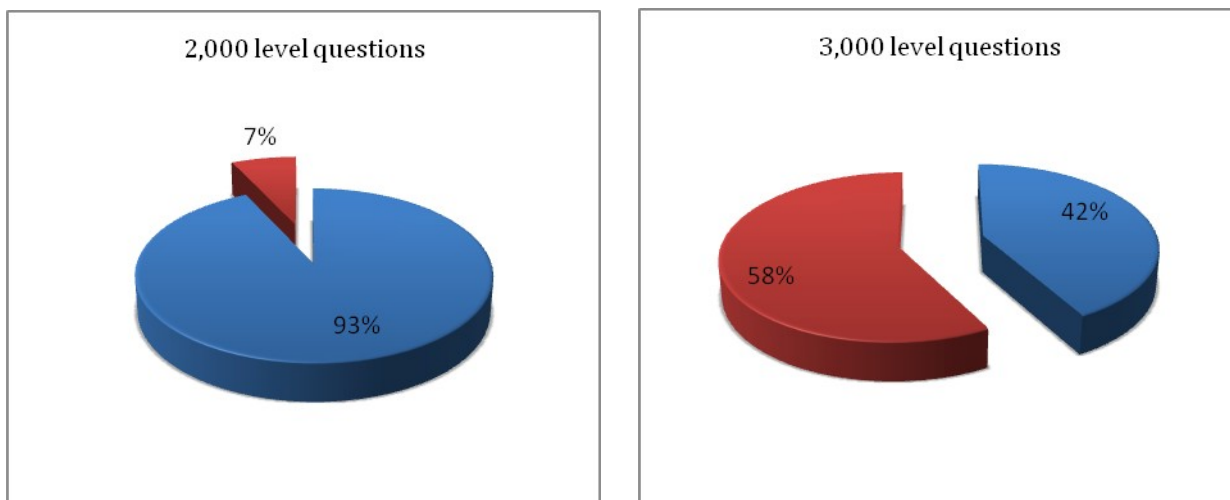


Figure 3.7: Vocabulary Levels Test Results

3.3 The Vocabulary Learning Strategy Survey's Results and Interpretation:

The vocabulary learning strategy survey (Appendix n°4) is administered to the 70 students. The results are tallied in mean and each response is given a numerical score from one to five. Never/*not useful* = 1, seldom/*not sure it is useful* = 2, sometimes/*quite useful* = 3, often/*very useful* = 4, very often/*extremely useful* = 5. The standard deviation for each vocabulary learning strategy is also calculated.

In the following discussion, the results are authentically reported in tables first then in figures to illustrate better the strategies rate. The overall mean score of the 38 strategies for frequency of use is 3.24 (*sometimes, often*); while for usefulness it is 3.77 (*quite useful, very useful*). For example, 3.5/1.3 refers to a mean of 3.5 and a standard deviation of 1.3

3.3.1 Determination strategies:

Determination strategies are very popular among students. With a mean score of 4.14/0.8, they are the most frequently used category. They are also perceived as being the most useful (4.20/0.99). These results appear in the following table:

Frequency of use	Perceived usefulness		
A1	Check the new word's form	3.42/1.16	4.59/1.31
A2	Look for any word parts that I know	4.06/0.97	3.96/0.94
A3	Use any pictures or gestures to help me	3.95/0.91	3.76/1.01

	guess		
A4	Guess from the context	4.81/0.3	4.34/0.65
A5	Use an Arabic/French-English dictionary	4.78/0.44	3.92/1.02
A6	Use an English-English dictionary	3.87/1.02	4.67/1.04

Table 3.3: Determination Strategies Survey Results

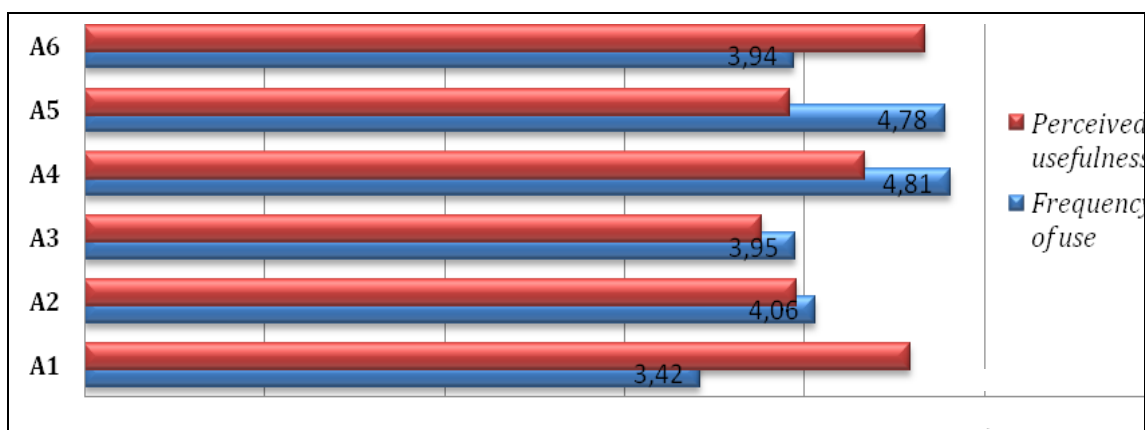


Figure 3.8: Determination Strategies Survey Results

The above data show that students frequently use the majority of strategies to determine meanings of new words. The strategy of checking word's form (A1) is *often* used and is perceived as *very useful*. Whereas, the strategy of looking at word parts such as affixes to determine meaning (A2) is *very often* used and perceived as more than *quite useful*.

The strategy of using pictures and gestures (A3) is *sometimes* used, whereas guessing word meanings from context (A4) is much *often* used by students. These two previous strategies are spontaneously used in almost every lecture and this may explain the results obtained. The two final determination strategies - using bilingual (A5) or monolingual (A6) dictionaries - scored interesting results. While students more frequently use bilingual dictionaries, they rated monolingual dictionaries as more useful.

3.3.2 Social strategies:

The students appear to *sometimes* use social strategies with a frequency of 3.14/0.83. They also perceive its usefulness as *quite useful* with a score of 3.60/0.97.

		Frequency of use	Perceived usefulness
B1	Ask the teacher to give you the definition or a sentence.	3.63/0.11	4.14/0.91
B2	Ask your classmates for the meaning	3.76/0.92	3.62/0.97
B3	Study the word with your classmates	2.64/0.9	2.99/0.91
B4	Ask the teacher to check your definition	2.65/0.86	3.29/0.99
B5	Talk with native speakers	3.03/1.4	4.43/1.01

Table 3.4: Social Strategies Survey Results

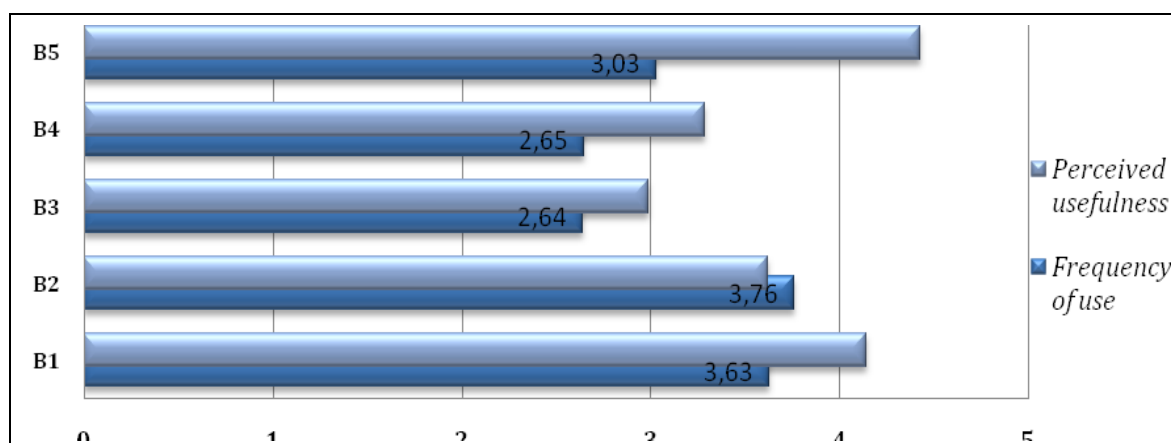


Figure 3.9: Social Strategies Survey Results

The students appear to follow a mechanical path when they use the social strategies. The strategies of asking the teacher to provide students with words' definition (B1), and asking classmates for meaning (B2) receive the highest score of frequency of use in this category.

These results are explained by the daily routine that students follow whenever facing a new word. They have the tendency to guess the meaning on their own first. If they don't succeed, they use a dictionary. If these strategies fail in determining the word's meaning, students ask for classmates' or teacher's help. This process means that students count on themselves first to decode unfamiliar words, and only if this is impossible they will seek for help from outer circle.

		Frequency of use	Perceived usefulness
C1	Draw a picture of the word to help remember it	1.02/0.03	1.01/0.04
C2	Make a mental image of the word's meaning	3.47/0.94	3.77/1.06
C3	Connect the word to a personal experience	3.49/1.32	3.06/0.91
C4	Remember the words that follow or precede the new word	1.01/0.02	1.02/0.03
C5	Connect the word to other words with similar or opposite meanings	3.22/1.13	3.14/0.37
C6	Remember words in 'scales' (always, often ...)	2.17/0.58	3.26/0.89
C7	Group words together to study them	1.63/0.44	2.97/0.73
C8	Use new words in sentences	2.52/0.57	3.94/0.67
C9	Write paragraphs using several new words	2.99/0.97	3.43/0.28
C10	Study the spelling of a word	4.13/0.16	4.58/0.06
C11	Study the sound of a word	3.89/0.86	4.01/1.23
C12	Say the new words aloud when you first meet them	3.96/1.01	3.97/1.31
C13	Make a mental image of the word's form	3.25/0.84	3.33/0.92
C14	Remember the word using its parts (im-, un-, -able)	2.41/0.93	2.87/0.84
C15	Remember the word using its word form (v, n, adj)	2.24/0.24	2.17/0.11
C16	Make your own definition for the word	4.03/0.96	3.99/0.23
C17	Use physical action when learning a word	1.01/0.03	1.02/0.01

the least used category and have received the second lowest frequency of use (2.73/0.59).

Table 3.5: Memory Strategies Survey Results

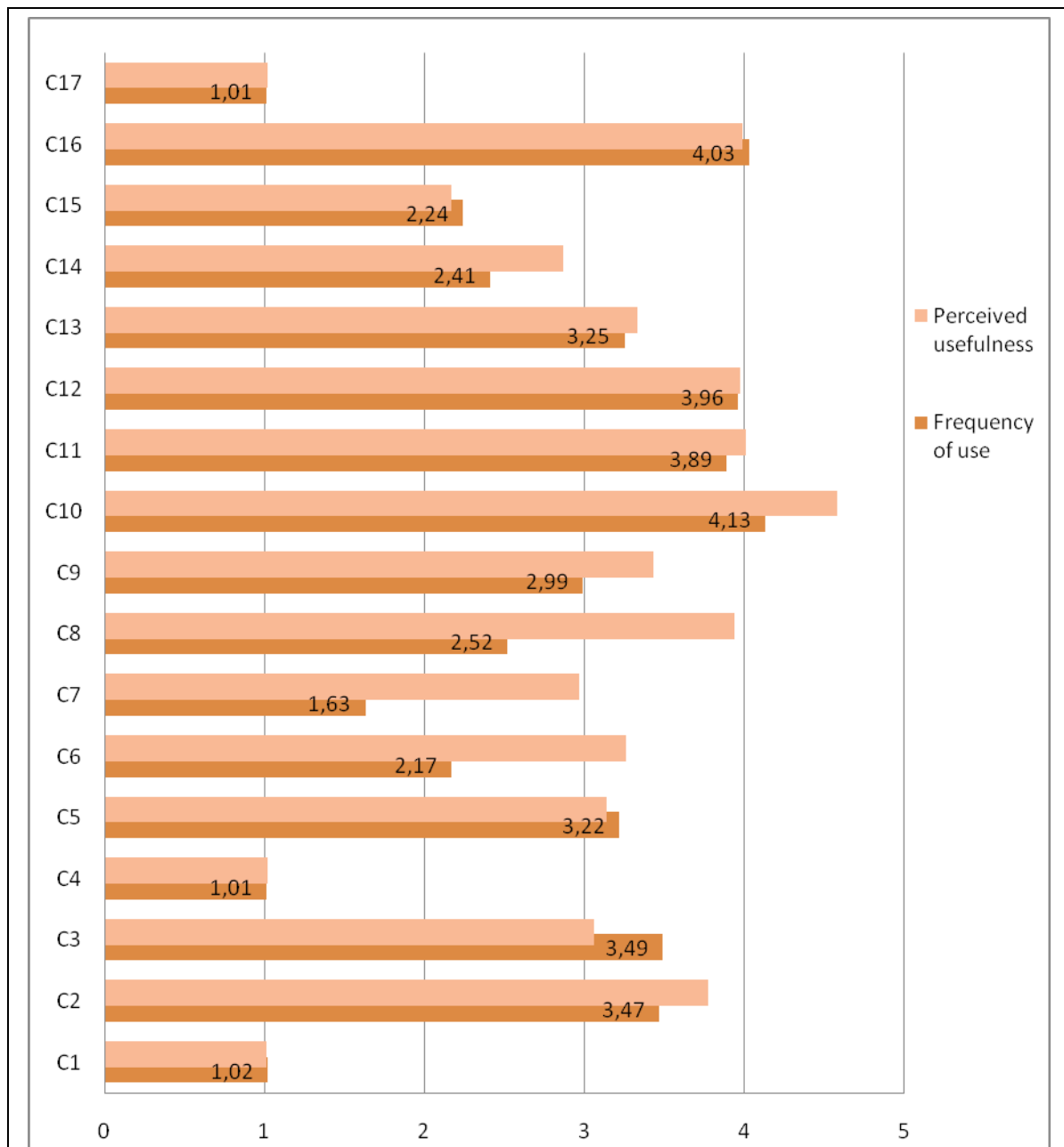


Figure 3.10: Memory Strategies Survey Results

It can be noticed from the above results that the students have mixed responses and attitudes towards the use of memory strategies. The strategies of drawing a picture of the word to help remember it (C1), remembering the words that follow or precede the new word (C4) and using physical action when learning a word (C17) received the lowest usefulness ratings in this category. These strategies are *never* used among students and are also perceived as *not useful*.

In contrast, the strategies of studying the spelling of a word (C10), its sound (C11), saying it aloud when it is first encountered (C12) and making own definition for it (C16) are relatively popular among students since they received the highest usefulness ratings. They are also perceived as *very useful*. The results of these strategies can be explained as follows. The strategy C10 is emphasized in every English lecture since it plays a crucial role for successful storing. The results of the strategies (C11) and (C12) are closely related to the module of phonetics. The latter is devoted to teach words' sounds and teachers see it as an important factor that foster students' vocabulary. The strategy (C16) helps students to store best the new words.

The strategies of making a mental image of the word's meaning (C2), connecting it to a personal experience (C3) and making a mental image of the word's form (C13) are *sometimes* used. In terms of usefulness, they are perceived as *quite useful*. These strategies are usually used by students who have the tendency to learn by heart. Besides, strategy C3 is stressed by teachers

in classes since they often try to link lectures to students' interests, hobbies and lives.

The results of connecting the word to other words with similar or opposite meanings (C5), remembering words in 'scales' (C6), grouping words together to study them (C7), using them in sentences (C8) or paragraphs (C9) are surprising. Ironically, while the strategy (C5) is *sometimes* used, the others are *seldom* used among students. Nonetheless, these strategies are perceived as *quite useful*. Although teachers often advise their students to retrieve and use the new words (C8, C9) that they have encounter while writing, students seem to neglect those strategies.

The final memory strategies - remembering the word using its parts (C14) or its form (C15) – are not popular among students. They are *seldom* used and students don't even know if these strategies are useful.

3.3.4 Cognitive strategies:

Although cognitive strategies are used slightly more than *sometimes* with a mean score of 3.5/0.86, they are regarded as *very useful* (4.13/0.72). In consolidation strategies group, the cognitive strategies are the most frequently used and perceived as the most useful.

	Frequency of use	Perceived usefulness
D1	Repeat the words aloud many times	3.64/1.29
D2	Write the words many times	3.28/0.88
D3	Make lists of new words	3.97/1.07

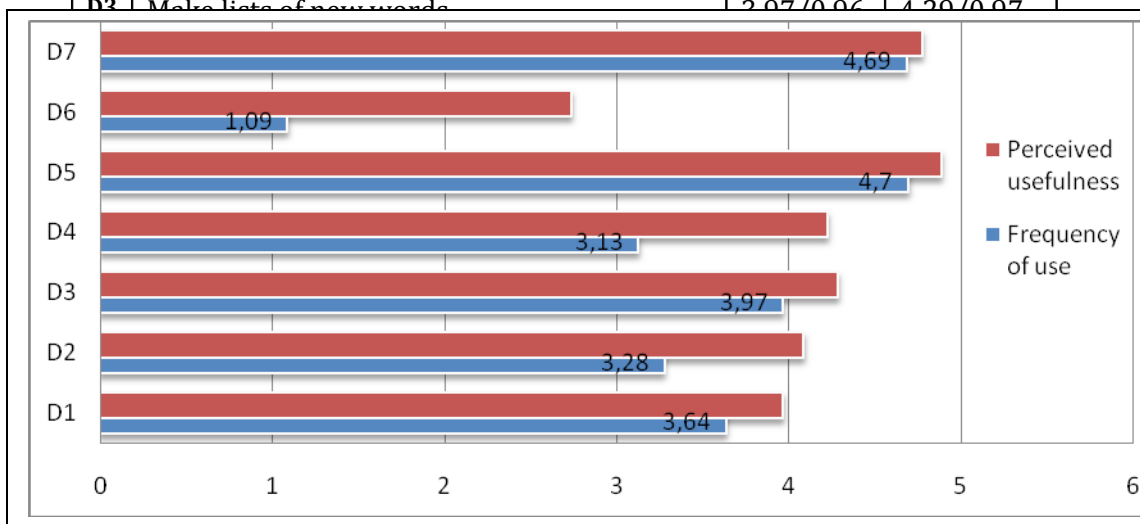


Figure 3.11: Cognitive Strategies Survey Results

Whereas the strategies of repeating words orally (D1) or through writing (D2) are *sometimes* used, they are regarded as *very useful*. The students have the tendency to use these strategies since teachers place a high value on correct pronunciation and spelling. The strategies of making lists of new words (D3) and using flash cards to record them (D4) are also *sometimes* used. Besides, they are perceived as *very useful* too. These two strategies help students in studying words in group and make it even easier.

The strategies of taking notes or highlighting new words in class (D5) and keeping a vocabulary notebook (D7) received the highest usefulness ratings in this category. These strategies are *very often* used and they are regarded as *extremely useful*. Teachers and students agree on the fact that these strategies are worthwhile.

However, the results dropped marginally when it comes to the use of putting English labels on physical objects (D6). This strategy obtained the lowest usefulness rating in this category. It is predicted that students misunderstood the use of this strategy and did not even comprehend what was meant by it.

3.3.5 Metacognitive strategies:

With a mean score of 2.4/0.25, metacognitive strategies are the least frequently used category. Nonetheless, they are regarded as being among the most useful v

	Frequency of use	Perceived usefulness		
E1	Use English-language media	4.70/0.19	4.79/0.54	
E2	Test yourself with word tests	1.14/0.32	3.65/0.78	
E3	Study new words many times	1.36/0.24	3.94/0.69	

Table 3.7: Metacognitive Strategies Survey Results

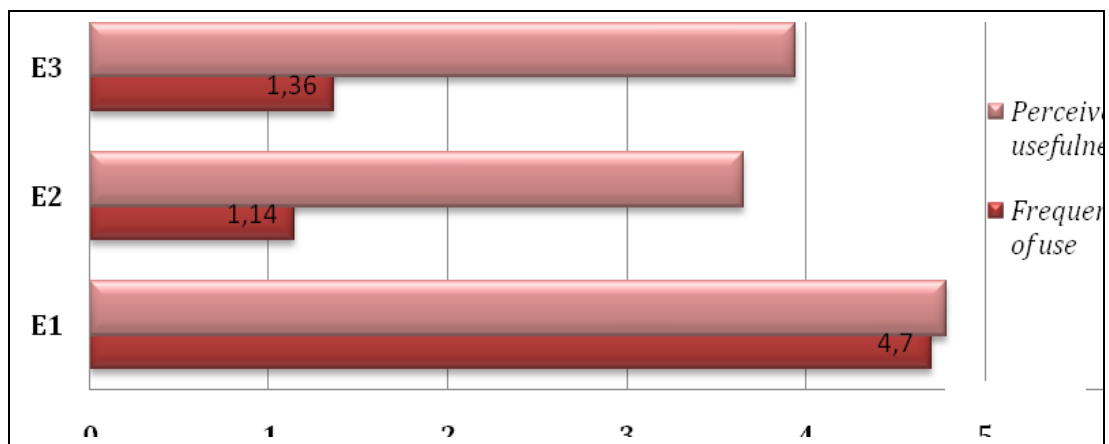


Figure 3.12: Metacognitive Strategies Survey Results

The metacognitive strategies results are quite disappointing, except for (E1). The strategy of using English language media received the highest frequency of use in this group. Besides being *very often* used, this strategy is perceived as being *extremely useful*. Nowadays, students are more open to English devices such as channels, radios. For instance, students are more likely to see English movies or listen to songs. In addition, teachers approve and emphasize the use of English resources.

In contrast, the two metacognitive strategies – testing yourself with words tests (E2) and studying new words many times (E3) - are much less frequently used. However, these strategies are perceived as being *very useful*.

3.4 The Examination Sheets Analysis:

In order to analyse students' productive vocabulary, examination sheets of two modules have been selected namely "*Origins of language*" and "*linguistics*". All the handouts that have been distributed during the course of these modules have also been collected to see whether the students are going to use this information identically in the examination responses.

As mentioned in chapter one, the modules have been selected since the students are asked to write essays or paragraphs while responding to the examination questions. However, it is important to mention that there are other

modules that follow the same procedure too. Nonetheless, the examination sheets of the modules used in this study were the only sheets available.

The two modules, to some extent, tackle the same topic which is human language. Both modules start their programme by introducing the subject of language origins (the divine source). However, the module of "*Origins of language*" primarily concerns the onset in prehistory of human language, whereas the module of "*linguistics*" studies human language scientifically.

In order to get a broader scale, the data gathered from both modules are used together in this research study. There is no distinction or comparison between the results of the two. The results obtained are classified first according to Sanaoui's (1995) and Clouston's (1996) approaches, then Schmitt's taxonomy (2000). While the former divides students in three categories, the latter looks at the strategies that those students used when retrieving the stored knowledge. Since the students are facing a productive skill, they are obviously going to use consolidating strategies.

According to what has been noticed when analyzing the examination sheets and relying on Clouston's study (1996), the majority of the students (49%) adapt the *semi-structured* approach. These students used *cognitive strategies* to retain and reproduce the words that they have learned. The students replicated what was given in the handouts but they slid new words too. However, the added words are not always in the appropriate place. This category of students also suffers from mother tongue interference. They tend to think in Arabic and write in English. Besides, the students tend to over generalize while writing and they seldom use connectors. Though students created opportunities for their own learning and reviewed words they were learning, they did not spent enough time on learning new vocabulary.

The following table stresses what is said above and gives the frequent sentences that have been used by the students:

<i>Approach</i> <i>h</i>	<i>A Sample of the Expressions Used</i>
---	--

<i>Semi-structured</i>	greatest mysterious, greater scientist, Above all and most important of all, speak well language, there is some statement from here and there, As it is well-known, arguments are not solid at all, Here the urge behind language study, many scientists tried to precise the origins of language, In other fact, people speak a singular language, the Bible also appeared this question, one kind of idea.
------------------------	---

Table 3.8: Expressions Used by Semi-structured Approach

The second category of students scored quite disappointing results since 38% of them fall into the *unstructured* approach. Those students seem to have used *cognitive strategies* to store information but have faced difficulties while generating it. They rely only on handouts and what was said in courses. Though students learned the lectures by heart, they could barely reproduce it correctly. It means that this category of students never spent hours on reviewing what they have learned and they did not even make efforts to learn new words. Besides, there is no coherence or cohesion between their paragraphs and sentences. Those students very often use words in their wrong place which makes understanding impossible. Their ideas are fuzzy and incomprehensible.

The following table gives a sample of the sentences that have been cited by students who belong to the unstructured approach:

<i>Approach</i>	<i>A Sample of the Expressions Used</i>
-----------------	---

<i>Unstructured</i>	<p>make emotion with them, the truth of original of language, human can imagine their future and remained their life past, still always, as a result we know that in fact, he haven't needing, imaginuity things, hypotheses where formulat as possible as answer, Because in addition to it, human have a highly still to think, make relate by others, he wants to progress his life,It is an old world of cheerful, this topic still always.</p>
---------------------	--

Table 3.9: Expressions Used by Unstructured Approach

The last category of students had the lowest percentage of 13%. Ironically, those students belong to the *structured* approach. The students used *metacognitive* and *memory strategies* in order to control and monitor best their studies. They have used their previous knowledge and also added several interesting words in an organized manner. They managed their paragraphs in a cohesive and coherent way by using appropriate links (thus, unlike, then, by contrast) and even metaphorical sentences. Besides answering correctly the examination questions, they also wrote short introductions and conclusions. One can easily understand their ideas and opinions.

<i>Approach</i>	<i>A Sample of the Expressions Used</i>
<i>Structured</i>	<p>fruitful result, language is a puzzle, we utter new words, we can deduce, they delimit, the divinity was involved, cover, hypotheses are plentiful, stresses, obvious, remove, conserving, supply, language is a continuum paradox, reconstruct, language allows human to speak about anything within realm of knowledge, substitute words, it is lost in the antiquity, the protolanguage, the source of language, it is dynamic.</p>

Table 3.10: Expressions Used by Structured Approach

The figure below summarizes the students' vocabulary level through the three approaches in percentages:

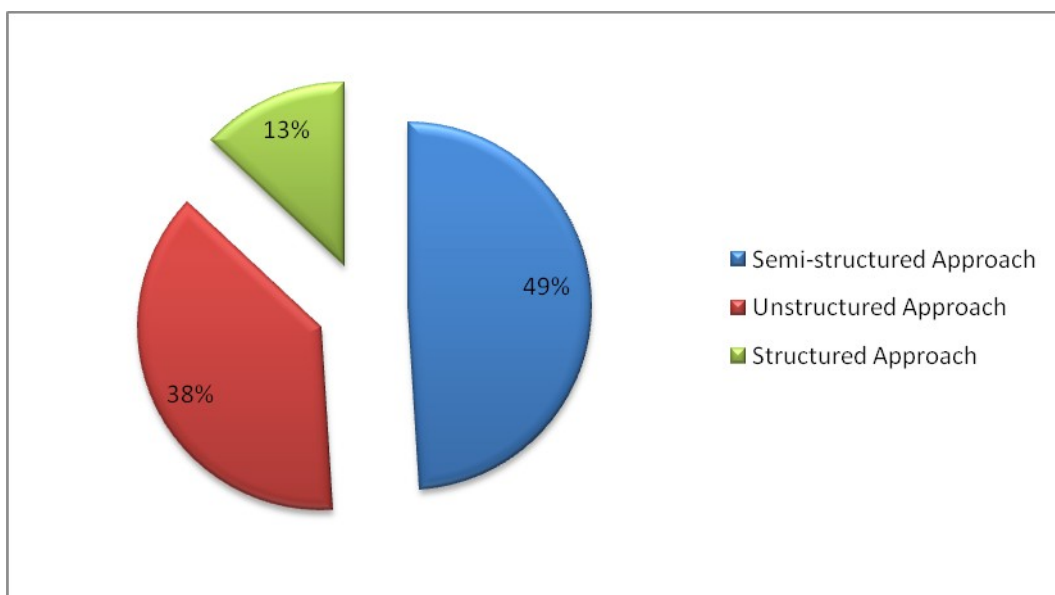


Figure 3.13: The Students' Vocabulary Approaches

3.5 Interpretation of the Results:

This section encompasses two main parts. The first part summarizes the results obtained above. It also discusses the most and least frequently used and useful vocabulary learning strategies, and the approaches that students adopt while learning vocabulary. The second part compares the results found to other previous researches (Ahmed 1989, Gu & Johnson 1996, Schmitt 1997, Fan 2003).

The first interpretation drawn from the results is that despite the fact that 84% of the students have chosen to study English, they still feel insecure and not at ease with that language. The students reported that their rare participation is mainly due to their lack of vocabulary and their unsafe feeling of making errors. The teachers' responses emphasize that the majority of the students' vocabulary level is weak.

However, it is important to mention that 90% of the students relate their English proficiency to their personal efforts. This response is not denied by teachers, since 67% of them have reported that they do not teach strategies that may help students to enlarge their vocabulary. Only 33% of teachers do teach strategies implicitly and this through context.

Since the students are the only persons responsible for their vocabulary learning process and have received no explicit instructions, they use various and random strategies while dealing with words. This likely matches what has been found when analysing the vocabulary learning strategies survey (Appendix n°4).

The students have the tendency to follow a mechanical process when encountering words for the first time. They try to determine the word's meaning on their own, first and only if they do not succeed they look for classmates' or teachers' help. This means that students no longer wait for the teachers' directions or instructions to decode or acquire new vocabulary items, since they find out other strategies that encourage and impulse their vocabulary learning process.

The most ardent used category of vocabulary learning strategies is **determination strategies**. It received the highest mean score of 4.14 in the discovery group. This category is also perceived as the most useful with a mean score of 4.20. In consolidation strategies group, **Cognitive strategies** category scored the highest mean score of 3.5. It is also regarded as the most useful (4.13). In contrast, the least used category is **metacognitive strategies** with the lowest mean score of 2.4. Nonetheless, it is considered by students as the third useful category (4.12). **Memory strategies** group, on the other hand, is regarded as the least useful with a mean score of 3.03. Appendix n°6 illustrates the most and least used categories. Appendix n°7 reports the most and least useful categories of vocabulary learning strategies.

The two most frequent vocabulary learning strategies that students use when encountering new words are **guessing from the context (A4)** and **use of Arabic/French-English dictionary (A5)** with the highest mean score of 4.81 and 4.78. These strategies fall under the *determination strategies* category which is seen as discovery strategies. The majority of students have the tendency to use both strategies to determine the new word meaning. The use of bilingual dictionary (A5) is also referred to as **translation** since the students have recourse to the mother tongue (Arabic) or to a more familiar language (French).

Guessing from the context strategy has scored the highest mean which is not surprising regarding the enormous number of words in the English language. Beside being very popular among students and intuitively used, the guessing strategy enhances reading skills and supplies them with hints too (Liu & Nation, 1985; Nation & Coady, 1988). This strategy is used by both beginners and advanced readers (Barnett, 1988). The former do not know much vocabulary and have to guess, whereas the latter know enough vocabulary to successfully apply the strategy to the unknown words. Interestingly, students even prefer using this strategy over dictionaries since it does not interrupt the

flow of their reading and shows better the function of words by being in context (Brown 1972).

Nevertheless, the use of bilingual dictionaries scored the second highest mean among the five categories. The students rush to use this strategy whenever guessing from context fails to decode the meaning of new words. The use of bilingual dictionaries is more utilitarian and much clearer than the monolingual ones since it provides a translation or explanation usually in their native language (Arabic), or a language they are familiar with (French). Besides being a matter of confidence, using bilingual dictionaries is a matter of preference too. The students tend to use bilingual dictionaries/translation simply because it does not slow their reading down by introducing a new content as monolingual dictionaries do. By using the bilingual dictionaries they can come back faster to the content that they are trying to understand.

However, it is important to mention that the above strategies (guessing from the context and use of bilingual dictionaries) are used to determine the new words' meaning. When it comes to remember and store new words, the students frequently use two other strategies: ***using English language media (E1)*** and ***taking notes or highlighting new words in class (D5)*** with an equal mean score of 4.70 but a different standard deviation. The former strategy belongs to the *metacognitive strategies* category whereas the latter falls under the *cognitive strategies* category. Both strategies are used for consolidating a word once it has been encountered.

The use of English language media proved to be often used to remember new words. The concept 'media' appeals to be both visual (talk shows, movies) and auditory (music, radio). It does not encompass television only, but internet, magazines, and even telephones. Language media are mainly used for communicative purposes. Beside being enlightening, entertaining, and educating, students corroborate this strategy since it links them directly to the world. Nevertheless, students are more likely to be addicted to songs. By this token, Median (2000) confirms that music positively affects language accents, memory, as well as grammar, mood, enjoyment, and motivation.

The note-taking strategy receives little emphasis and is seldom taught by teachers. Taking notes usually comes naturally and using it means that students were really paying attention to the course. The main purpose of taking notes is to help students study better and more quickly. Not only do their notes help

them recall facts and ideas that they may have forgotten, but the act of writing things down help them remember better too. While taking notes, students focus on two important points: *What is new* to them and *what is relevant*. To achieve these points, each student follows a series of steps. Highlighting new words is one of these steps. Students tend to highlight key words, important ideas and concepts.

In contrast, the least used vocabulary learning strategies are ***studying the word with classmates (B3)*** and ***asking the teacher to check their definition (B4)*** with a respective mean score of 2.64 and 2.65. These strategies which belong to *social strategies* are seldom used by students since the latter prefer counting on themselves first to decode the meaning of unknown words.

Nonetheless, the least used strategies to remember new words are ***remembering the words that follow or precede the new word (C4)*** and ***using physical action when learning it-*** like jumping up, acting out words, or making out songs - ***(C17)***. These two strategies which fall under *memory strategies* category received an equal mean score of 1.01. Interestingly, the strategy C17 is seen by Honig (n, d) as a great strategy that reinforces word memorization. Besides, pairing new words with physical movements creates a connection that the body will remember and also helps learners experience words rather than hear them.

Regarding the strategies perceived as useful, it turned out that students ardent advocate ***taking notes or highlighting new words in class (D5)*** strategy as being extremely helpful with a mean score of 4.89/0.54. While taking notes, students tend to use their own words and styles because it is easier for them to remember those words than the official text. Fowle's study (2002: 387) concludes that notebooks which are part of note taking proved to be an effective tool not only for aiding students' vocabulary learning but also for promoting the use of several other vocabulary learning strategies as well as learner independence.

Contrary to the above strategy, ***drawing a picture of the word to help remember (C1)*** is perceived by students as the least useful strategy with a mean score of 1.01. It belongs to *memory strategies* category. Interestingly, Turner (2008) perceives this strategy as one of the easiest, fastest, and most effective strategies. He claims that drawing pictures of words attracts the learner's brain attention since it catches and understands visual information

better and quickly. Appendix n° 7 classifies categories and strategies of vocabulary learning from the most to the least useful.

Concerning the approaches that students adopt while dealing with vocabulary learning, the majority of them are seen as *poor* learners and fall under the unstructured (38%) and semi-structured (49%) approach. Hence, only 13% are *good* students. They know how to manage their vocabulary learning, create opportunities of learning and spend extra hours practicing. These results are shown better in figure 3.13.

In comparison to some earlier studies, the present results are most in line with those findings. In terms of popular strategies, contextual guessing and bilingual dictionary use strategies were also shown by Gu and Johnson (1996), Schmitt (1997), and Fan (2003). In terms of usefulness strategies, the results proved to be different. Taking notes ranked first in this study, whereas guessing from context and use of dictionary were perceived as most useful in the previous mentioned researches. About the approaches results, Ahmed's finding (1989) indicates the opposite. In his research, the good learners outnumber the poor ones. However, both works share the same criteria of Sanaoui's classification (1995). The students who adopt the structured approach use more strategies and are more aware of how to learn new words than the ones who use the unstructured and semi-structured one.

3.6 Suggestions:

Since the process of vocabulary learning is the students' responsibility, they are faced with the necessity of taking such responsibility of their own learning process (Holec, 1981). Students have to become autonomous, since they are the only ones, by their own volition, to cause things to happen (Rathbone, 1971: 100). According to Benson (2001), the autonomous learner is the one that constructs knowledge from direct experience, rather than reacting to the teacher's instructions.

Nonetheless, learners who lack autonomy are capable of getting actively involved in their own learning through teacher's help (Dam, 2003: 135). Therefore, the teachers' role is not redundant in the language learning process. In other words, autonomous learning is by no means teacherless learning. As Sheerin (1997, cited in Benson & Voller, 1997: 63) argues, "...*teachers have a*

crucial role to play in launching learners into self-access and in lending them a regular helping hand to stay afloat”.

According to Candy (1991), learner autonomy involves a dynamic process learned partly through educational experiences and interventions. Thus, in order to help learners assume greater control over their own learning, it is important that teachers help them to become aware of and identify the strategies that they already use or could potentially use.

Learner autonomy can, then, be promoted through teachers' instructions on language/vocabulary learning strategies. As Thanasoulas (2000) explained, *“learner autonomy mainly consists in becoming aware of and identifying one's strategies, needs and goals as a learner and having the opportunity to reconsider and refashion approaches and procedures for optimal learning”*. The teacher's guidance can help students become aware of and familiar with thoughts, behaviours, mental steps or operations. This guidance assists learners to comprehend or retain new information and learn a new language. It can also encourage them to assume greater responsibility for their own language learning and help them assume control over their own learning process, which ultimately brings out their own autonomy.

The next sub-section provides some suggestions that teachers may use to foster learners' autonomy. Different pedagogical implications and activities are proposed to promote the language learning process in general, and vocabulary learning in particular. It emphasizes the teaching context study and the selection of the teaching materials, in order to meet teachers' objectives and learners' needs. It also stresses other recommendations such as using games and the internet in teaching vocabulary since it creates a relaxing and enjoyable atmosphere.

3.6.1 Study of the Teaching Context:

It is important for teachers to study their teaching context and pay attention to the students' behaviour. Observing students' behaviour and collecting extra information about them (goals, interests, learning styles, and motivations) could be helpful for teachers. By listening to the learners' needs and goals, teachers may deduce what students adapt to approach vocabulary, which will eventually aid them better deal with students' weaknesses.

By studying the teaching context, teachers will be more able to choose the appropriate teaching materials that will suit their learners' needs. For instance, teachers may select texts and activities according to students' levels and interests since they are already familiar with their needs.

3.6.2 Selection of the Teaching Materials:

In general, the selected material has to meet both the teachers' objective and the learners' needs. The right choice of vocabulary that can be used effectively in learning has to be included. When selecting teaching materials, learners have to be the center of instruction and learning. As Little asserts, "*Only learners can know what materials – from whatever source – are genuinely relevant to them*" (1991: 49). Teachers have to follow the curriculum and manage materials. The latter include textbooks, video and audiotapes recorders, computer, slides, visual aids, magazines, and so forth.

According to Tomlinson, didactic materials are "*anything that can be used to facilitate the learning of a language*" (2001: 66). He has also outlined different criteria for classifying didactic materials. The latter have to be instructional in order to inform learners about the language, experiential to provide exposure to the language in use, elicitor to stimulate language use, and exploratory to seek discoveries about language use. Hence, materials become the center of instruction, since both teachers and learners rely on them. Though many teachers do not have enough time to provide extra materials, these latter still crucial in language instruction.

3.6.3 Focus on Learner-Centred Approach:

In order to bring some change to the traditional approach and contribute best to the learning process, learner-centred approach has to be privileged. Nunan describes learner-centred approach as, "*a matter of educating learners so they can gradually assume responsibility for their own learning*" (1999: 12). However, most teachers are mainly concerned with performing their task and tend to forget that it is not teaching that should be focused on since it is not the final objective of the foreign language. It is rather the successful achievement of learners that is and should be the major concern (Lewis and Hill 1985).

Besides, it is very important that learners play an active role in their learning process. They are more likely to enjoy their language class and thus become more motivated for learning the target language if they are given the chance to choose their lectures. Hence, learners will no longer see the teacher as

a spoon-feeder, but they will be more involved in their own learning and become more autonomous.

3.6.4 Dictionary Use:

As it has been noticed through observation, EFL learners have a constant incompetent recourse to dictionaries. Indeed, many students have the tendency to overuse dictionaries for comprehension purposes. Therefore, training them to use dictionaries properly is essential since it will help them understand the structure, abbreviations, the given information and how to find expressions. It is not sufficient to recommend a dictionary without training students how to use it. Thus, teachers need to train students in using dictionaries accurately. As Thornbury asserts,

Training learners in effective dictionary use is particularly important since many learners may not be familiar with dictionaries conventions, even in their own language. Such training also provides them with the means to continue vocabulary acquisition long after their course of formal study has been completed.

(Thornbury, 2002:

151)

Thornbury (op. cit.) also proposes activities for training students in dictionary use, such as the following one:

Activity: In terms of pronunciation, which is the odd one out in each group?

A-incise

B-concise

C-precise

A-death

B-breath

C-sheath

A-rude

B-feud

C-lewd

Besides, Harmer (1983:172) put forward a figure to illustrate the information given by a dictionary while checking the meaning of a word.

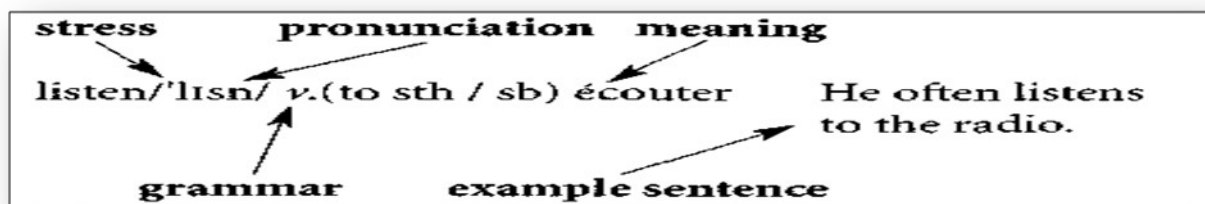


Figure 3.14: Dictionary Information

Harmer (op. cit. *ibid*) also emphasizes that students need to discover the meaning of the various abbreviations and definitions. He suggests the following activity to show that dictionaries contain a variety of useful information.

Activity: Look at the following dictionary entries and answer the questions:

swol·len¹ /'swɒlən|'swou-/ the past participle of **SWELL**
swollen² *adj* 1 a part of your body that is swollen is bigger than usual because of illness or injury: *He bandaged his swollen ankle.* 2 a river that is swollen has more water in it than usual 3 **have a swollen head/ be swollen-headed** *BrE* to be too proud so that you think you are very clever or important

- a. What parts of speech can *swollen* be? How do you know?
- b. How is *swollen* pronounced? How do you know?
- c. How many meanings of *swollen* are given? How do you know?
- d. What examples of *swollen* are given? How do you know?
- e. Are any of the uses of *swollen* particular to any special national or regional language variety? How do you know?

3.6.5 Group Work:

The use of group work is a very motivating activity that fosters learner's autonomy and independence. Students will rely more on themselves and will learn to cooperate with their peers. It dramatically increases the amount of talking for individual students. It also creates a relaxing atmosphere and encourages students to interact more freely, especially the shyest ones.

Brumfit states,

Small groups provide greater intensity of involvement, so that the quality of language practice is increased and the opportunities for feedback and monitoring also given adequate guidance and preparation by the teacher. The setting is more natural than that of the full class, for the size of the group resembles that of normal conversational grouping

(Brumfit, 1984:
77)

However, group work is not an easy task to plan. Careful preparation is necessary in order to be effective. Group work can easily turn to a noisy place and be chaotic if the teachers do not pay attention to students' behaviour or lose control. Nevertheless, not all students enjoy group works, because sometimes

they find themselves in uncongenial groups. Therefore, Harmer (1983:118) suggests three factors to be taken into consideration when deciding to put students in groups.

The Task:

Deciding when to group students depends firstly upon the task given. For instance, if the teacher wants to give students a few minutes to think about a task then write sentences that demonstrate their understanding, it will be preferable to let them do it individually. Otherwise, if teachers intend to conduct a dialogue or a role-play; they will probably put students in group, so that they all have a chance to make a contribution.

Variety in a Sequence:

It has to do with the particular manner that teachers constantly follow while conducting their activity, whether in students group or not. Teachers may break the routine by using variety in activities. For instance, if the teacher has the tendency to involve the whole class in a given task, it would be preferable to give them some breathing space to work individually or divide them into groups. Hence, variety in sequence will raise students' motivation and enthusiasm.

The Mood:

The use of students' mood while grouping them is crucial. Deciding to change students' grouping may affect their mood. On the one hand, if the students become edgy or bored due to a given activity, the teacher may group them in order to re-connect with the lecture. On the other hand, if grouping students becomes chaotic, the teacher may rearrange the class back into a plenary session and re-explain the task.

3.6.6 Games Use:

In order to create a pleasant atmosphere which encourages vocabulary expansion, teachers may adapt vocabulary games as resource materials that suit their own classroom situations needs. Vocabulary games break routine and

motivate students by keeping them interested in the task. It even pushes shy students to participate. In order to avoid boredom in classroom, EFL teachers simply need to introduce alternative activities such as games (Lewis and Hill, 1985). If students are asked to perform the same tasks many times, they will undoubtedly end up disliking their class and consequently neglecting the TL itself.

However, teachers should keep in mind that games are only supplementary activities and they should not base their syllabus on that. It is also important to set from the beginning the aim wanted to be achieved and giving clear instructions to students. Games are not just activities that bring fun in classroom, but they are very helpful if used in a proper way. By using games, teacher should combine between what is useful and enjoyable.

3.6.7 Use of Computers and the Internet:

The use of computers and the Internet in education generally, and in teaching English particularly is increasing at an extraordinary speed. Used in the right way, the Internet can be very beneficial. Windeatt, Hardisty and Eastment assert that it is, *"a tool which has great potential in the language classroom, but its effectiveness in practice depends to a large extent on the way it is exploited by teachers and students"* (2000: 08). The Internet can also make language learning and teaching very effective by offering a wealth of information and unlimited resources.

According to Harmer (1983:145), the main uses of computers and the Internet in language teaching include the following:

Reference:

Computers are seen as a reference tool, whether through the Internet or on CD/DVD-ROMS. Several encyclopedias are already available such as Encarta, Hutchinson and even teaching and testing programs. One of the main advantages of computers is that users can easily access to any information about any subject without moving from their place. Besides, many programs offer excellent visuals and sound support which make the material very interesting. Consequently, more people are becoming computer-literate (Redman 1999: 156).

E-mail Exchange:

One of the most popular uses of the internet is sending and receiving e-mails. Exchanging e-mail brings people together and allows interaction all over

the world. It interestingly increases students' English development and motivation. However, it should be noted that e-mails are often written in an informal style. There is less attention to grammatical correctness and spelling. Though e-mail may promote communication, it may not enhance accuracy.

Web Sites:

They constitute a large part of the internet. Web sites are documents that allow students access to diverse information such as virtual libraries, encyclopedias, dictionaries, chat-rooms. There are audio and visual sites too, where music, films, books and articles can be easily downloaded. Web sites also help students learn doing things by themselves, through developing thinking skills and choosing what to explore.

To sum up technology benefits, it can be said that computers and the Internet are an extraordinary resource which has changed the face of information. It also raises students' motivation by being fashionable and it can be noticed through students' numerous hours surfing on it (Crabbe, 1993). Teachers should encourage learners to use it in an appropriate way and this by recommending specific web sites for instance.

Conclusion:

Chapter three has analysed in details the data that have been gathered from the research tools and has drawn insightful interpretations, too. It has examined the different categories and strategies of vocabulary learning that EFL LMD students use and perceive useful. It also drew out the approaches that students adopt while learning vocabulary. The conclusion that has been deduced is that only few students know how to manage their vocabulary. The more students use strategies, the more their chance to learn vocabulary is great and the less they use strategies, the less they acquire vocabulary. On the light of these results, some pedagogical implications have been outlined in the end of this chapter that may raise student's awareness towards vocabulary learning.

The pedagogical implications started by introducing the importance of focusing on learner-centred approach and selecting the teaching/learning materials. Then, benefits of training students in using dictionaries and advantages of group work have been raised. Different activities with illustration to be implemented in EFL classroom that could help both teachers and learners have also been discussed. Games use value and the importance of computers

and the Internet while learning new vocabulary have been tackled at the end of this section.

General

Conclusi

on

The present case study illustrates, to a certain extent, facts about the use and usefulness of the vocabulary learning process by EFL LMD students. It also outlines the way learners approach their vocabulary learning. Hence, this research has raised two important issues. First, the most/least used and useful vocabulary learning strategies/categories. Second, the way vocabulary is approached by EFL university learners. Not only has this research promoted students' awareness toward the existence of several vocabulary learning strategies, it has encouraged them to try and use some of the listed strategies, too. Besides, it has provided a better understanding of the acquisition procedure which can be used as a guideline for introducing vocabulary teaching techniques.

According to the results obtained, the first hypothesis has been partially validated. It has been found that *determination strategies* are the most used category (use of bilingual dictionary) with a mean score of 4.14/0.8. However, the least used strategy (use of physical actions) belongs to the *memory category* (2.73/0.59) and not the social category. The second hypothesis results, on the contrary, were the opposite of what have been expected. The most useful strategies (taking notes and highlighting new words) which fall under the *cognitive category* received the highest usefulness rating (4.89/0.25), whereas the most useful category is *determination strategies* (4.20/0.99). Meanwhile, *memory strategies* are perceived as the least useful category (3.03/0.57). Concerning the third hypothesis, it has not been validated either, since the majority of students (49%) adopt the *semi-structured* approach and not the structured one. It can be deduced that vocabulary learning is perceived as a complex process. It pushes students to use numerous strategies to discover the meanings of the new words once encountered or to consolidate them. It also demonstrates that though students perceive vocabulary learning strategies as very useful, they do not resort to the strategies that often.

However, it should be born in mind that a strategy which works well for

one student may completely fail with another. The above results could be justified by the teachers' seldom instructional time spent on explaining and defining vocabulary items. Despite the importance of enhancing students' communicative competence of the target language, little effort is made on teaching vocabulary learning strategies.

Therefore, the pedagogical implication that could be derived from this research is the importance of exposing students to the vocabulary learning strategies varieties. As Schmitt and Sökmen (1997) suggest, vocabulary learning strategies instruction may play an important part of any course. It prepares learners to deal with and learn words that might be encountered and deal with when necessary. Embedding explicit vocabulary strategy instruction into regular courses would not only raise students' autonomy, but also make them more aware of the language/vocabulary learning resources available to them (Wenden 1991, Cohen 1998).

Nonetheless, the present study has got some limitations. It is mainly about understanding one aspect of language learning area which is vocabulary learning. It only focuses on exploiting vocabulary learning strategies. It is limited in identifying the vocabulary learning strategies used and seen useful by EFL LMD university learners. For instance, students' survey responses are quite fuzzy. The participants might have thought about different context (home or classroom) while responding. Interpretations could significantly change if the context had been specified. Besides, learners' answers cannot be affirmed whether they actually use the strategies or it might only be their beliefs. It would have been better then, if the context had been identified. Other instruments, such as interviews, could have also provided more insight on what learners truly do.

Despite these limitations, the results found concord with previous research. It is suggested though, to investigate other studies and take into consideration qualitative data collection. This field poses questions for further language/vocabulary learning strategies investigations, such as:

1. Would different interpretations have been obtained if multiple data collection has been used (enlarge the proportion diachronically or synchronically)?

2. Would the results change if the students were already aware of the existence of vocabulary learning strategies?
3. Does gender or learning styles affect the choice of vocabulary learning strategies use?

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Glossa

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Approach: An approach to language teaching has to do with the different theories about the nature of language and how languages are learned (like the communicative approach).

Coherence: The way a text makes sense to readers through its organized content, the relevance and clarity of its concepts and ideas. It is also the relationships which link the meanings of utterances in a discourse or of the sentences in a text. These links may be based on the speakers' shared knowledge (Richards et al, 1998).

Cohesion: The various linguistic means (grammatical, lexical, phonological) by which sentences linked together to form larger units of paragraphs, or texts.

Authentic Materials: The use of materials that were not originally developed for pedagogical purposes, such as magazines, newspapers, or songs. These materials are often thought to contain more realistic and natural examples of language use than those found in textbooks.

Cognate: A word in one language which is similar in form and meaning to a word in another language because both languages are related historically. For example English *brother* and German *Bruder*.

Competency Based Approach: An approach to teaching that focuses on teaching the skills and behaviours needed to perform competencies. The latter refers to the student's ability to apply different kinds of basic skills in situations that are commonly encountered in everyday life. Competency Based Approach is based on a set of outcomes that are derived from an analysis of tasks learners are typically required to perform in real-life situations.

Context: It occurs before and/or after a word or phrase. The context often helps in understanding the particular meaning of the word, phrase. The context may also be the broader social situation in which a linguistic item is used.

Decoding: It is the process of trying to understand the meaning of a word, phrase, or sentence. When decoding a speech utterance, the listener must hold the utterance in short term memory, analyze it into segments and identify the underlying propositions and illocutionary meaning.

Foreign Language: It is usually learned with specific goals in mind and typically taught as school subjects for communicative purposes. Someone who learns a language in a formal classroom setting, with limited or no opportunities for use outside the classroom, in a country in which that language does not play an important role in internal communication (not used as a medium of communication in government or in media) is said to be learning a foreign language.

Group Work: A learning activity which involves a small group of learners working together. The group may work on a single task, or on different parts of a larger task.

Interlanguage: The type of language produced by second/foreign language learners who are in the process of learning a language. The language used differs both from the mother tongue and the target language (borrowing patterns from the mother tongue, extending patterns from the target language... etc).

Language Acquisition: It is a process that learner uses to pick up any component of a language in a natural setting. Acquisition usually refers to learner's subconscious, unconscious, spontaneous intuitive processes used to

obtain a target language in a natural way, like a child's process in gaining a first language.

Language Learning: The learning and development of a person's language. It refers to the learning of a second or foreign language. It involves a conscious process of studying explicit rules of language and monitoring, guiding one's performance.

Learner Autonomy: Also known as *self-directed learning*, refers to the learner's ability to take responsibility for his/her own learning, the competence to use strategies to accomplish a variety of learning tasks, and the flexibility to transfer strategies to novel learning tasks. Learners should be able to assume a maximum amount of responsibility for what they learn and how they learn it.

Method: A way of teaching a language which is based on systematic principles and procedures, i.e. how a language is best taught and learned (such as the direct method, the audiolingual method).

Motivation: It is the driving force in any situation that leads to action. In the field of language learning, motivation refers to a combination of the learner's attitudes, desires, and willingness to expend effort in order to learn a target language.

Reading Skills: Abilities required for skilful reading, such as discerning main ideas, understanding sequence, noticing specific details, making inferences, making comparisons and predictions.

Second Language (L₂): It is an official sanctioned language spoken by an identifiable population in a given country or state. Someone who learns a language in a setting in which that language is necessary for everyday life is called to be learning a second language. Second language also refers to the language learned after learning the mother tongue.

Target Language: The language which a person is learning, in contrast to a first language or mother tongue (learned in infancy).

Technique: In language teaching, a technique refers to the different kinds of classroom activities used in particular methods (such as a role play).

Appendic

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APPENDIX N°1

Students' Questionnaire

Dear student,

Would you please answer the following questions and put a tick (x) in the appropriate box.

1. How long have you been studying English? _____

2. Why do you study English?

- a- Have been directed to
- b- For personal reasons
- c- For occupational reasons

3. How do you rate your English proficiency?

- a- Able to speak
- b- Able to write
- c- Able to read and understand
- d- Able to listen and understand

4. This level of knowledge is due to your:

- a- Personal efforts
- b- Teacher's way of teaching

5. How important do you think vocabulary learning is in learning English?

- a- Important b- Extremely important

6. How often do you take part in the classroom discussion?

- a- Never b - Sometimes c- Always

7. Your above answer is determined by:

- a- Lack of vocabulary
- b- Ashamed to make errors and be laughed at
- c- Uninterested

8. Through which of the following skills do you prefer to learn vocabulary?

- a- Listening b- Speaking
- c- Reading d- Writing

Thank you for your precious time and co-operation

APPENDIX N°2

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

The aim of this questionnaire is to find out your attitude towards teaching vocabulary in your classes and approaches that you use. Your cooperation will be genuinely appreciated. The information collected will serve

this particular research only and will remain confidential. Please feel free to share your opinions and experience.

1. How long have you been teaching English? _____

2. Which modules are you in charge of?

-

-

3. How do you find student's vocabulary level?

a- Good

b- Average

c- Weak

4. Do you teach strategies that help your students enlarge their vocabulary repertoire?

Yes

No

....

5. If you teach your students vocabulary learning strategies:

a- What material do you use?

b- What is your objective?

c- How do students react?

6. According to you, which of the following vocabulary learning strategies are the most useful? Please, rank them from the most useful to the least useful.

- Translation

- Use of monolingual dictionaries

- Use of bilingual dictionaries

- Reading and guessing from the context

- Asking others

- Note taking

If there are others, please state them

7. What kind of activities do you find the most efficient to teach vocabulary?

APPENDIX N°3: Vocabulary Levels Test

This is a vocabulary test. You must choose the right word to go with each meaning. Write the number of that word next to its meaning. Here is an example.

1 business

2 clock _____ part of a house

3 horse _____ animal with four legs

4 pencil _____ something used for writing
5 shoe
6 walls

You answer it in the following way.

1 business
2 clock _____ 6 part of a house
3 horse _____ 3 animal with four legs
4 pencil _____ 4 something used for writing
5 shoe
6 walls

The 2,000 word level

1 birth
2 dust _____ game (A)
3 operation _____ winning (B)
4 row _____ being born (C)
5 sport
6 victory

1 choice
2 crop _____ heat (D)
3 flesh _____ meat (E)
4 salary _____ money paid regularly for doing a job (F)
5 secret
6 temperature

1 cap
2 education _____ teaching and learning (G)
3 journey _____ numbers to measure with (H)
4 parent _____ going to a far place (I)
5 scale
6 trick

1 attack
2 charm _____ gold and silver (J)
3 lack _____ pleasing quality (K)
4 pen _____ not having something (L)
5 shadow
6 treasure

1 cream
2 factory _____ part of milk (M)
3 nail _____ a lot of money (N)
4 pupil _____ person who is studying (O)
5 sacrifice
6 wealth

The 3,000-word level

1 belt
2 climate _____ idea (a)
3 executive _____ inner surface of your hand (b)
4 notion _____ strip of leather worn around the waist (c)
5 palm
6 victim

1 acid
2 bishop _____ cold feeling (d)
3 chill _____ animal (e)
4 ox _____ organization or framework (f)
5 ridge
6 structure

1 bench
2 charity _____ long seat (g)
3 jar _____ help to the poor (h)
4 mate _____ part of a country (i)
5 mirror
6 province

1 boot
2 device _____ army officer (j)
3 ridge _____ a kind of stone (k)
4 marble _____ tube through which blood flows (l)
5 phrase
6 vein

1 apartment
2 candle _____ a place to live (m)
3 draft _____ chance of something happening (n)
4 horror _____ first rough form of something written (o)
5 prospect
6 timber

APPENDIX N°4:

Vocabulary Learning Strategies Survey

When I **find** a new English word that I don't know, I...

		I do this...					I think this is...				
		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very often	Not useful	Not sure it is useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Extremely useful
A1	Check the new word's form (verb, noun etc.)										
A2	Look for any word parts that I know (impossible , colorful).										
A3	Use any pictures or gestures to help me guess.										
A4	Guess from the context.										
A5	Use an Arabic/French-English dictionary.										
A6	Use an English-English dictionary.										
B1	Ask the teacher to give you the definition or a sentence.										
B2	Ask your classmates for the meaning										

When I want to **remember** new words and build my vocabulary, I...

		I do this...					I think this is...				
		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very often	Not useful	Not sure it is useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Extremely useful
B3	Study the word with your classmates										
B4	Ask the teacher to check your definition										
B5	Talk with native speakers										
C1	Draw a picture of the word to help remember it										
C2	Make a mental image of the word's meaning										
C3	Connect the word to a personal experience										
C4	Remember the words that follow or precede the new word										
C5	Connect the word to other words with similar or opposite meanings										
C6	Remember words in 'scales' (always-often-sometimes-never)										
C7	Group words together to study them										
C8	Use new words in sentences										
C9	Write paragraphs using several new words										
C10	Study the spelling of a word										
C11	Study the sound of a word										
C12	Say the new words aloud when you first meet them										

C13	Make a mental image of the word's form										
C14	Remember the word using its parts (im-, un-, -able, -ful, -ment, ex-)										
		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very often	Not useful	Not sure it is useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Extremely useful
C15	Remember the word using its word form (verb, noun, adjective)										
C16	Make your own definition for the word										
C17	Use physical action when learning a word										
D1	Repeat the words aloud many times										
D2	Write the words many times										
D3	Make lists of new words										
D4	Use flash cards to record new words										
D5	Take notes or highlight new words in class										
D6	Put English labels on physical objects										
D7	Keep a vocabulary notebook										
E1	Use English-language media (songs, movies, the internet)										
E2	Test yourself with word tests										
E3	Study new words many times										

Adapted from P.Bennette work (2006)

APPENDIX N°6:

<i>Categories of Vocabulary Learning Strategies</i>	<i>Frequency of Use</i>
Determination Strategies	4.14/0.8
Cognitive Strategies	3.5/0.86
Social Strategies	3.14/0.83
Memory Strategies	2.73/0.59
Metacognitive Strategies	2.4/0.25

The Most/Least Used Categories and Strategies of Vocabulary Learning

The most and least used categories of vocabulary learning strategies:

The most and least used vocabulary learning strategies:

APPENDIX N°7:

The Most/Least Useful Categories and Strategies of Vocabulary Learning

<i>Categories of Vocabulary Learning Strategies</i>	<i>Perceived Usefulness</i>
Determination Strategies	4.20/0.99
Cognitive Strategies	4.13/0.72
Metacognitive Strategies	4.12/0.67
Social Strategies	3.69/0.95
Memory Strategies	3.03/0.57

The most and least useful categories of vocabulary learning strategies:

	<i>Vocabulary Learning Strategies</i>	<i>Frequency of Use</i>
A4	Guess from the context.	4.81/0.3
A5	Use an Arabic/French-English dictionary.	4.78/0.44
E1	Use English-language media (songs, movies, the internet).	4.70/0.19
D5	Take notes or highlight new words in class.	4.70/0.67
D7	Keep a vocabulary notebook.	4.69/0.43
C10	Study the spelling of a word.	4.13/0.16
A2	Look for any word parts that I know (impossible, colorful).	4.06/0.97
C16	Make your own definition for the word.	4.03/0.96
D3	Make lists of new words.	3.97/0.96
C12	Say the new words aloud when you first meet them.	3.96/1.01
A3	Use any pictures or gestures to help me guess.	3.95/0.91
C11	Study the sound of a word.	3.89/0.86
A6	Use an English-English dictionary.	3.87/1.02
B2	Ask your classmates for the meaning.	3.76/0.92
B4	Ask the teacher to check your definition.	2.65/0.86
D1	Repeat the words aloud many times.	3.64/1.29
B1	Ask the teacher to give you the definition or a sentence.	3.63/0.11
C3	Connect the word to a personal experience.	3.49/1.32
C2	Make a mental image of the word's meaning.	3.47/0.94
A1	Check the new word's form (verb, noun etc.).	3.42/1.16
D2	Write the words many times.	3.28/0.88
C13	Make a mental image of the word's form.	3.25/0.84
C5	Connect the word to other words with similar or opposite meanings	3.22/1.13
D4	Use flash cards to record new words.	3.13/1.11
B5	Talk with native speakers.	3.03/1.4
C9	Write paragraphs using several new words.	2.99/0.97
B3	Study the word with your classmates.	2.64/0.9
C8	Use new words in sentences.	2.52/0.57
C14	Remember the word using its parts (im-, un-, -able, -ful, -ment, ex-).	2.41/0.93
C15	Remember the word using its word form (verb, noun, adjective).	2.24/0.24
C6	Remember words in 'scales' (always-often-sometimes-never).	2.17/0.58
C7	Group words together to study them.	1.63/0.44
E3	Study new words many times.	1.36/0.24
E2	Test yourself with word tests.	1.14/0.32
D6	Put English labels on physical objects.	1.09/0.74
C1	Draw a picture of the word to help remember it.	1.02/0.01
C17	Use physical action when learning a word.	1.01/0.03
C4	Remember the words that follow or precede the new word.	1.01/0.02

The most and least useful vocabulary learning strategies:

	<i>Vocabulary Learning Strategies</i>	<i>Perceived Usefulness</i>
D5	Take notes or highlight new words in class.	4.89/0.25
E1	Use English-language media (songs, movies, the internet).	4.79/0.54
D7	Keep a vocabulary notebook.	4.78/0.34
A6	Use an English-English dictionary.	4.67/1.04
A1	Check the new word's form (verb, noun etc.).	4.59/1.31
C10	Study the spelling of a word.	4.58/0.06
B5	Talk with native speakers.	4.43/1.01
A4	Guess from the context.	4.34/0.65
D3	Make lists of new words.	4.29/0.97
D4	Use flash cards to record new words.	4.23/0.73
B1	Ask the teacher to give you the definition or a sentence.	4.14/0.91
D2	Write the words many times.	4.09/1.02
C11	Study the sound of a word.	4.01/1.23
C16	Make your own definition for the word.	3.99/0.23
D1	Repeat the words aloud many times	3.97/0.96
C12	Say the new words aloud when you first meet them.	3.97/1.31
A2	Look for any word parts that I know (impossible, colorful).	3.96/0.94
C8	Use new words in sentences	3.94/0.67
E3	Study new words many times.	3.94/0.69
A5	Use an Arabic/French-English dictionary.	3.92/1.02
C2	Make a mental image of the word's meaning.	3.77/1.06
A3	Use any pictures or gestures to help me guess.	3.76/1.01
E2	Test yourself with word tests.	3.65/0.78
B2	Ask your classmates for the meaning.	3.62/0.97
C9	Write paragraphs using several new words.	3.43/0.28
C13	Make a mental image of the word's form	3.33/0.92
B4	Ask the teacher to check your definition.	3.29/0.99
C6	Remember words in 'scales' (always-often-sometimes-never).	3.26/0.89
C5	Connect the word to other words with similar or opposite meanings	3.14/0.37
C3	Connect the word to a personal experience.	3.06/0.91
B3	Study the word with your classmates.	2.99/0.91
C7	Group words together to study them	2.97/0.73
C14	Remember the word using its parts (im-, un-, -able, -ful, -ment, ex-)	2.87/0.84
D6	Put English labels on physical objects	2.74/0.81
C15	Remember the word using its word form (verb, noun, adjective)	2.17/0.11
C17	Use physical action when learning a word	1.02/0.01
C4	Remember the words that follow or precede the new word.	1.02/0.03
C1	Draw a picture of the word to help remember it.	1.01/0.04