



Strategies Used in Teaching Vocabulary Skill

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Requirements
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_____ "*ALL MIGHTY ALLAH*" _____

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List of Abbreviations

EFL English as a Foreign Language

TL Target Language

L1 First Language

L2 Second Language

FL Foreign Language

Abstract

This study investigates the vocabulary teaching strategies adopted by six English teachers in (Talia Alnasr School) public school in Sidi Khalifa, Benghazi city. This study tries to answer two basic questions :What are the vocabulary teaching strategies used in Talia Alnasr School, public school? Do these strategies subsume the various methods of teaching vocabulary in modern literature?

Analysis and discussions are based on the data collected from interview, observation, and post-observation interview. The participants are six EFL teachers with different experiences. The data analysis is based on the constant comparison method to establish semantic themes or categories.

The findings show that the strategies used by the participants to teach vocabulary items are miming, book pictures, drawing, definition and the translation method. The participants report that they do not teach their students strategies to learn vocabulary outside of class, contrary to the norms posited in the literature for teaching vocabulary.

Chapter one

Background of the study

1.1 Introduction

Lexicon is one of the most essential components of language .It makes it very plausible to acquire the most frequently occurring words in communication. Thus, it is English as a Foreign language teachers' responsibility to make sure that learners are exposed to a good amount of vocabulary in class, using various teaching strategies in this area. However, many teachers in public schools seem not to pay much attention to vocabulary teaching in EFL classes because they think it is acquired implicitly through different activities in class. Regardless of focus on lesson, many teachers complain that most students do not understand lessons in their EFL classes. The researcher have noticed weakness at the school where he teaches, and has heard similar complaints from teachers at other public schools. It appears that many English language teachers in public schools do not provide their students with the main communicating tool, i.e. vocabulary. As a EFL teacher, the researcher noticed that many students do not understand simple sentences constructed of high frequency words, nonetheless, some of the them have been learning English for several years. Therefore, the low level proficiency of EFL learners in public schools, may be partially attributed to methods of vocabulary instruction used. This explanation seems very plausible when we realize that previous studies indicate that a good vocabulary knowledge is needed to perform well in the language skills. This work primarily shed light on how vocabulary is treated at one public school as a sample for this pilot study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As an EFL teacher in Talia Alnasr School, The researcher has noticed that many of the students are unable to understand simple sentences which are constructed of high frequency words although some of the students have been learning the English language for several years. Therefore, it can be argued that the low level proficiency of EFL learners in public schools may be partially attributed to the methods of vocabulary instruction being used at these schools.

1.3 Aims of the Study

This study investigates whether or not EFL teachers in Talia Alnasr School are indeed aware of the significant role of vocabulary strategies in their classrooms. The other goal of the study is to compare the findings of this work to the effective vocabulary teaching strategies to teach vocabulary in EFL classroom.

1.4 Research questions

This study is conducted to answer the following questions:

- 1- What are the vocabulary teaching strategies used in Talia Alnasr School by six EFL teachers?
- 2- How far the strategies used in their classrooms relate to various methods of teaching vocabulary in modern literature?

1.5 Scope and limitation of the study

There are two main limitations to this study. First, this study is a case study of the EFL teachers at Talia Alnasr school. Second, the number of observations undertaken is limited to three observations for every participant.

1.6. Research methodology

A qualitative case study is used and data is collected through interview, observation, and post-observation interview. The participants are six EFL teachers with different experiences, teaching different levels. The study mainly depends on different resources like books, magazines and journals. This empirical research observes and interviews the participants (six teachers). The analysis of the collected data is based on the constant comparison method between what the EFL teachers say, what they use and what is observed in the class. The study is limited to the boundaries of one school, and it follows a case study approach.

This thesis consists of five chapters: Chapter 1 presents the background to the study aims as well as research questions.

Chapter 2 outlines the literature relevant to the study which in turn is divided into five main sections:

the first section defines word and vocabulary; the second section discusses the importance of learning vocabulary , the third section discusses the insufficiency of implicit vocabulary learning, the fourth section takes up the relation of vocabulary to other language skills and the fifth section presents the strategies of vocabulary instruction.

Chapter three deals with the methods adopted to conduct this study: classroom observation and interview.

Chapter four presents the analysis of the data.

Chapter five presents the findings of the study followed by some recommendations.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Many papers have been produced to address the different facets of vocabulary as the main component of a language. Some of these papers talk about the essential role that vocabulary takes in a communicative situation, and how it can impede comprehension when it is misunderstood. Others address and clarify the need to set well planned lessons to teach vocabulary throughout a language course. Yet there are other studies that tackle the effect of vocabulary on the different skills of a language and how learners' performance improve when they have a good vocabulary knowledge. In addition there are studies which deal with the various strategies that can be used to teach and learn vocabulary, and what characteristics an educator needs to choose a class strategy.

2.2 Defining Word and Vocabulary

All languages have words, a vocabulary or lexicon. A clear distinction between the terms *word* and *vocabulary* should be made. Some scholars (Bowen et al., 1985; Jackson and Amvela, 2000) indicate that 'word' may be easy to identify, but is hard to define. Trask (1995, pp. 46-51) points out that

there are the difficulties in the definition of the word because words do not have meanings in isolation, but they are related to the meanings of other words in ways that may be simple or complex.

Some scholars says words have meaning in isolation, but others say they do not have meaning alone. Hornby et al. (1984, p. 202), have viewed *word* and *vocabulary* in a comparative way, they say

Word is an uninterruptible unit of structure consisting of one or more morphemes and which typically occurs in the structure of phrases. The morphemes are the ultimate grammatical constituents, the minimal

meaningful units of language, while vocabulary (which is synonymous with 'lexis', or 'lexicon') is viewed as "a collection of words" or "a package of sub-sets of words that are used in particular contexts".

Richards et al. (1992) define the term *word* as

the smallest of the linguistic units which can occur on its own in speech or writing (p. 406), but *vocabulary*, as a set of lexemes which includes single words, compound words and idioms (p. 400).

Besides, *word* is defined as sound or combination of sounds forming a unit of the grammar or vocabulary of a language, whereas *vocabulary* as the total number of words which make up a language; and a range of words known to, or used by a person (Hornby et al., *ibid*). In addition, regarding the definition of word and vocabulary, "a word is a unit formed of sounds or letters that have a meaning" (Sheeler and Markley 2000, p.2), while vocabulary is defined as total number of words we know and are able to use (Nandy, 1994). Based on some scholars' view *word* is the smallest meaningful unit of language used for making phrases and sentences that usually represents an object, idea, action, etc. Vocabulary is seen as a set of lexemes - the study of vocabulary items - which includes single words, compound words and idioms. In other words, a word is a form which can occur in isolation and have meaning, or a sound or combination of sounds forming a unit of the grammar or vocabulary of a language, and so act as 'a part of vocabulary' in a language. Therefore, vocabulary consists of more than just single words (Richards, 2000). and more than this, vocabulary concerns not only simple words in all their aspects, but also complex and compound words, as well as the meaningful units of language (Jackson and Amvela, *ibid*, pp. 1-2).

2.3 The Importance of Learning Vocabulary

The importance of vocabulary has been acknowledged by many scholars. Fan (2003) clarifies this by quoting Michael McCarthy's words in an interview for *Cambridge Connection* ("interview," 2001):

Vocabulary forms the biggest part of the meaning of any language, and vocabulary is the biggest problems for most learners. So I've always

been interested in ways of helping learners in building up a big vocabulary as fast and as efficiently as possible. (p. 222)

McCarthy, in the same interview, goes further than that by connecting between the strength of learners' vocabulary and their independence and success language learning process:

The successful learners are those who develop techniques and disciplines for learning vocabulary: it might be just a question of keeping a notebook, or using a dictionary properly or perhaps disciplining yourself to look over your notes or to read a lot outside of class. The more independent you become as a learner, the better and stronger your vocabulary becomes, I think. (p. 222)

In addition, Amer (2002) argues that vocabulary is central to language and of critical importance to the typical language learners. Bogaards (2001) adds that "vocabulary knowledge constitutes an essential part of competence in a second or foreign language (p. 32)", Moreover, Atay and Ozbulgan (2007) state that

development of lexical knowledge occupies an important position in the learners struggle to master a second/foreign language (p. 40).

Not only that, learning a second language has been tied up with acquiring a good amount of the learned language vocabulary regarding this, Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) say "learning (L2) involves the learning of large numbers of words" (p. 1).

This is very important to equip learners with the main tool to convey their verbal messages in (L2). Many researchers and academics agree that vocabulary is the main component for effective communication in the language of interaction. Croll (1971) states that a full vocabulary is essential to adequate self expression. Furthermore, Jarvis and Stephens (1994) maintain "one of the most obvious linguistic factors affecting communicative effectiveness is vocabulary" (p.2). Moreover, Ediger (1999) argues that conversations carried on with other persons require a rich vocabulary. There is no doubt that many of those who learn a foreign language have been in situations in which they found themselves helpless for not possessing the right vocabulary to verbalize what they wanted to say. A number of them are surely very competent in utilizing grammatical rules, but the empty slots in a well-structured sentence are not compensated for by the

mere application of correct grammatical rules. Meaning is thoroughly conveyed by the use of the right vocabulary. In contrast, one can manage in a communicative situation without the correct use of grammatical rules when vocabulary is available. That is not to say that grammar has no role in effective communication, but it is secondary to the role of vocabulary. Nunan (1999) supports this argument:

most of learners who live and work in a foreign country, and who attempt to function in the target language, find that we can get by more readily by learning vocabulary than grammatical structures (p.103).

2.4 The Insufficiency of Implicit Vocabulary Learning

Vocabulary cannot be learned solely by encountering it in context, it necessitates focusing on it in classrooms. Some scholars argue that learners acquire vocabulary through intensive reading about different topics because

they will encounter a wealth of new words and their vocabularies will grow naturally, without direct teaching (Coomber, Peet, & Carl, 1998, p.12).

However, this is not always the case, as many L2 learners have noticed that encountering new words in context does not in itself serve to add these novel words to their vocabulary except when the learners search for their meanings and try to use them in some way. For example, Hunt and Beglar (2005) say regarding this point

Implicit instructional and learning tasks – such as narrow reading ..., task cycles that require learners to approach texts in multiple ways and reading extensively – promote small incremental gains in vocabulary growth (p. 28).

Additionally, Fuente (2006) says research on the role of implicit and explicit focus on form indicates that explicit learning conditions and classroom-based tasks designed to focus learners' attention on specific forms may be more effective for EFL classrooms. Thus, there is a need for teachers to engage their students in a variety of methods that make them interact with the words that first appear in context. Coomber, Peet, and Carl (1998) state that

without teacher instruction, context clues might actually mislead learners as they deal with some of the most important words in passage (p. 12).

Moreover, Hunt and Beglar (ibid) claim that inferring vocabulary from context is problematic for a variety of reasons. One of them is that learners need to know not less than 98% of the words that could give clues to guess the meaning of new words from context in a certain text. For weak learners, this may lead to the “beginners’ paradox” which is a vicious cycle in which limited lexical knowledge discourages reading and, simultaneously, a lack of reading restricts vocabulary growth (Hunt & Beglar, ibid). A second reason for dealing with words in context is that the ability to memorize words is improved when learners look at words out of their context and deal more deeply with their different facets (Hunt & Beglar, ibid). A third reason is that contexts with scarce clues, more than one reasonable guess, illusory simplicity, numerous definitions, and unsuccessful use of morphological and syntactic hints can lead to partially or fully incorrect inferences and attributes, which can require years to unlearn (Hunt & Beglar, ibid). So, context by itself, as a form of introducing vocabulary implicitly, is not enough to guarantee learners’ acquisition of vocabulary. This is why Hunt and Beglar (ibid) recommend explicit vocabulary teaching and learning: First, Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition research shows that the explicit temporary study of decontextualized vocabulary is valuable in EFL reading classroom. Early studies of decontextualized vocabulary learning have been replicated by a variety of contemporary researchers and the results have consistently shown explicit learning to be effective.

First language (L1) research undertaken in the US from the late 1960s to the 1980s confirmed that an early and explicit emphasis on the medium (on word recognition and decoding) was more effective for reading comprehension. In addition, programs that incorporate direct vocabulary instruction have been found to be more effective for vocabulary development than those that rely exclusively on indirect means.

Having presented those points, Hunt and Beglar (ibid) stated

that the most efficient learning involves a carefully selected combination of both explicit and implicit instruction and learning.

2.5 Relation of Vocabulary to other Skills of Language

A good base of vocabulary can enhance learners' performance in the main skills of a language. Carl (2003a) states,

Research indicates that in order for the students to perform well in speaking, reading, and writing they need to possess a rich vocabulary (p. 3).

This is quite intuitive. When a person knows the vocabulary associated with a certain topic, it becomes obvious how this person outperforms others in the activities that are related to that topic. In contrast, when he/she encounters many unfamiliar words in a certain context, whether the words are low or high frequency words, the meanings of these words become obscured. Therefore it is safe to assume that he/she has a difficult time trying to understand what is going on. Nation (1990) elaborates that

learners feel that many of their difficulties in both receptive and productive language use result from an inadequate vocabulary (p. 2).

When L2 learners read a text that contains a number of familiar vocabulary items, it becomes easy for them to understand the gist of the text, even if they do not know the meaning of all words. When learners do not know many words in the text, however, they often find themselves confused and frustrated regardless of their competence in other aspects of the language. Regarding the effect of vocabulary on reading, Bromley (2007:528) argue that

fluent readers recognize and understand many words, and they read more quickly and easily than those with smaller vocabularies .

Ediger (ibid) states one reason that pupils do not read well is that they do not possess a functional vocabulary for reading. This reason is one of the eight reasons which Ediger (ibid) suggests as to how learners develop their vocabulary. He strongly advises language teachers to engage their students in activities that serve to develop their vocabulary. The effect of vocabulary is most obvious in writing and speaking skills. The richer vocabulary we have, the more we find ourselves able to express what we want to

say in a way that impresses our readers and listeners. This can be inferred from what Ediger (ibid:1) claims

Variety in selecting words to convey accurate meanings is necessary in speaking and writing, the outages of the language arts, and use of diverse terms and concepts in speaking and writing adds variety to quality communication.

Shedding light on the same point, Ratcliff (1994) argues that they [writers] should use words that their audience understands and that are appropriate to the rhetorical problem. Of course, choosing the most suitable words to express an idea serves to convey the message with more ease and more accuracy. In addition, regarding the effect of vocabulary on writing, Carl (2003b) points

writing is heavily dependent upon an author's ability to draw upon words to describe an event, vocabulary development must be taken seriously in the classroom (p. 4).

Thus, the work of writers becomes much easier when they possess a portion of vocabulary that suffices to convey the meaning they want to express. Engber (1995,p.140) further clarifies, "while less-skilled writers were as concerned as skilled writers with getting their ideas down on paper, they were hampered by a lack of language, particularly vocabulary". This is one of the facets regarding the effect of vocabulary on writing that Engber (ibid) discusses in a paper in which he examines the role of the lexical component in the scoring of sixty-six placement tests. He finds that error-free variations [using a variety of lexical resources] are congruent with scores. So, if EFL teachers, want to help students to make good progress in their writing abilities. They should give more attention to vocabulary in their classes. This is explicitly stated by Lee and Muncie :

Focusing on vocabulary prior to writing significantly improved the production of higher level recognition vocabulary as well as impressive use of newly learned higher level vocabulary (2006:296).

These studies indicate that vocabulary has a significant role in ESL classes, of which ESL teachers must be aware. Foil and Alber (2002) maintain that

with the recent focus in applied linguistics on lexical competence, and the impact this has had on language teaching, many language teachers are now aware of the necessity of making vocabulary a central part of their teaching practice (p. 380).

What seems to be a good sign is that a lot of language learners are sensitive to the value of learning vocabulary since it has been noticed that they use more approaches to deal with vocabulary than for other linguistic areas (Fan, 2003).

2.6 Strategies to Vocabulary Teaching

The term strategies is defined as, "the approaches that can be used across curricular areas to support the learning of students, may be used only on occasion " (Herrell and Jordan, 2004,p.4).Wandberg and Rohwer (2010,p.164) define teaching strategies as

the structure, system, methods, techniques, procedures, and process that a teacher uses during instruction. These are strategies the teacher employs to assist students learning.

While techniques are defined as the body of specialized procedures and methods used in any specific field.However, due to the difficulty in establishing and distinguishing between strategies and techniques during one observation lesson the researcher decided to make these two terms interchangeable.

Many researchers have examined the effect of vocabulary learning strategies in order to find out those that better serve to develop L2 learners' vocabulary. Some of these strategies found to be very effective in this area will be briefly presented in the following section.

2.6.1 The Translation Strategy

Despite the many arguments raised against its use, Nation argues "learning of vocabulary is faster for many learners if the meaning of the word is given through an L1

translation first” (cited in Folse, 2004,p.66). Moreover, in a study conducted by Grace (1998) on 181 native speakers of English studying beginner French, the researcher divided the participants into two groups: a group enrolled in a computer assisted language learning (CALL) program in French with the opportunity of using English translations and a group using a CALL program in French without translations in English. The researchers found that learners who had the option of using translations gained 42 percent more new words than those who did not.

Furthermore, Luppescu and Day (1993) state that

the Japanese learners who used bilingual dictionaries scored higher on a vocabulary posttest than the students who did not (cited in Fan, 2003,224).

However, it should be pointed out that the translation strategy is most effective with beginner-level L2 learners. Its effectiveness with higher levels still needs to be tested. Folse (2004:68) confirms:

Research should now move to more pertinent questions, such as whether the value of L1 translation is as effective for higher-proficiency students as it is for lower-proficiency students .

2.6.2 The Context Strategy

Since, knowing the meaning of a word is not enough to learn the different shades of meaning that a word may have, here emerges the role of the context strategy. Carl (2003b) says regarding the role of context in learning a new word:

We can learn much about a word’s meaning through different contexts in which it is used. And the more different contexts we encounter with that word, the more flexible we become with that word and its meaning and the more likely it is that we will remember it(p.2).

Other researchers and educators as well stress the importance of context in acquiring new words. For example, in a classroom guide for Reading teachers, the authors of Reading Comprehension Instruction in Grades 4 - 8 maintain that "context is crucial in helping children learn and understand new words" (North Central Regional Educational

Lab, 2002,p.7). That is, learning vocabulary in the “abstract” can be a waste of learners’ time if it leads them to formulating a wrong perception or understanding of a word. Application of the context strategy, of course, may take different forms like asking learners to use context to guess the meaning of words, and giving learners sentences with blank spaces that should be filled according to the context. Here, however, I am specifically referring to another form of context which provides the necessary repetitions of newly learned words to transfer them to long-term memory. Repetition is a recycling process that is essential to deepen understanding of words. Richards (2000,p.37) explains,

If recycling is neglected, many partially known words will be forgotten, wasting all the effort already put into learning them .

This kind of context can be provided for L2 students by engaging them in different types of readings in and out of class.

2.6.3 The keyword Strategy

Another strategy found to have a considerable role in increasing L2 learners’ vocabulary and widely discussed in the literature is the keyword strategy. The keyword strategy is

a mnemonic strategy for elaborating upon an unfamiliar word or concept by making it more meaningful and concrete (Foil &Alber, 2002,p.135).

For instance, a learner might recall that “muck” means filth by rhyming it with “yuck.” Regarding its effectiveness, Foil and Alber(ibid) state that

students experience increased levels of academic success when teachers implement the Keyword Method [and this] has been well documented .

Furthermore, Nation (1990,p.166) argues that "the keyword strategy is an effective way of doing this [remembering a new word]".In addition, Hunt and Beglar (2005,p.32) point out that

it [the Keyword Method] may be most efficiently applied to consolidating words that have proven difficult to learn by other approaches.

Fan (2003:224) adds, "this strategy, which associates the meaning, sound, and image of the L1 and L2, has been found to improve retention". To add to that, Sagarra and Alba (2006), in their study of three methods of learning vocabulary, examined the effectiveness of rote learning memorization, semantic mapping, and the keyword strategy among 778 beginner L2 learners. They concluded that the use of the keyword strategy to introduce vocabulary results in better L2 vocabulary learning at initial stages of acquisition. Thus, it might be inferred from the studies discussed above that the keyword method is very useful in teaching vocabulary although its implementation can consume a lot of time and effort.

2.6.4 The Word Links Strategy

A further strategy for developing word knowledge is Word Links which is based on the characteristics of effective vocabulary instruction. That is, it engages learners in multifaceted activities. Yopp, Brigman, Wood, and Fink (2007, p.1) claim that:

Word links offer students myriad opportunities to think and talk about the contexts in which words are used, to revisit words that they have been learning, to think about relationships among words as they connect with classmates, and to actively engage with words as they decide whether or not to link with peers who have different words.

The idea behind the Word Links method is as follows: after having introduced a list of chosen vocabulary items from a unit by providing simple definitions or instructional contexts, the teacher distributes cards with the words written on them to the students, one for each. The students' task is to walk around the classroom and find a partner whose word is related to theirs in some way. Then, the partners have to explain how their words are related. Likewise, this type of strategy provides students with the opportunity to think about and discuss the meanings of words with their partners as they are trying to find relations between the words, which makes it a very useful experience. Yopp, et al. (ibid), explain that reviewing the words in this way usually results in rich conversations about the meanings of the words and is a motivating and interesting experience for the students.

2.6.5 The Semantic Mapping Strategy

An addition to these strategies is semantic mapping. It presents words in a diagram that shows their relations with other words and has been remarkably beneficial in helping learners to acquire new words. One form of semantic mapping is to ask learners to write a newly introduced word in the middle of a paper and then lead them through answering three questions that could give details about the word. In another form the teacher writes a word on the board and asks learners to repeat all the words that fit in the category (Foil & Alber, 2002). This serves to connect between prior knowledge and new knowledge, which strengthens learner's acquisition of significant words.

Regardless of which vocabulary teaching strategies are adopted, there are four characteristics for effective vocabulary teaching should be taken into consideration:

- The vocabulary teaching method exposes learners to contextual use besides the definition of the items under focus (Foil & Alber, *ibid*; Stahl, 1999; Yopp, et al. 2007).
- It subsequently retrieves the items under focus and gives the learners the opportunity to apply and practice the words (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2006, Foil & Alber, (*ibid*); Yopp, et al. *ibid*).
- It pushes the learners to figure out associations among word meanings (Blachowicz & Fisher, (*ibid*), Foil & Alber, (*ibid*); Yopp, et al. *ibid*).
- It engages the learners in dynamic learning activities (Beck, McKeown & Kucan, 2002; Foil & Alber., (*ibid*); Yopp, et al. *ibid*).

In addition, Atay and Ozbulgan (2007, p.40) assert:

In deciding which vocabulary learning strategies to recommend to L2 learners, one needs to consider the specific learning context as the effectiveness with which learning strategies can be both taught and used depends on a number of variables, i.e., the students' proficiency level, their motivation and purposes in learning the L2, the tasks and texts being used.

2.7 Summary

What is presented above is a small sample of what is conducted in this area. However, it serves to give a general idea of vocabulary as a major constituent of language. According to some scholars, it serves to identify some more effective strategies.

Chapter Three

Research methodology

3.1 Research design

What do ESL teachers in Talia Alnasr School do to develop their students' vocabulary? Are teachers aware of the importance of vocabulary instruction in classrooms? Do teachers in public schools use external resources to support vocabulary instruction? In order to approach these questions more closely in qualitative research studies by use of triangulation (McDonough, McDonough, 1997), a three methods data is used : interviews, observations, and post-observation interviews.

Thus, the study is qualitative in nature. Moreover, the study is limited to one school and six teachers at this school. It is a case study approach, which normally entails a detailed description of the situation under focus. A case study is "intensive descriptions and analyses of a single unit or bounded system" (Merriam, 1992,p.19).

The qualitative method is motivated by its reflexivity as connected to education research (Hammersley, 2000). Kleinasser (2000) says

Qualitative research sheds light on ...deeper, richer meanings about personal, theoretical, and epistemological aspects of the research question (p.155).

Moreover, qualitative research stresses the idea of providing comprehensive and detailed descriptions of the different features included in a study. The availability of such descriptions in this research makes it feasible for other EFL teachers, specifically in public schools.

3.2 Participants

The participants in this study are six teachers teaching English at Talia Alnasr school. The school where the study is conducted is an all-male public school in Sidi Khalifa,

Benghazi. It is Preparatory and secondary school. Thus, the only criterion for the selection of participants is that they are a sampled of EFL teachers at a case study school. The curriculum is provided by the Libyan Ministry of Education to teach English. The Preparatory levels consist from 10 units, the secondary levels consist from 8 units.

These teachers, who are all Libyan, have different experiences. Besides, they are teaching different grades. Because they prefer to be anonymous, the researcher gives them pseudonyms. Salem has three years of EFL teaching experience and teaches Preparatory 1 at the school. Mohammed has four years of experience and teaches Preparatory 2. Younis has four years of experience and teaches Preparatory 3. Nasr has five years of experience and teaches Secondary 1. Othman has five years of experience and teaches Secondary 2 both Literary and Scientific section. Ali has six years of experience and teaches Secondary 3 both Literary and Scientific section. All teachers have a Bachelor of Arts in English from Benghazi University.

Table 1: A summary of information about the six participants

Teacher	Years of EFL Teaching Experience	Levels	Qualifications
Salem	3	Preparatory 1	BA from Benghazi University
Mohammed	4	Preparatory 2	BA from Benghazi University
Younis	4	Preparatory 3	BA from Benghazi University
Nasr	5	Secondary 1	BA from Benghazi University
Othman	5	Secondary 2 Literary and Scientific section	BA from Benghazi University
Ali	6	Secondary 3 Literary and Scientific section	BA from Benghazi University

3.3 Data Collection

Three main cycles of data collection procedures are used interviews, observations, and post-observation interviews.

3.3.1 Interviews

The term interview is regarded as a directed conversation between an investigator and an individual or group of individuals in order to gather information (Nunan, 1989; Richards et al.,1992). It is one of the major data collection tools in qualitative research. It is a very good way of accessing people's perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality. "It is also one of the most powerful ways the researchers have in understanding others" (Punch, 2005, p.168-169).

Interviewing has a wide variety of forms and a multiplicity of uses. The most common type of interviewing is individual, face-to-face verbal interchange, but it can also take the form of face-to-face group interviewing, mailed or self-administered questionnaires, and telephone surveys (Fontana and Frey,1994).

Nunan (ibid),Punch (ibid); and Robson (2002) indicate, according to types and styles of interviews, that interviewing can be fully structured, focused or semi-structured, or unstructured.

Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) points out that whether interviewing is structured or unstructured, it provide personal information on many of language learning strategies not available through classroom observation.

Likewise, interviews can be used to investigate a range of issues including developmental aspects of language learner and learning-style preference (Nunan ,ibid). Of the three types of interview mentioned, Nunan (1992) affirms that semi-structured interview seems to be popularly used in qualitative designs since they are flexible. The semi-structured interview also gives the interviewee a degree of power and control over the course of the interview. This is consistent with Merriam's (1998) conclusion that a

semi-structured interview is flexible enough to allow the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging world-view of the participants, and to new, or unforeseen ideas on the topic. With regard to time spent on interviewing, an interview can be a one-time, brief exchange, lengthy sessions, sometimes spanning days, as in life-history interviewing (Fontana and Frey,ibid).

Collecting data by interviewing is widely used in social studies research because it helps the researcher to get data about subjects' personal information, behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, and opinions. One of the good points of the interview is that when interviewees are asked but questions are not clear, the interviewer clarifies his or her questions so that the interviewees understand. Some limitations of the interviews are time constraint, expense.

Interview is chosen because conducting one-on-one interviews require the researcher to be directly involved in the process of data gathering. This helps to closely observe the responses of the interviewees, both verbal and non-verbal as recommended by Seidman (1998). This gives the opportunity to reach a deeper perspective about the issue under focus.

3.3.2 Classroom Observation

Observational methods are procedures and techniques based on systematic observation of events, e.g. using audio and video recorders, check lists, etc. Observational methods are often used in classroom events.

(Richards et al. 1992:255) say :

Observation is one of the effective data collections if the researcher is also conducting a research about culture, feelings or subjects' ways of life. For example, if the researcher wants to study ways of life of the hill-tribes, one of the key elements of collecting data is to observe participants' behaviors by participating in their activities.

Collecting data from classroom observation is a good technique because researchers directly study and collect data based on situations. Robson (2002:310-311) mentions that

a major advantage of observation as a technique is its directness since a researcher does not ask language learners about their views, feelings or attitudes, but he or she can watch what they do and listen to what they say.

This can help the researcher get the facts during those situations. Oxford and Burry-Stock (ibid) point out that classroom observations are easy to use and can be conducted both formally and informally. On the contrary, (Aphok,1981) concluded that observation is not a very fruitful or workable method.

3.4 Procedures

In the interviewing phase one teacher is interviewed alone. Each interview lasts 20 to 30 minutes. The interviews are conducted in English. The interviewees are asked seven questions. Each has sub-questions depending on the answers given by the interviewees. Each interviewee is provided with a copy of these seven questions in advance to have the chance to think and arrange better responses motivated by their experience and practice teaching vocabulary.

Regarding post-observation interviews phase, the same procedure used for the interviews are applied. Post-observation interviews follow classroom observations. During post-observation interviews, interviewees are requested to explain issues they state in their interviews observation. The interviews are tape-recorded to obtain maximum amount of data. This was feasible since each interview is tape recorded the day after to ensure that the actual interview is easily recalled. This implies that the analysis of the collected data is instant and continuous. Each interview is analyzed to find systematic patterns and compare the responses of the teachers involved. These patterns are identified by using the constant comparative method of data analysis

(Merriam, *ibid*). The comparison of the derived patterns enables to find out how teachers generally deal with vocabulary in classes. This is compared with other data collection methods at a later stage of this analysis.

In observation phase, each teacher is observed three times in a two-weeks period. The time lapse between observations of each teacher is one week. A reflection for each observation is reported. While observing, The researcher notes the type of strategies the teachers use to teach vocabulary and the number of times these strategies are used. The collected data from the combination of interviews and observations provides the researcher with a wealth of data to analyze in order to answer my research questions.

3.5 Data analysis

Strategies each teacher uses reflect his/her awareness of how to best avail himself of most recent strategies. Thus, This section provides the material for chapter four, which sheds light on the strategies used by teachers. The researcher describes the reported vocabulary teaching strategies used by teachers during interviews. The researcher gives a description of the observed strategies in their classrooms. Next, the researcher explains some discrepancies between reported and observed strategies and the reasons teachers give explanations for these discrepancies, thus answering the first research question. Finally, vocabulary teaching style analyzing the collected data is compared with the most useful vocabulary teaching methods in recent literature. This provides the answer to the second research question.

Chapter Four

Data analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the data on the basis of the constant comparison method to establish semantic themes or categories. Constant comparison method looks for similarities and difference between cases. Comparative analytical method can be applied to social units of any size. This process involves: identifying a phenomenon, object, event or setting of interest, identifying a few local concepts, principles, structural or process features of the experience or phenomenon of interest. Making decisions regarding initial collection of data based one's initial understanding of the phenomenon. Further data collection cannot be planned in advance of analysis and the emergence of theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Strategies teachers use should reflect the teacher's philosophy and awareness of how to use the most recent strategies in class best. Thus, this section starts by shedding light on the participating teachers' philosophies regarding the role of vocabulary. And also considers, the reported vocabulary teaching strategies teachers claim to use during interviews. Furthermore a description of the observed strategies that teachers seem to use in classrooms are given. To answer the first question in this work, some discrepancies between reported and observed strategies are clarified. The reasons given by teachers to account for reported and observed discrepancy are examined. The vocabulary teaching style of the participating teachers and the most useful vocabulary teaching methods are compared according to recent literature. This, in turn, contributes to shed light on the second question.

4.2 Participants' View of Vocabulary

All participants assert that vocabulary is the core of language. They argue that the acquisition of a good amount of vocabulary helps students to develop all language skills, viz. listening, reading, writing, and speaking. For instance, Salem affirms that *vocabulary is very important for other skills. For example, students write better if they know more words and, of course, they read quickly and understand a reading text if they have more vocabulary.* Mohammed states that *vocabulary is more important than other skills because students have to start collecting vocabulary to start understanding English...* Nasr states that *vocabulary is a very important aspect of English ... because if pupils know a lot of vocabulary, they can understand what they read and hear, and then write and speak.*

Moreover, the acquisition of a good amount of vocabulary transfers students from the stage of dealing with the language in pieces to the stage of dealing with it as a whole, which contributes to enhancing their language production. All this improve the academic performance of the students. A participant responded to the question **How vocabulary improve your students' English level?** For example, Nasr says, *I have a student ,who knows lots of vocabulary, so when I ask questions, he answers most of them and he always tries to participate. This clearly affects his level.*

These factors urge participants to give vocabulary priority in their philosophy of teaching as it is clearly indicated in their responses. This emphasis given to vocabulary in EFL teaching by the participants is congruent with the prominence given to it by many researchers as discussed in the literature review. In spite of the weight given by participants to vocabulary in their teaching philosophy, they all reach a consensus regarding the general weakness of their students' vocabulary knowledge.

Students' weakness is apparent through analyzing the participating teachers' responses to the questions in their interview, which elicits responses about teachers' impressions about their students' vocabulary. All teachers express the general weakness of students' vocabulary level despite the effort they claim to have put into teaching vocabulary. Some of these responses are:

Othman: *The students are weak; whatever you do for them, whatever you teach, whatever you say for them to review the words.*

Mohammed: *You can say, through my experience, that they are poor.*

Salem: *Maybe 2 or 3 are good in remembering and using vocabulary .Some of them are average, and the rest are weak.*

Nasr: *In each class, one or two students have a good amount of vocabulary, the rest are very weak.*

Some teachers attribute lack of vocabulary to students' negative attitude, which stands, as they claim, as a great barrier to their language learning. Ali says, *I think students are not interested in English because it is difficult for them , and it is not their first language.* Other teachers attribute weakness to detailed syllabus , which restrains them from setting better plans to develop students' vocabulary. Regarding this point, Nasr adds *our students don't have a good base in vocabulary; this is because of the syllabus.* These justifications could be part of the problem; but teachers do not seem to realize that the low level of students' vocabulary could also be related to teaching style strategies used by teachers. None of the teachers mention or retail the thought that students' inability to grasp new vocabulary items may be partially an outcome of vocabulary teaching approaches used in the classroom, as it is obvious from the following analysis.

4.3 Reported and Observed strategies of Vocabulary Teaching

In response to the interview question regarding the way in which the participants teach vocabulary, each participant, as expected, has something to say. As explained above, three class observations compare what teachers are supposed to do with what they actually do during class time. Mismatches (or discrepancies) between reported and observed methods of instruction are discussed below to answer the research question, **What are the vocabulary teaching strategies used in public school by EFL teachers?**

To begin with, Salem says that *he normally writes words on the board to attract students' attention to those words. He tries to demonstrate them through illustrative examples and miming words. If the words are difficult and the students show no signs of understanding, he provides them with the meaning in Arabic ,as a last resort.* This, according to Salem, saves time and effort. The three observations of Salem's class show a sequence of vocabulary strategies that match the sequence he describes in his interview. For example, to explain the word “make,” in introducing some of vocabularies in his lesson (unit 3 Likes and dislikes, 3.6 activities, preparatory 1) he first writes it on the board and read it out loud. When no student knows its meaning, he mimes it, to help students guess its meaning. It is obvious that the students have the meaning of the word because most of them raised their hands, and some of them were already saying the answer. However, one discrepancy between what he reports doing and what he actually do is that he does not use any of the strategies he says that he uses in his interview. Moreover, he uses the translation strategy often .He translates words or asks students to do so. The translation strategy is used by Salem as first method of teaching in class for half of the words taught in three observed classes.

Younis's response to the same question shows that he uses the same methods Salem uses. However, in practice, these methods rarely appear in Younis's teaching. He uses methods only with some of words he taught in three observed classes. The prevailing strategy he uses in teaching vocabulary is the translation strategy. He uses it right from the beginning to explain most words, including “pyramid,” and “mosque”. (unit 2 Landmarks and inventions, 2.2 Giving your opinion, preparatory 3) All other words, are taught by the use of pictures from the students' textbook. There is no attempt to present words in context. This contradicts what he says in his interview.

Mohammed says something different. He comments that teaching vocabulary could take different forms, depending on the level of the students. Thus, he explains that when he introduces new vocabulary items to students, he uses words in sentences that may give clues to their meaning in teaching advanced English. He also reports that he tries to draw students' attention to the position of the word within the sentence to help students figure out its meaning. With lower-level students, he says that he uses strategies that are different from those mentioned above. He makes use of miming, illustration, and finally, the translation strategy if students are still unable to comprehend the meaning of

the new words. However, through observing his class, contextual vocabularies are rare. It does not seem to have a priority. One of the words “wild” in a context: “I think the wild animals in Scotland are more interesting ”. (unit 2 Holidays, 2.2 Choosing a holiday, preparatory 2) Only three students raised hands to guess the meaning of the word, but for the others, the teacher have to give the meaning in Arabic after a few attempts by the students to translate the word. Thus, the strategy of vocabulary teaching that Mohammed has mostly used is the translation method, whether words are new or reviewed, and student are lower or advance. Furthermore, his use of the translation strategy takes different forms, such as teacher translation, students translation, and directing students to their English Arabic glossaries.

Moving to another teacher, Nasr says that when he introduces new vocabulary items to his students, he relies on miming, book pictures in order to teach concrete words. He resorts to the translation strategy when teaching abstract words which are difficult for students to understand through context. The observed classes do not show that he takes into account whether a new vocabulary item is concrete or abstract when choosing the appropriate strategy. For example, he uses the translation strategy right from the beginning to explain the words “communication” and “system” .The other strategies he uses during the interview match those he uses during the observed classes. Among those, is the context strategy which he uses to review two words at the beginning of the first observed class: first is the word “changing,” is reviewed in the sentence: Today, television is changing more and more quickly and the word “international” which he uses in the sentence: This international network needs communications satellite system like Arabsat. He also uses flash cards to explain the words: “radio station” transmitter “.” Students appear to comprehend the meanings of these words and no need to be translated into Arabic.(unit 1 Global Village, Lesson 1 and 2:Reading, secondary 1)

Moreover, Othman asserts that the main strategy he uses to explain new words is miming. If students are not able to get the meaning through miming, he provides context to clarify meaning. Much like other participating teachers, Othman claims that he makes use of the translation strategy when students cannot get the meaning of the new words. Observations of Othman's classes, however, shows that he uses the translation strategy intensively to explain most of words he teaches. Some of the translated words

in this teacher's classes are "wadi," and "rough track," unit 1 Stories, Lesson 1 and 2:Reading, secondary 2. Literary section).

Considering Ali's response to how he teaches vocabulary, he first says that *he uses context to explain new words. Then, he uses one of the following strategies: book pictures or drawings to help students to get the meanings of the words in question. If students are still not able to understand new words, he, in the line with other teachers, resorts to the translation strategy.* Analysis of collected data through observations shows that Ali relies heavily on the translation strategy, he uses directly to explain most words he taught during the observed classes. Some of these words are "drip down," "spread germs," and "skating." unit 2 Weather and climate, Lesson 1 and 2:Reading, secondary 3, Scientific section). There are no instances in which he uses direct translation as a last resort as he states in his interview.

It is clear that there are some discrepancies between the participating teachers' perceptions of vocabulary teaching methods. To begin with, Salem , Younis, Othman and Ali report that they contextualize new words to help students guess the meanings of such words. There are no occasions in which they employ this strategies in the observed classes. What is more is that Younis does not follow the same sequence of teaching vocabulary that he claims to follow when he teaches vocabulary. Ali uses the translation strategy as a main and only method. Another teacher, Mohammed states that the vocabulary strategy he selects depends on the student level .The context strategy is mostly used. However, students' level and priority of the context strategy are not taken in consideration three observed classes. Lastly, Nasr notes that difference between concrete and abstract words is crucial when choosing vocabulary strategy. This distinction has not been shown in the observed classes as concrete and abstract words are taught with the same strategy.

Table 2 :reported and observed strategies.

Teacher	Reported Strategy	Observed Strategy	Discrepancies Attitudes
Salem	- Use board - Give examples - Miming - Translation as a last resort	- Use board - Miming - Translation as first method	- Give examples - Translation as first method
Younis	- Use board - Give examples - Miming - Translation as a last resort	- Use board - Miming - Translation as a first method - Book pictures	- Give examples - Translation as a first method - book pictures
Mohammed	- Give examples - Miming - Illustration - Translation as last resort	- Give examples - Translation as a first method -definitions - Miming - Drawings	- Translation as a first method - definitions
Nasr	- Miming - Book pictures - Context - Translation as last resort	- Translation as a first method - Context - Book pictures	- Translation as a first method
Othman	- Miming - Give examples - Translation as a last resort	- Translation as a first method - Miming	- Translation as a first method - Give examples
Ali	- Context - Book pictures - Drawing - Translation as a last resort	- Translation as a first method - Miming - Book pictures	- Translation as a first method

It is important to note here that the different attitudes held by the teachers do not mean that the various methods used are totally neglected in classrooms. Rather, such discrepancies confirm that the reported strategies are not integrated in the teachers' vocabulary teaching style as they claim. Thus, the questions that come to mind are: why

teachers' perceptions and actual classrooms are inconsistent? Why do teachers drop away from their vocabulary teaching philosophies? In order to answer these questions, the participants are asked during post-observation interviews to comment on the observed mismatches. The following section presents these responses.

4.4 Teachers' Attitudes of the Discrepancies

All participating teachers express their dismay and anxiety when they try to justify their discrepancies. When teachers talked about the reasons behind the discrepancies, with the exception of Ali who believes that experience is another reason behind good achievements.

Teachers attribute their dismay to two main reasons, the restrictions imposed by the Libyan Ministry of Education on prescribed curriculum. For instance, Othman says, responding to the question whether the situation in public schools helps teachers to apply their style of teaching, *We are completely restricted to follow the curriculum; this is the policy of the ministry.*

In addition, Younis states that: *"The obligation to stick to the curriculum pressurizes us. We don't have a separate course to teach vocabulary. The enforced system imposes the direct method.*

Moreover, the teachers object to the fact that the Ministry of Education give inspectors a thorough inspection to check their program in the prescribed syllabus and to follow the accomplishment of the scheduled plan.

The other factor that leads to teachers' hopelessness is time as a major obstacle. They complain that the vast amount of vocabulary in the curriculum can hardly be covered in the time allotted for the course. Covering the prescribed materials in such a limited time is very important for their EFL exams, especially in secondary school exams administered by the Ministry of Education. This forces teachers to speed up vocabulary teaching with poor achievement. Some samples of teachers' responses to the observation question, **Do you think that vocabulary teaching course is given enough time? Why?:**

Nasr: *Time is limited, so we don't give them words outside the curriculum.*

Othman: *We can't teach all words thoroughly because of time.*

Salem : *It's difficult to complete the course items.*

4.5 Used Strategies vs. Suggested strategies

The collected data indicates that the teachers use very simple strategies that serve only to provide the meaning of the words. These strategies include miming, book pictures, flash cards, drawings, definitions and the translation strategy. All these strategies are very useful to introduce the basic meanings of new words, but they do not assure that students develop a good mastery of vocabulary. With no other strategy adopted, there is no guarantee that students understand and attain the new vocabulary items in the long run. For example, the literature review shows the significant of the context strategy to clarify meaning .

The analysis of the data suggests that none of the teachers use context to explain words. This implies that teachers rarely refer back to previously taught words for reinforcement. Almost all words that teachers teach are presented once and only once. None of the teachers in this study use homework exercises to enhance students vocabulary. Regarding this, Nation (2001,82) says,

We should expect only limited learning from single meetings with a word and should bear this in mind when we plan or carry out those meetings.

He justifies this with the fact that a number of facts need to be known about a word: its form, its meaning, and its use. All these points do not seem to be taken into consideration by the participants in this study, which implies that their methods do not develop learners' vocabulary.

Furthermore, the collected data indicates that none of the teachers seem to teach his students strategies to learn vocabulary outside class. This is supported by their responses to the post-observation interview question, which, attests whether teachers teach their students strategies to learn vocabulary or not. All teachers claim that they teach their students such strategies. When asked how this is done, teachers respond that this is done through translation strategy, miming, pictures, and drawings. When explain that the researcher observe teachers using these strategies, which is not the same as overtly teaching students how to use these methods, the participants' responses indicate that he cannot differentiate between using strategies to teach vocabulary and teaching strategies for learning vocabulary. Some of their responses are:

Salem: I can't see any difference between using and teaching strategies ... when I use a strategy to teach vocabulary, the students should know how to use it by themselves because I set an example for them.

Mohammed: When we use strategies, we actually teach using them at the same time, doesn't have to be direct.

Younis: I use different strategies to teach vocabulary, so when Students see me use a strategy a number of times, they Should be able to use it when they need to.

This implies that the way the participants teach vocabulary is not consistent with the current norms in the field of teaching vocabulary, and the teaching vocabulary strategies. Atay and Ozbulgan (2007,p.2) argue that

learners need to be given explicit instruction to become more aware of and proficient with the broad range of strategies that can be used through the learning process.

A further point that could be deduced from analyzing the results is that the teachers generally do not consider the different proficiency levels of students as a criterion to choose vocabulary teaching strategies. All teachers use the same strategies to teach vocabulary regardless of the level they are teaching, even when there is a noticeable gap

between the students' proficiency levels. Younis and Othman, who teach (preparatory 3) and (secondary 2), are a case in point. Nation (ibid.39), distinguishes between lists of translation pairs and context strategies in terms of learners' levels of competence says, "While advanced learners may benefit from learning vocabulary in context, beginners probably benefit most from words that are presented in lists of translation pairs".

This could bring into question the effectiveness of the participants' vocabulary teaching style especially when we know that teachers do not plan what strategies to use to teach new words. This is evident in the teachers' responses to the post observation interview question. This elicits whether participating teachers plan what words to teach and what strategies to adopt in introducing them.

Examples of their responses are the followings:

Nasr: *I don't have to plan which word to teach because they are already planned in the teacher's book, but what strategies to use to teach them, I leave to lesson.. Sometimes I feel translation strategy is enough, and at other times I use available book pictures.*

Ali: *What words to teach are there in teacher's book, but sometimes in class, I feel that there is a need to teach other words not included in the teacher's book ... If flash cards are available, I use them to teach the words-- this is a strategy, but for other words I teach them in different ways depending on students' reaction.*

Thus, the reasons teachers give to justify students' poor vocabulary, discussed at the beginning of this section are not the only factors. The teaching style of these teachers apparently plays a major role in compounding this problem, a role which goes unnoticed by the teachers. What's more, none of the strategies in their teaching style, has effective vocabulary teaching . Accordingly, the answer to the second research question in this study (i.e., do the strategies used in their classrooms reflect the various methods of teaching vocabulary in the recent literature?) The answer is to a large extent a negative one. Although teachers are aware of the effect vocabulary teaching methods in

recent literature (i.e., context and recycling strategies), they often neglect these methods in their classrooms.

Chapter five

Conclusions and Recommendations

Having analyzed the data and classified the results, this chapter is devoted to the conclusions , and answering the research questions posited by the researcher.

5.1 Conclusion

All participants in the study grant vocabulary high significance, compatible with the importance assigned to vocabulary teaching in recent literature in the field of TESOL. However, they believe that their students' level of proficiency in vocabulary is far lower than average, despite the efforts they exert in class.

Analysis of the data collected in interviews and observations, reveal that there are some discrepancies between what teachers say and what they actually do in their EFL classes. The discrepancies are spotted in the following issues: the teachers claim that they provide context for new words, use the translation method as the last resort, and take students' level of proficiency into consideration, when choosing methods to teach abstract and concrete words. Teachers attributed this incompetence to loss of interest, which in turn is due to two factors: the restriction imposed by the Ministry to stick to the prescribed curriculum together with the limited time allocated to the course.

Generally, the analysis show that the strategies used by the participants to teach vocabulary items are miming, book pictures, flash cards, drawings, definitions and the translation method. The analysis of the data also show that the majority of the teachers makes little use of context strategy to explain new words. Contrary to the norms set in the literature for teaching vocabulary, none of the teachers teach students the strategies to learn vocabulary outside class.

5.2 Recommendations

The main advice for language teachers in public schools is that they should reassess some of their approaches to teaching vocabulary, and enhance their repertoire of vocabulary teaching strategies. Although teachers appear to be aware of some of the most effective methods, some feel that they had to resort to less effective strategies such as the translation method in attempt to meet the requirements set by the Ministry of Education in a limited duration. However, to improve students English proficiency in public schools, appropriate methods should be adopted.

In addition, central to a better achievement and attainment, teachers should consider proficiency levels of their students to decide which vocabulary items to be taught as well as the methods to be employed. In other words, what applies to beginners is not always applicable to other levels and vice versa. For example, word links strategy might prove too advanced for beginners because it presupposes a higher level of linguistic proficiency.

Furthermore, teachers need to know when and how to reinforce the teaching words ,since acquiring a word thoroughly does not happen from single session. New vocabulary words must be revisedthrough different examples to expose students to the various uses and connotations words might have. This recycling is fundamental for providing the necessary repetitions to promote acquiring and retaining a word. “If recycling is neglected, many partially known words will be forgotten, wasting all the effort already put into learning them” (Richards, 2000,p.137).

Teachers should encourage learner autonomy to help their students become active vocabulary learners. Successful vocabulary learners are those who are devoted to learning and know how to utilize vocabulary learning strategies on their own (Atay&Ozbulgan,2007). It is vital to consider the time teachers need to teaching English vocabulary items. Hence, it is the task of teachers to employ and teach the most effective teaching and learning strategies.

The Libyan Ministry of Education is advised to organize workshops and seminars for EFL teachers aimed at developing these teachers awareness of current effective methods

of teaching English language vocabulary. It is also recommended that learner strategies for acquiring new vocabulary items should be implemented. Only through the Ministry of Education full support, flexibility, and understanding teachers will truly be able to accomplish their goals and fulfill their potential.

In addition, the Ministry should consider adjusting and elaborating the prescribed curriculum. To this end, teachers' experience and remarks should be taken into consideration because they are well experienced in the designed curriculum and its restrictions. Thus, teachers are more aware of the positive and negative aspects of the issue.

Accordingly, the Ministry of Education should give its public school teachers more space to participate. Teachers may interact with students to choose topics the students are eager to learn. Furthermore, teachers should be given the chance to introduce authentic teaching materials related to chosen topics. This would help in motivating students to engage in language learning process. For example, teachers can search for texts (from newspapers, magazines, ...etc.) that include the words they plan to teach. The level of learners has to be considered, of course. After presenting words, the teachers should ask students to use words in context or situation. Their teachers might ask learners to search for other synonyms and texts in which the words are used. A further activity that teachers can do is to create a communicative situation, for situational English.

Despite the limitations and setbacks mentioned above, this study is a starting point in solving the problems with vocabulary instruction. Moreover, this study reveals the difficulties that teachers face in public schools which rely on the Ministry of Education to provide for solutions to those obstacles.

For those obvious points, it is strongly recommended to conduct similar studies within a wider context. That is, more schools and teachers need to be included to know the extent to which the issues raised in this study are present in public schools in Libya. It is also strongly recommended that symposiums, meetings and seminars are to be regularly held.

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Appendix A

Model of Interview Form

Time started: Time ended: Teacher:

Strategies Used in Teaching Vocabulary

1- Where does vocabulary teaching stand in your teaching philosophy? Do you give it priority?

1.1- Why does vocabulary teaching take priority in your philosophy?

2- How do you teach vocabulary in your classes?

3- How do you think, teaching vocabulary improve students' English level?

4. What are the sources of the vocabulary you teach in your class?

4.1 (if the teacher limits himself to the vocabulary in the curriculum)

Why do you choose the vocabulary in the curriculum?

4.2- (if the teacher uses other sources) On what bases do you choose that vocabulary?

5. How many new words do you usually teach per lesson?

5.1 Do you usually teach new vocabulary in lessons assigned to teach vocabulary, or as part of lessons?

5.2 what is your impression about your students' vocabulary level?

5.3 Do you think that you need more time or what you are doing is enough?

6. What strategies you use to teach vocabulary?

6.1 What strategy you use most? Why?

7. How do you usually revise vocabularies?

8- What are the purposes of teaching vocabulary?

Appendix B

Model of Post-Observation Interview Form

Time started:

Time ended:

Teacher:

1- It is noticed that you teach certain numbers of words in each lesson. How does that match the importance you give to vocabulary?

2- what words and strategies do you plan to teach and How?

2.1 In your lessons, you teach six (or more) new words each lesson. Does this match your students comprehension?

3- It is noticed that you lean more toward the strategy, to teach new words.

Why?

4- In most cases, it is observed that the purpose behind teaching new words is _____ . could you explain?

5- in learning vocabulary, do you teach your students strategies independently? How?

6- Do you think public schools policy helps to apply your philosophy of teaching vocabulary? How?

7- do you think that the period designated for the course is enough? Why?

Appendix C
Model of Observation Sheet Form

Date: Place: Grade: Teacher:
Lesson: Started: Ended: Number of students:

strategies used to explain words: Number of times strategies used:

* Teachers use context: _____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Word category:- nouns 1 2 3 4 5 6 _____ verbs 1 2 3 4 5 6 _____
-adjectives 1 2 3 4 5 6 _____ ...1 2 3 4 5 6 _____

Aims of presentation:-Expanding vocabulary. – Clarifying a point.
- Facilitates understanding a text. _____

* Teachers use translation from the beginning: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Word category:- nouns 1 2 3 4 5 6 _____ verbs 1 2 3 4 5 6 _____
- adjectives 1 2 3 4 5 6 _____1 2 3 4 5 6 _____

Aims of presentation: - Expanding vocabulary. – Clarifying a point.
- Facilitates understanding a text. _____

* Teachers use translation as a last resort:_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Word category: - nouns 1 2 3 4 5 6 _____ verbs 1 2 3 4 5 6 _____
- adjectives 1 2 3 4 5 6 _____1 2 3 4 5 6 _____

Aims of presentation: - Expanding vocabulary. – Clarifying a point.
- Facilitates understanding a text. _____

* Teachers use miming: _____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Word category: - nouns 1 2 3 4 5 6 ____ verbs 1 2 3 4 5 6 ____
- adjectives 1 2 3 4 5 6 _____1 2 3 4 5 6 ____

Aims of presentation: - Expanding vocabulary. – Clarifying a point.
- Facilitates understanding a text. - _____

* Teacher uses drawing : _____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Word category: - nouns 1 2 3 4 5 6 ____ verbs 1 2 3 4 5 6 ____
- adjectives 1 2 3 4 5 6 _____1 2 3 4 5 6 ____

Aims of presentation: - Expanding vocabulary. – Clarifying a point. -
- Facilitates understanding a text. _____

*Teacher uses flash cards: _____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Word category: - nouns 1 2 3 4 5 6 ____ - verbs 1 2 3 4 5 6 ____
- adjectives 1 2 3 4 5 6 _____ -1 2 3 4 5 6

Aims of presentation: - Expanding vocabulary. – Clarifying a point. -
- Facilitates understanding a text. _____

* Teacher uses a game: _____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Word category: - nouns 1 2 3 4 5 6 ____ - verbs 1 2 3 4 5 6 ____
- adjectives 1 2 3 4 5 6 _____1 2 3 4 5 6 ____

Aims of presentation: - Expanding vocabulary. – Clarifying a point.
- Facilitates understanding a text. - _____

* Teacher uses _____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Word category: - nouns 1 2 3 4 5 6 _____ - verbs 1 2 3 4 5 6 _____
- adjectives 1 2 3 4 5 6 _____1 2 3 4 5 6

Aims of presentation: -Expanding vocabulary. – Clarifying a point.
- Facilitates understanding a text. - _____

Class material

Number of revised words: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Number of new taught words: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Time allotted:

Words taught: -in the first third of the period
- In the second third of the period
- in the last third of the period
- throughout

Appendix D

Sample of Interviews Transcript

Interviewer: Researcher (Mohammed)
Interviewee: Teacher (Salem)
Date: 17th December 2015
Time: 10.00 a.m.
Place: Talia Alnasr School, Sidi Khalifa, Benghazi

Strategies Used in Teaching Vocabulary

Researcher: Good morning.

Teacher: *Good morning.*

R: Please take a seat.

T: *Thank you.*

R: How are you today?

T: *I'm fine, thank you. And you?*

R: I'm very fine, thank you

R: Let's start... Where does vocabulary teaching stand in your teaching philosophy? Do you give it priority, for example?

T: *I give it my priority. Yes. I try to help them understand the meaning of vocabularies before reading the textbook...*

R: Why does vocabulary teaching take that position in your philosophy?

T: *Because I think teaching vocabularies is the best way to learn English*

R: How do you teach vocabulary in your classes?

T: *By giving the meaning in Arabic*

R: How do you think, teaching vocabulary affects the improvement of your students' English level?

T: *If they learn vocabularies.. they can speak English*

R: What are the sources of the vocabulary you teach in your class?

T: *I teach them vocabularies only from the Curriculum*

R: (if the teacher uses other sources) On what bases do you choose that

vocabulary?

T: On bases that help student to memories vocabularies..

R: How many new words do you usually teach in a lesson period?

T: About ten

R: Do you usually teach new vocabulary in a lesson assigned only to teach vocabulary, or you do that as part of lessons?

T: As part of lesson.

R: what is your impression about your students' vocabulary level?

T: I think they are weak

R:Do you think that you need more time or what you are doing is enough? Why?

T I think I need more time.

R. What strategies you use to teach vocabulary?

T: Writes on board, Give examples, Miming, Translation as a last resort

R:What strategy you use most? Why?

T: translation, because I think it helps them memorize the meaning of words very well..

R: How do you usually revise vocabularies?

T: By asking them about the meaning of them at the beginning of the lesson

R: Thank you very much for useful and valuable information of your vocabulary teaching strategies.

Appendix E
Sample of Classroom Observation Sheet

Date: Place: Grade: Teacher:
Lesson: Started: Ended: Number of students:

strategies used to explain words: Number of times strategies used:

* Teachers use context: _____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Word category: - nouns 1 2 3 4 5 6 _____ verbs 1 2 3 4 5 6 _

- adjectives 1 2 3 4 5 6 _____1 2 3 4 5 6 _

Aims of presentation: -Expanding vocabulary. – Clarifying a point.

- Facilitates understanding a text. - _____

* Teachers use translation from the beginning: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Word category: - nouns 1 2 3 4 5 6 _____ verbs 1 2 3 4 5 6 _____

- adjectives 1 2 3 4 5 6 _____1 2 3 4 5 6 _____

Aims of presentation: - Expanding vocabulary. – Clarifying a point.

- Facilitates understanding a text. _____

* Teachers use translation as a last resort: _____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Word category: - nouns 1 2 3 4 5 6 _____ verbs 1 2 3 4 5 6 _____

- adjectives 1 2 3 4 5 6 _____1 2 3 4 5 6 _____

Aims of presentation: - Expanding vocabulary. – Clarifying a point.

- Facilitates understanding a text. _____

* Teachers use miming: _____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Word category: - nouns 1 2 3 4 5 6 ____ verbs 1 2 3 4 5 6 ____
- adjectives 1 2 3 4 5 6 ____1 2 3 4 5 6 __

Aims of presentation: - Expanding vocabulary. – Clarifying a point.
- Facilitates understanding a text. _____

* Teacher uses drawing : _____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Word category: - nouns 1 2 3 4 5 6 ____ verbs 1 2 3 4 5 6 __
- adjectives 1 2 3 4 5 6 ____1 2 3 4 5 6 __

Aims of presentation: - Expanding vocabulary. – Clarifying a point.
- Facilitates understanding a text. _____

*Teacher uses flash cards: _____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Word category: - nouns 1 2 3 4 5 6 ____ verbs 1 2 3 4 5 6 __
-adjectives 1 2 3 4 5 6 ____1 2 3 4 5 6

Aims of presentation: - Expanding vocabulary. – Clarifying a point.
- Facilitates understanding a text. _____

* Teacher uses a game: _____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Word category: - nouns 1 2 3 4 5 6 ____ - verbs 1 2 3 4 5 6 ____
- adjectives 1 2 3 4 5 6 ____1 2 3 4 5 6 ____

Aims of presentation: - Expanding vocabulary. – Clarifying a point.
- Facilitates understanding a text. _____

* Teacher uses _____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Word category: - nouns 1 2 3 4 5 6 ____ verbs 1 2 3 4 5 6 ____

- adjectives 1 2 3 4 5 6 _____1 2 3 4 5 6

Aims of presentation: -Expanding vocabulary. – Clarifying a point.

- Facilitates understanding a text. _____

Class material

Number of revised words: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Number of new taught words: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Time allotted:

- Words taught:
- in the first third of the period
 - In the second third of the period
 - in the last third of the period
 - throughout

ملخص الدراسة

الاستراتيجيات المستخدمة في تدريس مهارة المفردات

تبحث هذه الدراسة في استراتيجيات تدريس المفردات في مدرسة حكومية في مدينة بنغازي .

ولتحقيق هذا الهدف، لقد أجريت دراسة حالة نوعية، جمعت فيها البيانات من خلال مقابلات وملاحظات. وكان المشاركون في هذه الدراسة ستة معلمين للغة الإنجليزية ذوي تجارب مختلفة و تدريس مستويات مختلفة. استندت إلى تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها عن طريقة المقارنة المستمرة للتحليل من أجل تحديد المواضيع الدلالية و الفئات.

وأظهر التحليل أن الاستراتيجيات التي يستخدمها المشاركون لتدريس المفردات هي التقليدي، صور الكتاب، الرسوم، المترادفات و الترجمة. وأفاد المشاركون أنهم لا يعلمون الطلاب استراتيجيات لتعلم المفردات خارج الفصل، والتي تتجاهل المعايير المنصوص عليها في المؤلفات العصرية لتعليم المفردات.



الاستراتيجيات المستخدمة في تدريس مهارة المفردات

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تحت إشراف :

د . محمد سالم رقص

قدمت هذه الرسالة استكمالاً لمتطلبات الحصول على درجة الماجستير في
في اللغة الإنجليزية واللغويات

جامعة بنغازي

كلية الآداب

فبراير 2018