

The People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
University of Algiers 2
Faculty of Arts and Languages
Department of English

RETENTION AND ATTRITION IN EFL

VOCABULARY LEARNING:

A CASE STUDY OF FINAL YEAR SECONDARY SCHOOL

LEARNERS (3° AS)

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Submitted by:

Mrs Wafia Tihal

Supervised by:

Prof. Faiza Bensemmane

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Board of Examiners

Chair: Dr. Nadia Mahiddine

University of Algiers 2

Supervisor: Prof. Faiza Bensemmane

University of Algiers 2

Internal /External Examiner: Dr. Souryana Yassine

University of Tizi Ouzou

I hereby declare that the substance of this dissertation is entirely the result of my investigation and that due reference or acknowledgement is made, whenever necessary, to the work of other researchers.

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Signed.....

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Abstract

The present descriptive and exploratory study aims to explore the effectiveness of Vocabulary Learning Strategies used by final year school students and to test their retention of the target words thereby measuring their vocabulary size. It is based on the works of Oxford (1990) and Schmitt (1997).

A vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire adapted from Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy was used to gather data on the students' use of five identified Vocabulary Learning strategies : Determination (DET), Social (SOC), Memory (MEM), Cognitive (COG) and Metacognitive (MET) strategies .

A Vocabulary Achievement test was used to evaluate their word retention . A questionnaire to teachers was designed to elicit their attitude towards vocabulary teaching and the recall strategies taught for long term vocabulary retention.

The results demonstrate that:

1. 'Shallow' strategies ('taking notes', 'guessing from context' and 'asking classmates') did not cause retention as they did not require manipulation of vocabulary .
2. At a receptive level, students used 'bilingual dictionary', 'guessing from context' and 'asking classmates' strategies to comprehend the meaning of unknown words.
3. At a productive level , 'discovery' strategies were used. Students avoided strategies involving deep mental processing(such as Keyword Method, Semantic Mapping and Spaced Word Practice)and used strategies which cause attrition.
4. Teachers did not use efficient strategies to help their students increase their word retention.

Finally, proposals were made for teachers to improve vocabulary retention in EFL secondary school students.

Key words: Attrition, Retention, Vocabulary, Vocabulary learning strategies.

Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	1
1- Research Motivation and Statement of the Problem	2
2- The Purpose and Significance of the Study.....	3
CHAPTER ONE: CRITICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON VOCABULARY	
LEARNING,RETENTION, AND STRATEGIES	
1.1 Vocabulary and Learning.....	6
1.1.1 Defining Word and Vocabulary.....	6
1.1.2 The Importance of Vocabulary Learning Goals	10
1.1.3 Vocabulary Learning approaches.....	11
1.1.4 Number of Words Students Need to Know	15
1.1.5 What Does it Mean to Know a Word?.....	18
1.2 Remembering Words: Memory, Retention and Attrition.....	23
1.2.1 Ausubel’s Meaningful Theory of Learning (1968)	24
1.2.2 The Depth of Processing Hypothesis (1975).....	25
1.3 Vocabulary Learning Strategies.....	26
1.3.1 Definition of VLS	26
1.3.2 Taxonomies of VLS	28

A- Oxford’s Taxonomy (1990)	29
B- Schmitt’s Taxonomy (1997).....	32
1.4 Strategies for Comprehending and Retaining New Words	
A- The Keyword Method	35
B- Visualization	35
C- Grouping	36
D- Associating.....	36
E- Semantic Mapping.....	36
F Guessing From Context.....	36
G- Dictionary Use.....	37
H- Recycling / Space-Practice.....	37
1.5 Survey of Studies on Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Retention.....	39

CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH METHOD AND PROCEDURE

2.1 Research Design and Method.....	43
2.1.1 Subjects.....	44
2.1.2 Data Collection.....	45
A-Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire.....	45
B-Vocabulary Achievement Test.....	46
2.2 Procedure of Data Collection.....	48

CHAPTER THREE: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

3.1 Discovery Strategies as The Main Strategies For Retaining Words	52
A: Determination Strategies.....	54
B: Social Strategies.....	56
3.2 Consolidation Strategies.....	56
A: Social Strategies.....	57
B:Memory Strategies.....	58
C: Cognitive Strategies.....	63
D: Metacognitive Strategies.....	66
3.3 Strategies Most Frequently Used by students.....	70
3.4 Strategies the Least Frequently Used By Students.....	73
3.5 The Importance of the Inputs.....	79
3.6 Shallow Processing as an Ineffective Strategy for Vocabulary Retention.....	86
3.7 ‘Putting Words in Context’ and ‘Using a Dictionary’ are the Dominant Teachers’ Strategies.....	102
3.8 Summary of the Research Findings.....	115

CONCLUSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS.....	119
1- Pedagogical Implications.....	120
2- Limitations of This Study and Suggestions For Future Research.....	121
References	123
Appendix 1(Students' questionnaire)	131
Appendix 2 (Teachers' questionnaire).....	134
Appendix 3 (Vocabulary Achievement Test).....	137
Abstract in Arabic	140

INTRODUCTION

A recurring theme in the field of teaching and learning English has been the neglect of vocabulary. The prevailing approaches such as The Grammar Translation Method, Audio Lingual Method and others focused on controlling the grammar of the target language and considered a learner a 'passive recipient'. (Hedge, 2000; Takac, 2001).

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, and with the advent of Communicative Methodology, a great awareness began to be noticed among both researchers and teachers with regard to vocabulary learning. People started to re-think about the role of vocabulary in language pedagogy and attention was taken away from teaching-centred perspective to learning-centred perspective.

Today, researchers and teachers agree that vocabulary is of utmost importance for language learning. However, learning vocabulary is not easy because there are always new words to learn. Dorzi (2011:138) ascertains that vocabulary is "a never-ending process and often poses insurmountable difficulties for language learners".

Consequently, many researchers put more and more focus on the strategies students use to learn language in general and vocabulary in particular (Allen, 1983; Schmitt, 1997; Takac, 2008; Zimmerman, 2009). Currently, premium is put on "how the actions of learners might affect their acquisition of language" (Schmitt, 1997:199). It is worth noting that Rubin (1975) and Stern (1975) are the first scholars who advocated necessity for learners to use a variety of learning strategies in order to

become good learners and succeed in acquiring a language .These two researchers were followed by many others who adapted different approaches to explore the effectiveness of vocabulary learning strategies. We can group them in three categories:

First, researchers such as Cohen and Aphek(1981); Lawson and Hogben (1996) explored the use of strategies in vocabulary learning tasks.

Second, Ahmed(1989); GU and Johnson (1996) investigated the frequency of use of strategies from self-report strategy questionnaire and from some achievement scores.

Third, Schmitt (1997) investigated the opinions of students on how effective they perceive strategies based on their past learning strategies

However, using the strategies does not guarantee long term retention of vocabulary. According to the Depth of Processing Hypothesis, students must use deep processing strategies which involve more cognitive energy and a great manipulation and elaboration of meaning for better word retention. Craik and Tulving (1975) advocate that using strategies which involve deeper engagement with words should definitely lead to higher retention.

1-Research Motivation and Statement of the problem

In my long experience of English teaching in a secondary school, I have noticed that many students forget the new vocabulary learned soon after the test or exam and then most of these supposedly learned vocabulary items become 'dead'. I have also

heard them complaining that they often fail to convey a message or express themselves freely because they cannot recall these “learned” words at will. Two possible explanations could be given to this problem: Either students are not really interested in learning English and learn vocabulary just for a short term purpose (test, exams), or that they learn it but they use inappropriate strategies which do not help them to remember new words.

When I think back on my teaching experience, I can hardly recall any training or lesson concerned with vocabulary learning strategies’ instructions for retaining words. Indeed, in the absence of training of teachers on the use of vocabulary learning strategies, each teacher teaches according to what s/he thinks is suitable for his/her students. That is why, the problem of vocabulary retention and attrition has interested me, and I was strongly motivated to investigate vocabulary learning strategies, what students use to comprehend and retain new words and what strategies are effective in terms of retention and production. Finally, this study will inquire into teachers’ attitude towards vocabulary learning and teaching and the strategies they use to help students retain new words.

2- The Purpose and Significance of the study

This study is conducted in an attempt to identify the strategies used by students in secondary school and then try to find out whether a correlation exists between students’ use of these strategies and their success or failure in retaining new words

through an achievement test. A second purpose of this research is to investigate the strategies teachers use in teaching vocabulary in order to help students store and retrieve words in the target language.

This research will attempt to answer the following research questions:

RQ 1-What strategies do students use to learn new L2 vocabulary?

RQ 2-How effective are their strategies for the comprehension and retention of new words?

RQ 3-What strategies do teachers use to help the students retain new vocabulary?

In order to answer RQ1, we will investigate how pupils proceed in order to internalize new words and retrieve them when needed, what steps and techniques they use to facilitate their learning of vocabulary, why they cannot retain the learned words over a long period of time and why they are unable to use them appropriately.

To answer RQ2, we will see whether students use effective strategies or not to understand, retain and recall words whenever needed.

To answer RQ3, we will see how teachers deal with short-term and long-term vocabulary retention, and if they have strategies to help learners to store words and actively use them in both spoken and written English.

To achieve these objectives, a questionnaire and an achievement test will be used to collect research data.

The dissertation comprises three chapters. The first chapter reviews relevant literature concerning L2 vocabulary learning, memory retention and attrition, and vocabulary learning strategies. The second chapter deals with a discussion of the research methodology. In the third chapter, the results of the study are presented and discussed. The conclusion serves as a summary of the most important findings and discusses the implications of the study, the limitations, and provides some suggestions for further studies. The appendices sections present the data used in the study: the questionnaires (teachers and students) and the test given to the participants.

CHAPTER ONE

1- Critical Review of Literature on Vocabulary Learning, Retention and Vocabulary Learning Strategies

This chapter provides an overview of the literature related to the study of vocabulary learning, retention and vocabulary learning strategies (VLS). It comprises two parts:

The first section deals with Vocabulary and Learning and starts by defining the concepts of 'vocabulary' and 'word'. Next, the importance of vocabulary goals is discussed along with, vocabulary learning approaches, the number of words students need to know, and finally, what it means to 'know a word'.

The second section deals with memory retention and attrition with regard to Ausubel's Theory of Learning and the Depth of Processing Hypothesis. Then, the importance of vocabulary learning strategies is discussed, followed by the taxonomy of VLS proposed by Oxford (1990) and Schmitt (1997). Finally, studies on VLS are presented with some strategies suggested for comprehending and retaining vocabulary.

1.1 Vocabulary and Learning

1.1.1 Defining Word and Vocabulary

It is very important to draw a clear distinction between the term word and vocabulary.

A number of scholars agree with the fact that trying to define a word is not easy and that there are “so many formally different definitions of this term that their number alone suggests the complexity of the problem” (Takac,2008:4)

As a matter of fact of this complexity and because the aim of my research is to investigate the problem of retention through vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) used by Algerian students in secondary schools, the history of the words will be left out and I limit myself to define both terms ‘word’ and ‘vocabulary’ and endeavor to draw , if possible, a clear distinction between both terms.

Zimmerman (2009:1) cited Winston Churchill who, addressing Walter Monckton, says “I still have the idea, Walter, but I can’t find the words to clothe them”. From this quotation, it is clear that words are very important since they permit us to “clothe” our ideas and express them appropriately. But is there a difference between ‘word’ and ‘vocabulary’?

Hornby (2000:1490) in The Oxford Advanced Learners’ Dictionary of Current English defines a word as “sound or combination of sounds forming a unit of the grammar or vocabulary of a language”, and vocabulary is considered to be “the total number of words which (with the rules for combining them) make up a language” (2000:1447). Richards and Schmitt (1985:588) define a word as “the smallest of the linguistic unit which can occur on its own in speech or writing” whereas vocabulary as

“a set of lexemes, including single words, compound words and idioms” (1985:580). Furthermore, Thornbury (2006:244) defines a ‘word’ as “the smallest language item that can occur on its own” while vocabulary as “that area of language learning that is concerned with word knowledge” (2006:240). Later, he adds that it (vocabulary) “consists of a wide range of lexical forms” (2008:.6). Skiljan (1994, cited in Takac, 2008) states that a word is “a combination of morphemes that comprises a firm unit suitable for the formation of higher level units” while Takac, (2008) defines vocabulary as “a dictionary or a set of words”.

We can see that a word operates as a “part of vocabulary” in a language and that to learn vocabulary means essentially to learn words of the target language. All the above definitions stress that defining a word is very complex. Schmitt (2000:1,2), in an attempt to highlight the meaning of a word, gives as an example the verb ‘die’ which can have various items carrying the same meaning:

die

expire

pass away

bite the dust

kick the bucket

give up the ghost

All these items are, in fact, synonyms of ‘to die’. (by synonym we mean words that have the same meaning), and to handle these items, the term ‘lexeme’, also called

'lexical unit' or 'lexical item' has been set forth so as "to get round the fuzziness of the word word"(Thornbury, 2006:119).The three terms ('lexeme', 'lexical unit', 'lexical item')are seen as "an item that functions as a single meaning unit regardless of the number of words it contains" (Schmitt,2000:3).This goes in line with the definition given by Thornbury (2006:120) which states that "lexical item means 'any item' that functions as a single meaning unit, regardless of its different derived forms or of the number of words that make it up". As far as Takac's (2008:5-6) definition is concerned, a lexeme is "an abstract unit that includes various orthographic, phonological, grammatical and semantic features of a word" .This means that the six terms mentioned above by Schmitt (die, expire, pass away, bite the dust, kick the bucket, give up the ghost) are in fact lexemes with the same meaning. Likewise, for Thornbury (2000), take is the lexeme of which to take and taking are variants, and when two words have the same form but different meanings, they are not the same lexeme. A lexeme can have different forms in a spoken or written sentence, and all inflected forms such as 'give', 'gave', 'given', 'giving' belong to the one lexeme 'give' (Richards and Schmitt, 1985). In addition, Thornbury (2006) states that "lexis is a technical term for the vocabulary of a language" and a lexicon is "a collection of words, and is often used to talk about the way vocabulary is stored in the mind, as in the mental lexicon". But for the purpose of this study, the word 'vocabulary' will be used generically.

Words are organized in our mental lexicon which is a kind of dictionary containing word's knowledge. Hulstijn (2000, quoted in Takac) defines the mental lexicon as "a

memory system in which a vast number of words, accumulated in the course of time, has been stored” (2008:11)

The mental lexicon is, indeed, viewed to be highly ‘structured’ and ‘organized’. Therefore, words are not stored randomly in the mind but are organized in our mental lexicon, and in it words are stored and brought back when needed for use. Hedge (2000:122) states that the mental lexicon is often regarded as “a storehouse, a library, an encyclopedia, and a computer”.

It is clear that if we want to learn a language and be able to communicate both in oral or written form, we must enlarge our vocabulary by learning a ‘package’ of words and the strategies that help in dealing with unfamiliar words. Hence, learning a language is primarily a matter of learning the vocabulary of that language.

1.1.2 The Importance of Vocabulary Learning Goals

As discussed above, vocabulary is a key element in learning a language. Learners should be made aware that it is the pillar of any skill and without it nothing can be done in the classroom. Therefore, it is important for language teachers to set forth vocabulary learning goals when they plan a lesson so that they can guarantee success for their learners. This should be done through teaching vocabulary in isolation and in context. The main goal of vocabulary learning should be to determine the meaning of a new word, to retain it in the mental lexicon for a long term in order to retrieve it for appropriate use and therefore enlarge the learner’s lexical repertoire. Two essential learning goals of vocabulary teaching are comprehension and retention.

Comprehension is “the identification of the intended meaning of written or spoken communication” (Richards and Schmitt, 1985:99) while **Retention** is “the ability to recall or remember things after an interval of time” (Richards and Schmitt, 1985:457)

Through comprehension and retention, we can limit **attrition** which Chamot (1999:286) defines as “the loss of a second or foreign language after instructions”.

Nation (2001:6) rightly remarks that “it is useful to be able to set learning goals that will allow us to use the language in the ways we want to”. So a good learner should set for himself / herself important goals such as to understand, store, and recall words in long-term memory and not in short-term memory only. To achieve these goals the learner must pay attention and take into consideration “the number of words in the language, the number of words known by native speakers and the number of words needed to use the language” (Nation,2001:6).

In sum, when teachers teach vocabulary, one of their goals should be to help their students in setting learning goals and in making them aware of the importance of pronouncing well and spelling words correctly, retaining the new words by using appropriate strategies and then using them to express their ideas and thoughts appropriately. It is in this way that students can enlarge their vocabulary and improve their language proficiency.

1.1.3 Vocabulary Learning Approaches

As seen in the previous sections, there is no doubt that vocabulary is essential in learning a language. There are a number of vocabulary learning approaches, and

there is no 'right' or 'best' technique for learning vocabulary. The choice of one approach rather than another will depend mainly on the student himself, what words we want him to learn , the school system and curriculum. (Schmitt, 2000)

In studies on L2 vocabulary learning, two main approaches are described as being used by learners in order to learn the vocabulary of a language. These two approaches are: the Indirect Vocabulary Learning Approach, and the Direct Vocabulary Learning Approach. The first approach or indirect approach is often referred to as implicit or 'incidental learning' (i.e., learning from context) and the second approach as explicit or 'intentional learning'.

In the 1970's and the 1980's teaching was based on the indirect approach or implicit / incidental learning of vocabulary because of the influence of "the top down, naturalistic, and communicative approach" (Sokmen, 1991, quoted in Schmitt and Mc Carthy, 1997). This approach holds that words are learned 'unconsciously', which means that the learner does not know that he is learning them. All his focus is, indeed, on the meaning of the message carried and not the form. For example, Learners learn new words indirectly while reading or listening as discussed below.

In the classroom, 'implicit/Incidental' vocabulary learning happens through context; that is, through a lot of reading because reading favors guessing from context. Moreover, implicit /incidental learning happens when "one is using language for communicative purposes" (Schmitt, 2000:120) and it requires a lot of exposure. Elley, (1991, quoted in Schmitt, 2000) cites a research undertaken in the South Pacific

Islands where students were exposed to 'extensive reading' of stories. The results showed that the students' lexical repertoire was enlarged. This demonstrates the importance of such 'book flood' in providing the learners with the right and beneficial exposure they need for their learning of vocabulary.

To learn vocabulary from context covers "learning from extensive reading, learning from taking part in conversation, and learning from listening to stories, films, television, or the radio" (Nation, 2001: 232). However, this approach seems to have some problems. Parry (1993) conducted a longitudinal study of university students to see their progress in reading and found that guessing from context does not ensure long-term retention because students in this study could guess the meaning of words while working with a test but were completely unable to remember the meaning once tested later. This view is shared by Sokmen (1991) who claimed that guessing from context does not necessarily help learners to recall words.

For Schmitt (2000 :120), in implicit/incidental learning, one has to read a great amount of texts and do a lot of reading before they can come across the target words and thus consider this approach as "slower and more gradual, lacking the focused attention of explicit learning".

The Direct approach, or the 'explicit/intentional' vocabulary learning approach involves 'conscious' learning because learners learn vocabulary explicitly. Stoller and Grabe (1993) suggest that learning vocabulary explicitly is beneficial and state clearly that it is the kind of learning which occurs through selective learning. However, for

Schmitt, this way of learning is 'time-consuming' and for students, it would be "too laborious to learn an adequately sized lexicon" (2000: 12).

It is worth pointing that the two terms (explicit and implicit/ learning) have been challenged by Hulstijn (2001, cited in Nation, 2001) who argues that these two terms are not "particularly relevant to studies of vocabulary learning"; what really counts is "the quality of the mental processing that takes place during learning" (Hulstijn, 2001). For Schmitt (2000) and Nation (2001) both 'incidental' and 'intentional' learning are needed for second language learners. They agree that the two types of learning interweave and that they are 'complementary', "each one enhancing the learning that comes from the other" (Nation, 2001: 232). Schmitt (2000:120) advocates that the most frequent words should be given 'explicit attention' whereas the less frequent words are best left to indirect learning. Emphasizing the importance of both approaches, Ellis (1994:212) draws a distinction between 'the form' learning aspects of vocabulary and 'the meaning' aspects of vocabulary. It is more suitable and beneficial to learn word forms through implicit learning while explicit learning is left to meaning. Nation (2001:34) states that implicit learning is achieved through repeated meetings of the word but the explicit one is done through the depth of processing activities which involve thinking about the meaning, deliberate inferencing, and using images. Thus, the meaning of a new word should be taught explicitly and both teachers and learners "should discuss where and when certain words should not be used.

As a matter of fact, learners can learn vocabulary using both approaches incidentally and intentionally. One has to admit that it is quite impossible to teach the students everything they need. Learners learn the core vocabulary (i.e. the basic vocabulary) that is part of the course explicitly, and learn other words implicitly/incidentally through their listening and reading. Consequently, the two approaches are very helpful and important in the students' learning process and should be complementary.

To summarize, the combination of both approaches can contribute to effective vocabulary learning and thus improve learners' language proficiency. Today, "the pendulum has swung from direct teaching of vocabulary (the Grammar Translation Method) to incidental (the Communicative Approach) and now, laudably, back in the middle: implicit and explicit learning" (Sokmen,1991, quoted in Schmitt and McCarthy,1997:239)

1.1.4 Number of words students need to know

Because it is important for students to know a sufficient 'package' of vocabulary in order to succeed in building up their language skills, it is worth discussing vocabulary size and see how many words a L2 learner needs to know to be able to handle easily the four skills (Listening, Reading ,Speaking, Writing).Firstly, one must be informed about the learner's purpose in learning vocabulary. Students' needs are the only component which can help to decide on how many words they must learn because this will increase their motivation and help them to learn these words easily. For

instance, the demand for learning vocabulary for someone who intends to visit England would be different from the demand for studying at the university. (Schmitt, 2000; Thornbury, 2002)

With respect to second language learners, Schmitt points out that “2,000 words seems to be the most commonly cited initial goal” (Schmitt, 2000: 142) and Thornbury remarks that 2,000 words are ‘the core vocabulary’ that is suitable in almost all the situations and this is the reason why L2 learners should be equipped with this lexical stock in order to be successful in language skills.

It is worth noting that most learners wish to be able to grasp English so that they can express themselves and also comprehend radio and T.V programs just like a native speaker does (Allen, 1983). To achieve these goals, they must learn 15,000-20,000 word families in order to learn a great number of words ‘similar in size’ to words known by a native speaker. (Nation and Waring, 1997, cited in Schmitt, 2000:143). (By word families we mean a group of words which have the same root but different affixes). Indeed, it is suggested that an educated native speaker of English knows well around 20,000 words (or to be more precise 20,000 word families). This is explained by their continual adding of approximately a thousand words each year of their early life. (Nation, 2001; Thornbury, 2002)

Nation and Waring (1997:10, quoted in Schmitt and Mc Carthy, 1997) agree that “a vocabulary size of 2,000 to 3,000 words provides a very good basis for language use” (p.9-10). Allen (1983) remarks that 30,000 is the number which is generally referred

to for a 'real command' of the language but adds that it is an unachievable aim because teachers find that learning 30,000 words is quite 'discouraging'. This goes in parallel with Schmitt, (2000) and Thornbury, (2002), who admit that all these words cannot be taught solely by the teacher in the classroom because they (teachers) are compelled by a specific list of words related to the curriculum and is limited by time. And to help teachers cope with such a serious problem, Allen (1983:105) suggests choosing words which are used frequently. This means that "if students are going to meet a word frequently in their reading of English, that word is important to learn "

On the other hand, Nation (1990, quoted in Schmitt, 2000:144) proposes helping students learn all these words through the use of useful strategies such as "guessing from context, learning word roots and affixes, and applying mnemonic techniques". (VLS will be discussed in another section). Moreover, teachers should leave students discover the meaning of new words by giving them homework like to discover the meaning of new words through reading texts at home and then consolidate the meaning of these words in the classroom through activities specifically designed for this purpose.(Schmitt,2000).

Meara (1995, cited in Schmitt, 2000) insists that 2,000 words are so important that teachers should teach them explicitly and suggests that if learners learn 50 words per week, then all these 2,000 words will be covered in 40 weeks, that is in one academic year. So "with a vocabulary size of 2,000, a learner knows 80 percent of the words in a text which means that one word in every five (approximately two words in every line) are unknown" (Schmitt and Mc Carthy, 1997:9-10)

It is worth mentioning that for Schmitt (2000) vocabulary is better learned if learners learn in group. A research study done earlier in Japan by Schmitt (1997) shows the importance of ‘cooperative group learning’ and thus concluded that “the social context enhances motivation of the participants” (Schmitt 2000:145). This view is shared by Dansereau (1988) who states that when teachers do not really intervene, learners have more time to use and manipulate language in class (Dansereau, 1988). Hence, teachers are encouraged to engage learners in team activities.

To summarize, L2 learners are required to learn a certain number of words in order to use language appropriately and be able to understand it easily. The number of words depends greatly on the students’ goal and need. Thus,:

2,000 words for conversational speaking, 3,000 word families to begin reading authentic texts, perhaps as many as 10,000 for challenging academic texts, and 15,000 or 20,000 to equal an educated native speaker. (Schmitt, 2000:157)

As a matter of fact, learning words which are frequently used will help learners understand any type of text. The following section will deal with the issue of knowing a word.

1.1.5 What does it mean to ‘know a word’?

This section examines the different aspects involved in knowing a word.

To know a word means to know its ‘form’, ‘meaning’, and ‘use’. (Nation, 2001; Thornbury, 2002). For Thornbury, to know a word does not mean to know its

‘dictionary meaning’ only, but also covers the knowledge of other aspects namely “the words commonly associated with it (its collocation) as well as its connotation, including its register and its cultural accretions” (2002 :15).

This study will be limited to those aspects of a word which are the most useful, practical and appropriate to the level of our secondary school learners.

When we say that learners know the ‘form’ of a word, we mean that they know its spelling and pronunciation. By ‘meaning’, we refer to the denotation of the lexical item itself, that is, its literal definition and the related meanings through the different encounters. And lastly, knowing a word involves also knowing how to ‘use’ it .

The learner must take into consideration the grammar of the word, its collocation and even its levels of formality and informality. Thus, knowing how to put this word in a sentence correctly is important since knowing an L2 lexical item “inevitably includes the ability of productive use; i.e. efficient retrieval of the lexical item for active use” (Takac, 2008:10). This is confirmed by Oxford and Crookall (1990) who ascertain that to know a L2 word is not only a matter of matching it with its L1 counterpart, but rather involves “being able to use the L2 word communicatively in any of the four main language skills”

According to Nation, the notion of ‘receptive’ and ‘productive’ “covers all the aspects of what is involved in knowing a word” (2001:26). This leads us to distinguish between receptive and productive knowledge of a word. Nation (op.cit:24-25) defines receptive vocabulary use as that of “perceiving the form of a word while

listening or reading and retrieving its meaning” and productive use as that “wanting to express a meaning through speaking or writing and retrieving the appropriate spoken or written form” (p.25).

Table 2 below lists the aspects of knowing a word adapted from Nation (2001:27)

Form	Spoken	R	What does the word sound like?
		P	How is the word pronounced?
	Written	R	What does the word look like?
		P	How is the word written and spelled?
	Word parts	R	What parts are recognizable in the word?
		P	What word parts are needed to express the Meaning?
Meaning	Form and meaning	R	What meaning does this word form signal?
		P	What word form can be used to express this Meaning?
	Concept and referents	R	What is included in the concept?
		P	What items can the concept refer to?
	Associations	R	What other words does this make us think of?
		P	What other words could we use instead of this one?
Use	Grammatical functions	R	In what patterns does the word occur?
		P	In what patterns must we use this word?
	Collocations	R	What words or types of words occur with this One?
		R	Where, when, and how often would we Expect to meet this word?
	Constraints on use (register, frequency)		

Schmitt (2000) suggests that receptive and productive knowledge of words should not be considered separately since studies have shown that some students can easily know the meaning of a word in isolation but are unable to use it in context while others can produce a word but not read it.

In general learners agree that the most difficult aspect in learning a word is its meaning and usage because a word can have different meanings associated to it. Zimmerman (2009:1) illustrates the various complicated details in word-meaning through the verb lose. According to him, at a given level, a student learns that lose is “to be unable to find something”, but soon after, he discovers that this verb has different other usages that are far from the literal definition. Hence, he finds for example:

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| -lose a tooth | -lose weight | -lose sleep |
| -lose a turn | -lose a loved one | -lose a place in a line |
| -lose money | -lose face | |

(Zimmerman, 2009:2)

Words are not learned from the first encounter. The different aspects of learning a word (e.g., meaning, collocation, word parts, grammatical features, register...) are grasped ‘gradually’ over a period of time as a result of numerous exposures to the word and using it. (Zimmerman, 2009; Schmitt, 2000). Consequently, learners should

approach it as a 'process' rather than just 'an act of memorization' (Zimmerman, 2009)

Word –learning is complex. It is sometimes 'daunting' (Zimmerman, 2009) and it requires a lot of effort. Nation (2001) talks about the 'learning burden' of a word. Namely "the amount of effort required to learn it" (Nation, 2001:23). When L1 (i.e., the first language) is 'closely related' to L2 (i. e, the target language), then the learning burden of words is 'light' for the learner and therefore words can be learned without involving much effort, whereas when L1 is not related to L2, then the learning burden becomes 'heavy' and learners will find it difficult to learn words. (Nation, 2001).

To summarize, knowing a word entails recognizing it when it is written or spoken, being able to pronounce it and spell it correctly, recall it easily and use it appropriately with the various meanings associated with it. The learner should try to get information of the word from 'each encounter' and "to gradually add layer after layer of knowledge until a word is understood and can be used with ease" (Zimmerman, 2009:.5)

However, knowing a word does not prove that learners will be able to store and memorize it whenever needed.

The next part of this literature review will focus on memory, retention, attrition and vocabulary learning strategies.

1.2 Remembering Words: Memory, Retention and Attrition

Forgetting (also known as Attrition) is an important issue in relation to the acquisition of lexical competence. This point has often been discussed with English inspectors of secondary education stressing that our secondary school learners tend to forget words that were presented and practised in class soon after being tested. Most of the time, students complain about their inability to retain words for a long period of time even when they spend hours memorizing long lists of words. Where does the problem lie?

This section investigates the problem of retention and attrition in an attempt to find out why retention is so difficult and why attrition occurs, hoping to find clues that may help our students retain and retrieve new vocabulary even after a period of disuse. To this end, it is essential to understand how memory works, examining Ausubel's Meaningful Learning Theory (1968) and the Depth of Processing Hypothesis (Craik and Tulving, 1975).

To understand how memory works, researchers make a distinction between two types of memory: Short- Term Memory and Long- Term Memory.

Short term memory (STM) is also called Working Memory and it is our ability to retain items for few seconds. Thornbury (2002:23) describes it as "the brain's capacity to hold a limited number of items of information for periods of time up to a few seconds" whereas long term memory (LTM) is that memory which stores words for a longer period of time. Likewise, Schmitt (2000:131) states that STM is "fast but has a

small storage capacity” while LTM “has an almost unlimited storage capacity but is relatively slow”. Thus, the learned vocabulary is supposed to move from “the quickly forgotten to the never forgotten”. (Thornbury, 2002:24)

Learning a language is not only a matter of learning a long list of words but also retaining them because “learning is remembering” (Thornbury, 2002:23). This leads us to discuss Ausubel’s Meaningful Theory of Learning.

1.2. 1 Ausubel’s Meaningful Theory of Learning

In order to understand how learning and retention are enhanced, Ausubel (1968) makes a distinction between rote learning and meaningful learning.

Rote learning is the process which involves mentally storing items as ‘discrete’ and ‘isolated’ entities ; these items have little or no association with already existing cognitive structure, whereas meaningful learning is referred to as being a process of relating the new items to already established entities in cognitive structure.

Ausubel sees that relating the new learning material to the learner’s prior knowledge can be meaningful for any learning situation (Ausubel in Brown 2000). This is confirmed by William (1890:662) who ,describing the importance of meaningful learning, states:

In mental terms, the more other fact is associated with in the mind, the better possession of it our memory retains. Each of its associates becomes a hook to which it hangs...Together, they form a

network of attachments by which it is woven into the entire issue of our thought. The 'secret of good memory' is thus the secret of forming devices and multiple associations with every fact we care to retain.

Therefore, learning new material by rote is not effective in terms of retention or long- term memory and to remember unfamiliar words, meaningful learning becomes the best solution. (Brown, 2000). This implies that meaningful learning involves elaborating and processing information as is suggested by the Depth of Processing Hypothesis.

1.2.2 The Depth of Processing Hypothesis (DPH)

The prominent figures of this hypothesis are Craik and Tulving (1975). According to this hypothesis, when a person exerts cognitive energy when manipulating and thinking about a word, he/she will be able to recall the word effortlessly and use it later.

The seminal work of Craik and Tulving stipulates that the storage and retention of new items is not determined by the 'length of time' being exposed to the new item but rather on the 'shallowness' or 'depth' with which the new word is processed. They state that "memory performance depends on the depth to which the stimulus is analyzed" (Craik and Tulving, 1975:290). By 'depth of processing', the authors refer to great degrees of semantic involvement which result in higher

retention in contrast to processing only the phonological form of a new word which is done at a rather shallow level. Thus, learners must pay careful attention to how words are pronounced and written, their grammatical category, the meaning they convey and how they relate semantically to other words and avoid shallow processing which involves giving importance to only one or two of these dimensions. (Laufer and Hulstijn, 2001). Craik and Tulvig (1985 cited in Hedge, 2000) point out that learners can easily retain a new word if they have “worked on its meaning actively”. This means that when there is depth of processing, then the ‘input’ becomes easily ‘intake’. Craik and Lockhard (1972 cited in Carter and Mc Carty, 1988:62) state that “there is a tight relationship between ‘cognitive depth’ and ‘retention’”. However, Folse (2006) gives counter-evidence about the Depth of Processing Hypothesis and finds that students who practised shallow processing activities of “fill in the blanks” resulted in recalling and better retention of target word than students who were given the same length of time and processed vocabulary into sentences.

. 1.3 Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS)

1.3.1 Definition of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS)

Learning words and using them appropriately is not only hard and laborious but also takes much time. This is why learners have to learn specific techniques and approaches that help them in knowing the meaning of words, storing them and recalling them when needed. This can only be done through the use of different types

of vocabulary learning strategies.

So what are vocabulary learning strategies?

'Learning strategies' refer to the adequate equipment made at the disposal of the learner in order to facilitate for him /her learning process and makes it more efficient.

Strategies are therefore believed to facilitate and regulate learning and make it more rapid, more effective and more transferable to new situations. (Oxford, 1990).

According to Nation (2001) a strategy must have the following characteristics:

- 1-involve choice; that is, there should be several strategies to choose from
- 2-be complex; that is, there should be several steps to learn
- 3-require knowledge and benefit from training
- 4-increase the efficiency of vocabulary learning and vocabulary use (2001: 217)

Since the advent of communicative language teaching, the focus is less on teaching and more on learning and on understanding "how the actions of learners might affect their acquisition of language" (Schmitt, 2000:52). These definitions are in line with that of Rubin (1987) and Oxford (1990), both cited in Takac (2008:51). According to Rubin, VLS are "what learners do to learn and do to regulate their learning" and Oxford states that learning strategies are "behaviors or actions which learners use to make language learning more successful, self-directed and enjoyable".

Takac (2008) also remarks that strategies are “a resource that learners can turn to in solving language learning tasks”, and that “they cannot be characterized as inherently either good or bad but as potentially useful”. They are the only means through which learners can enlarge their vocabulary repertoire and achieve their language learning goals.

All these definitions have something in common: VLS are ‘conscious’ actions that learners deliberately use in order to grasp the meaning of words and remember them and so improve their language learning. In other words, a learner strategy refers to the various steps and approaches adopted by the learner for the purpose of learning.

For the purpose of this study, VLS will be taken to mean “activities consciously chosen by learners with the purpose of regulating their own language learning” (Griffths, 2007:91).

1.3.2 Taxonomies of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

It is widely accepted that words are the building blocks of a language. They are also the primary tool for communication. Unfortunately, because of time constraints, teachers find themselves obliged to deal only with words imposed by the syllabus content, and not with words necessary for communicating in language. In order to be able to understand and retain words for a long period of time, learners need to know and use various strategies which give them the opportunity to take more control of their own learning (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2000). Many researchers such as Cohen

(1987; 1990); Oxford (1990); Rubin and Thompson (1994); Stoffer (1995); GU and Johnson (1996); Lawson and Hogben (1996); Schmitt (1997), Nation (2001) and others have attempted to classify Vocabulary Learning Strategies in order to help learner understand and increase their lexical repertoire through better retention.

The primary measuring instrument in this study is Oxford's(1990) Strategy Inventory For Language Learning (SILL),and Schmitt' (1994)s taxonomy. These taxonomies are described in the next sections. They have been considered the most suitable for the following reasons:

1-Their questionnaires used as an instrument for collecting data in this study are very popular among researchers and have been used in various studies with EFL learners.

2-They have been 'validated' across cultures and languages. (Takac, 2008)

3-They can easily be adapted for the Algerian students participating in my study.

A: Oxford's Taxonomy (1990)

Oxford (1990) introduced a comprehensive taxonomy of language learning strategies, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) which has been used by many researchers in their studies. This taxonomy is regarded as "the most comprehensive taxonomy of learning strategies currently available" (Brown, 2001:217).

Oxford identifies two types of strategies: **Direct** strategies and **Indirect** strategies each of which entails three groups:

Direct strategies are “cognitive strategies, which learners apply directly to the language itself” (Brown, 2001:217). They comprise cognitive, memory and compensatory strategies. Cognitive strategies help the learner ‘manipulate’ and use the language. Takac (2008:53) states that cognitive strategies are “mental steps or actions that are employed in learning or problem solving” and that they involve “direct analysis, transformation or synthesis (i. e, direct manipulation) of learning material” . It is worth mentioning that cognitive strategies are generally used with beginners whereas at an advance level learners use less cognitive strategies because “their arsenal of vocabulary and structures has become larger” (Oxford, 2001 cited in Celce-Murcia, 2001:363).

Memory strategies are used to help students retain words and recall them easily when needed. They are based on making association, connecting the word to its synonyms or antonyms, combining sounds and images (the Key Word Method) and using gestures.

Compensatory strategies are used when learners try to grasp the meaning of an unknown word through guessing from context or through ‘talking around’ the missing word (Oxford 2001).

On the other hand, Indirect strategies are “metacognitive strategies, in which learners manage or control their own learning process” (Brown, 2001:217). They do

not involve a direct use of language; this is why, they are called so. These consist of Metacognitive, Affective and Social strategies.

Metacognitive strategies concern the “planning of learning, setting of goals, thinking about the learning process, monitoring of performance, as well as evaluation of results and the learning process” (Takac, 2008 : 53). In other words, Metacognitive Strategies make use of the following:

- Gathering and organizing materials
- Arranging and planning learning
- Monitoring mistakes
- Evaluating

(Oxford, 2001.in Celce-Murcia)

As far as Affective Strategies are concerned, these include lowering learners’ anxiety in order to facilitate learning and thus enable them to control their emotions. Learners make use of affective strategies when they are aware that negative feeling hinders learning.

The last type of strategies are Social Strategies and these help learners learn effectively through interaction, which means that learners can cope with any difficult item through asking questions to clarify what is misunderstood and also through asking for help when encountering problems in doing a given task. Indeed, cooperating with others increases self-confidence and enhance learning.

B. Schmitt's Taxonomy (1997): Schmitt (1997) developed a comprehensive classification of Vocabulary Learning Strategies based on Oxford's (1990) classification of Language Learning Strategies. This taxonomy includes four of the six categories of LLS from Oxford 1990's taxonomy, i.e. Social, Memory, Cognitive, Metacognitive, and he added a fifth type that he termed Determination strategies, not included in Oxford's classification that are defined below. In addition, he drew a clear distinction between strategies used for discovering a new word's meaning and strategies used for consolidating a word once it has been encountered. The former are called Discovery Strategies and contain Determination and Social Strategies and the latter Consolidation Strategies and contain: Cognitive, Metacognitive, Memory and Social strategies. Schmitt studied learners of English in Japan and based on this study he came up with six main VLS and fifty eight individual strategies of which only those strategies which are known to enhance retention will be described in this study.

B.1-Strategies Used for the Discovery of a New Word's Meaning

a--Determination Strategies (DET): According to Schmitt (1997:205), they are "the kind of strategies used by an individual when faced with discovering a new word's meaning without recourse to another person's expertise". These strategies are used for finding out the denotation of an unknown word. Learners try to understand by themselves without the help of their peers or teachers but only through analyzing

part of speech, analyzing affixes and roots, using gestures, guessing from context and using a bilingual or monolingual dictionary.

b- Social Strategies (SOC): Learners make use of these strategies by asking their teachers or peers for the meaning of the new word. They can use many different ways such as “giving the L1 translation if they know it, giving a synonyms or antonyms, giving a definition by paraphrase, using the new word in a sentence, or any combination of these” (Schmitt, 1997:210)

B-2-Strategies used for Consolidating a New Word After Being Encountered:

a -Social Strategies (SOC): When a learner learns in group and practises the meaning of the unknown word by interacting with other people, he is making use of social strategies.

b Memory Strategies (MEM): When a learner connects the word to be retained to his previous knowledge through the use of imagery or grouping, he is using memory strategies which is traditionally known as mnemonics. According to Schmitt (1997), this consists in connecting the word to its synonyms or antonyms, using gestures, or using the key Word Method. These strategies and others will be discussed in the following section .

C- Cognitive Strategy (COG): These are similar to memory strategies but do not require learners to engage in mental processing. They include mechanical means to

learn vocabulary. Cognitive Strategies for consolidating a new word meaning involve verbal and written repetition, the use of vocabulary notes , word lists....

d- Metacognitive Strategies (MET): Finally, when learners use strategies to test and assess their own learning and also use spaced word practice, we say that they are using metacognitive strategies. At this stage learners decide about “planning, monitoring, or evaluating the best way to study” (Schmitt, 2000:136). This, in fact, provides “input into the effectiveness of one’s choice of learning strategies, providing positive reinforcement if progress is being made or a signal to switch strategies if it is not” (Schmitt ,1997: 216)

To summarize this discussion on taxonomies, it is clear that learners have at their disposal a large number of strategies but the mostly needed strategies are those which will help them cope with unknown words, comprehend and retain them in their long-term memory. Some of the vocabulary learning strategies suggested by Oxford and Schmitt involve deep processing and thereby enhance more long term retention than others, as is discussed below.

1.4 Strategies for Comprehending and Retaining New vocabulary:

According to Schmitt (2000), these involve the Key Word Method, Visualization, Grouping, Associating, Semantic Mapping, Guessing from Context, Dictionary Use, and Recycling/Space-Practice.

A-The Key Word Method: This strategy suggested by (Atkinson, 1997) stipulates that to remember the meaning of a new word, learners use a word from the first language (the key word) which is acoustically similar to the L2 new word. Thus, they use an image which associates the pronunciation of the second language new word with the meaning of the first language word. (Thornbury, 2002). Nemati (2009) illustrates the Keyword Method through the example of an English learner learning the Spanish word **pan** meaning **bread**. This word **pan** can be learnt by imagining a loaf of bread in a **pan**. So, the Key Word Method pushes the learner to move from the acoustic link to the imagery link.

Schmitt (2000) considers this technique as the most effective for helping students retain words in their long term memory, contrary to memorizing words by repetition which does not enhance the retention of the target words because it demands 'shallow processing' and involves short term memory only.

Avila and Sadoski (1996) found in their study that students who used the Key Word Method could understand unfamiliar words and retain them longer than those who made use of rote repetition. However, some students found it time consuming and very hard to create images.

B-Visualization: This consists in memorizing words through visualizing or pairing them with pictures. Then, once a learner sees a given picture, he will immediately remember the word that labels it.

C-Grouping: This strategy aims at grouping words according to their attributes (color, size, function, likes, and dislikes, go, bad...), and is supposed to help learners store new information longer.

D- Associating: This involves linking the form and meaning of an item to concepts already in memory. In other words, learners learn and retain better from mental associations.

E-Semantic mapping: This strategy involves deep processing. Learners write the key word in the centre of the sheet of paper/ or a page and then write all words related to the key word. This allows students to grasp and retain words more efficiently.

F-Guessing from context: Guessing implies using all the surrounding information which can serve as clues to guess the meaning of a new word. Read (2000:53) proposes that such information can be:

- Identifying the word class of the unknown word.
- Scanning the surrounding sentence for other words that collocate with it.
- Looking for cohesive devices that link the sentence with the other sentences in the text.
- Analyzing the structure of the word itself into prefix, root and suffix.

This strategy aims at helping students discovering the meaning of new items and remembering them effectively.

G- Dictionary use: it is a strategy which aims at learning a new word by looking it up in the dictionary. It is a well-known strategy among learners in general. (Cohen and Macaro, 2007; Schmitt, 2000). However, students should be aware when consulting a bilingual or monolingual dictionary that it can sometimes mislead them because they tend to take in the first definition of the new item which can be polysemous. They ought to know how to use a dictionary correctly and choose only the relevant information they need.

H - Recycling / Spaced Word Practice: This is a very important strategy because it consists in reviewing the new words to ensure a better retention. Recycling means practising following a space of reviewing. Thornbury (2002) states that in order to ensure that every learned word moves into permanent long term memory, learners must adapt the spacing strategy and rehearsal which are viewed to be very helpful in recalling words. He adds that two factors determine retention: Firstly, words that are easy to learn are better retained. Secondly, if vocabulary learning occurs over 'spaced learning sessions', then words are retained much better than if they are learned in 'concentrated burst'. (Thornbury, 2002:26)

Nation (2001) argues that words that are distributed and spaced across a period of time are better retained than those learned in a 'single block'. This is in agreement with Oxford (1990) 's 'Spiraling 'and Pimsleur (1967)'s 'Memory Schedule'. Oxford (1990, cited in Nemati, 2009) advises learners to adapt a 'structural' reviewing. This consists in reviewing at different intervals. This is also

called 'spiraling' because learners "keep spiraling back to what has already been learned at the time they are learning new information" (Oxford, 1990:42).

Pimsleur (1997) also recommends learners to review and repeat the new vocabulary just after the first encounter and then gradually increase repetition at different intervals. Indeed, "this spaced repetition results in learning that will be remembered for a long period of time" (Nation, 2001:76). Moreover, Pimsleur, (1996) and Baddelly,(1990) (cited in Schmitt, 2000:130) state that 'expanding rehearsal' is important in reducing attrition. This can be achieved when learners revise the new words just after they have been taught and then revision should be done throughout 'increasing intervals'. In other words, forgetting decreases when there is spaced revision of the new information learned. Thus, Schmitt proposes that students must regularly check and see if they can remember words they have studied. Therefore, "if they can remember them, they should increase the interval before the next review, but if they cannot they should shorten the interval" (2000:131). Thornbury suggests that the 'spaced review' of what is learned can have a great effect on minimizing "the rate of forgetting" (2002:26). This is why, Nation, (2001), Schmitt (2000) and Thornbury (2002), all advise learners and teachers to recycle vocabulary in order to fight attrition. Hence, recycling can be "a remedy against forgetting" (Thornbury, op.cit:26)

1.5 Survey of Studies on Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Retention

This section aims to give an overview of studies that were conducted to compare the retention effects of different VLS.

A study was conducted by Brown and Perry (1991) comparing the following three vocabulary learning strategies: the key Word Method, a Semantic Processing Method and the Combined-Key Word Semantic Strategy. The aim of the study was to see which one results in better retention and retrieval of words. The subjects participating in this study were native Arabic speakers learning English.

The results showed that the Combined Key Word- Semantic Strategy was the best for retention, and then came the Key Word Method followed by the Semantic Processing Method.

Semantic Processing is a method based on manipulating words in different ways by paying attention to how new words relate to other words. (Beck et al, 1987, cited in Brown and Perry 1991). In the Key Word Method already defined in the previous section, Arabic speakers chose 'forsa' (meaning 'chance') as a key word for the selected word 'fortress'. In other words, both the Key-Word Method and the Semantic- Processing Method were good strategies for retention but the combination of both proved to be the best because it "produced both stronger memory traces and better retrieval paths than if used alone" (Brown and Perry, 1991:666)

Likewise, Baleghizadeh and Ashouri (2010) undertook a study investigating the effect of the Key Word Method and Word List Method on immediate retention. The results revealed that compared to the Word List Method, the Key-Word Method produced better retention.

Baleghizadeh and Yousfipoor Naeim, (2011) also underlined the importance of semantic mapping as a vocabulary learning strategy in their study which was run with a single-subject. A forty-five years old male learner learning English as a foreign language. The results of their study revealed that the learner's score on the test related to semantic mapping was high.

According to these researchers, semantic mapping allows learners to see the connection among words in a map and is thus an effective strategy that helps them foster their vocabulary retention. This is confirmed by the participant himself who said: " I had the picture of the maps in my mind when I wanted to remember the words. It helped me remember better"

Marafet and Shirazi (2003) examined the impact of teaching Direct Learning Strategies (memory, cognitive and compensation) on EFL learners' short- term and long-term retention. The participants in this study were 60 Iranian female English language learners. The findings indicate that learners (in this study) performed better when using memory strategies and showed long term retention of vocabulary. Then, came cognitive strategies and finally, compensation strategies were ranked third and showed no significant effect on the learners' retention of new items. The

memory strategies used in this study were: grouping/ imagery/ contextual effect and association. The conclusion drawn is in line with the study undertaken by Nemati (2009) who undertook a study with the pre-university students from India. The aim was to investigate the importance of memory vocabulary learning strategies and the impact these strategies have on students' long term retention. The study revealed that using memory VLS namely 'creating mental linkage', 'applying image and sound', 'reviewing well' and 'employing actions' enable students to store new vocabulary items and easily retrieve them when needed.

Read (2000) cited a series of experiments conducted by Hulstijn (1992) in Holland investigating the effects of guessing words from context and found evidence for his hypothesis that "the amount of mental effort that learners put into understanding an unknown word positively influences their chances of retaining its meaning". Read (2000) results corroborate Hulstijn's conclusions that when learners 'work out' the meaning of unknown words by themselves without the help of their teacher these words will be remembered better.

All these findings provide interesting insights which go along with the Depth-of-Processing Hypothesis (Craik and Tulving, 1975) and according to which, the more words are processed, the better storage in memory is. According to Craik and Tulving (1975:292)

The subject's performance in acquisition, retention, transfer, and retrieval was held to be a direct function of the strength

of associations and their interrelations. The determinants of strength were also well-known: study time, number of repetitions, recency, intentionality of the subject, pre-experimental associative strength between items, interference by associations involving identical or similar elements and so on.

In this chapter, I have examined the existing literature and studies on vocabulary learning, retention and vocabulary learning strategies aiming at shedding light on the importance of deep processing strategies in enhancing the comprehension, storage, and retrieval of vocabulary whenever needed even after a long period of disuse

Chapter TWO: Research Method and Procedure

This chapter describes the research method and procedure used to collect data on the research topic of Retention and Attrition in EFL Vocabulary Learning.

2.1 Research Design and Method

To recall, the present study was undertaken with final year secondary school students in a secondary school in Algiers during the academic year 2011-2012. The main objective is to investigate the problem of retention through determining the vocabulary learning strategies used by students and find out whether their strategies are effective in terms of retention. It is also an attempt to establish any possible correlation between the strategies used and the students' ability or inability to store words the longer possible. The following questions were researched:

Research Question One: What strategies do students use to learn new L2 vocabulary?

Research question two: How effective are these strategies for the comprehension and retention of new words?

Research question three: What strategies do teachers use to help their students retain new words?

This study is a case study. Both a descriptive and exploratory quantitative approach was adopted. The choice of this approach was deemed the most appropriate way for investigating data which would answer the three research questions. As Nunan

(1992:3) states, quantitative method is “controlled, objective, generalisable, outcome oriented, and assumes the existence of facts”.

2.1.1. Subjects

The population is a sample of twenty two students and three teachers from the same state secondary school named “Rabah Bittat”. The students are final year secondary school learners following the ‘Foreign Languages’ stream. The choice of this stream is not done randomly. Students of the foreign languages stream are more involved in learning English because it is a major subject and they receive more tuition(four hours a week) than the other students (science or humanities).

The participants’ age vary from 17 to 20 years old. They are preparing for the Baccalaureat National Examination which is always held at the end of the academic year in June. This sample group represents Algerian students coming from the same learning environment: All of them have been exposed to English for four years in the middle school, and two years in the secondary school. Hence, they are all of comparable ability.

On the other hand, the three teachers involved in this study are female full-time Algerian teachers of English. One of them is the participants’ own teacher and the other two are teachers of third year classes teaching in the same school. Two teachers hold a four-year university degree from the University of Algiers at Bouzareah and the University of Mouloud Mammeri of Tizi Ouzou. The third one

graduated from ENS (Algiers School of Education) and holds a five year university degree.

2.1.2 Data collection tools

In order to meet the objectives of the study and obtain answers to the three research questions, the following data collection instruments were used: A questionnaire to students (Vocabulary Learning Strategies' Questionnaire (VLSQ), and to teachers (Vocabulary Teaching Strategies' Questionnaire (VTSQ), and an achievement test (vocabulary Achievement Test (VAT). These instruments are described in the following sections.

A-Vocabulary Learning Strategies' Questionnaire (VLSQ)

In order to answer RQ1: What strategies do students use to learn and retain new L2 vocabulary? a self-report questionnaire was designed to collect data from the students on their actual use of VLS.

This questionnaire was chosen as a tool for the study because it is the most useful method for doing research on VLS. It also offers the possibility of gathering data from a large number of people within a short time. (Nation, 2001; Takac, 2008). And as the students' names were changed to keep confidentiality, the participants felt relaxed and thus answered honestly. The VLS questionnaire is an adapted version of the Vocabulary Strategy Questionnaire proposed by Schmitt (1997) which itself is based

on Oxford's Strategy Inventory Language Learning (SILL). It is based on a five- point scale Likert measurement: Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Usually, and Always.

The first part of the questionnaire contains 27 strategies statements and one open-ended question. It includes 4 statements on Determination Strategies (DET), 4 statements on Social Strategies (SOC), 5 statements on Cognitive Strategies (COG), 10 statements on Memory Strategies (MEM), and 4 statements on Metacognitive Strategies (MET) for vocabulary learning. This questionnaire was administered to 22 students during a regular English lesson in early December 2011. Data gathered were analyzed using descriptive statistics where the frequency was tabulated and calculated. The second part of the students' questionnaire concerns the importance of ten different inputs in their learning of English vocabulary. This can be found on the following address: (<http://gandalf.aksis.uib.no/reg/survey/teacher.html>)

On the other hand, an eleven –item questionnaire was handed out to the three teachers who took part in the study. The aim was to gather information about teachers' attitude toward teaching vocabulary and what teaching strategies they use to help students understand and retain words.

B- Vocabulary Achievement Test (VAT)

The Vocabulary Achievement Test is a pen-and-paper test adapted from different extra curriculum books available in most book-shops in Algeria. Such books as: 1- English Course With Key Answers (Bensidi Aissa,2007)/ 2-English Step by Step

(Boutchacha, 2007)/ 3-English Exam Subjects and Keys (Khelifa,2008). The test consists of 47 new key words (content words) related to the first two units supposed to be covered by the end of the first term. They are found in the students' third year secondary education English text book entitled New Prospects and published in 2008 by the National Board of School Publications (ONPS). These units are:

- Unit one: Exploring the Past (p. 14 to p.42)

- Unit two: Ethics in Business (p. 45 to p.72)

The test is meant to measure students' vocabulary size by counting the number of new items they have retained by the end of the term. The 47 target words are distributed through six activities all aiming at testing students' ability to retain the meaning of words, recall them at will and produce them appropriately. Students were asked to give the same pseudonyms they used in the questionnaire so that they could be identified after the test.

The Vocabulary Achievement Test is based on these two units and the test takers were given the following instructions:

-Find the words whose definitions follow

-Match the words with their synonyms

-Cross the odd one out

-Fill in the blanks (the target words are given to them)

-Write sentences using the following words (the words are given to them)

-Add three words related to the nouns below (the nouns are: Civilization and Ethics)

The students are familiar with this type of instructions since they appear in all English tests and exams. The students were tested for their knowledge of the words dealt with in class and repeatedly used during the whole term. Based on my years of experience as a teacher of English, I picked out the words and expressions that can be considered as core from both unit one and unit two. The words are:

Unit one: civilization/ evolve/ vanish/ develop/ originate/ emerge/ tombs/ graves/ refinement/ establish/ flourish/ collapse/ spread/ expansion (expand)/ achievements/ prosper/ fall to ruins/ bloom/ decline/ (total: 19 words and expressions)

Unit two: ethics (unethical)/ counterfeiting/ money-laundering/ nepotism/ embezzlement/ deceive/ fraudulent/ genuine/ original/ mislead/ deceitful (deceive)/ legal (illegal)/ lawful/ authorized (unauthorized)/ lawless/ outlawed/ authentic/ fake/ imitate/ copy/ duplicate/ corruption (corrupt)/ stringent laws/ bribery (bribe)/ wrong doing/ tax evasion/ false accounting/ theft. (total: 28 words and expressions)

The test consists of seven activities over which the 47 target words are distributed:
(see Appendix 3)

2.2 Procedure of Data Collection

The present study followed the following procedure:

Step 1: Introducing the topic of my research study

The first step in my data collection was to introduce myself and my research subject. I explained the purpose of my study to the class and showed them how much their collaboration would be of great benefit for my research. I stated that I am not here to assess them and that anything which might happen during the test would not affect their grades and would remain extremely confidential.

Step 2: The pilot study

As the standard procedure requires, a pilot study was conducted with a group of ten students from another class a week before the main study. The aim was to solve possible problems found in the instrument used, narrow down any confusion or ambiguity and more importantly, ensure the practicability and face validity of the instrument used.

Step 3: Results of the pilot study

After the pilot study, some modifications occurred to the questionnaire. Item 3 'I use rhymes to remember a word' was found difficult to understand and was therefore changed into 'I connect unrelated words with rhymes so that I can remember them. E.g. one is bun, two is shoe...'. Also, item 6 'I use spaced word practice in order to remember words' was changed into 'I practise revision at spaced intervals'. Item 9 'I associate new words with the ones I already know' was simplified into 'I associate new words with their synonyms or antonyms', and finally, item 24

'I use semantic mapping to remember new English words' was modified into 'I use word families to remember new English words'.

Concerning the Vocabulary Achievement Test, no change occurred because the students were familiar with all the instructions.

Step 4: Administering the questionnaire to the students

The questionnaire was administered to the participants after completing the first Unit: 'Exploring the Past' of the 3AS text book entitled: **New Prospects**. The questionnaire was handed out to students in December 2011. The aim behind giving first the questionnaire before the test was to give students opportunity to reflect on their own strategies and to raise their awareness on the existence of some other strategies which they might ignore and that they could use to learn more new vocabulary.

Step 5: Administering the test

The achievement test was administered in March 2012. That is, at the end of the second term. The participants should have taken the test by the end of the first term, but because the teachers went on strike, the second unit could not be completed till February 2012. It is worth noting that by February, students were supposed to have been exposed to more than 80 hours of English (four hours per week) which suggests that they had enough vocabulary input to be tested on. The students were reassured

that no name would be collected and no mark given, and that the test scores would be kept secret and would serve only for the purpose of the study.

Step 5: Administering the questionnaire to teachers

The last step was to give the teachers the questionnaire. This was done in the staff-room and completed at home.

The data collected from the test and the two questionnaires were analyzed, classified and then presented in tables, and charts. They appear in the next chapter.

Chapter Three: Presentation and Discussion of the Results

This chapter aims to present and discuss the results of the data gathered from the three research tools to answer the three research questions. There are three main sections in this chapter: The first section tries to answer RQ1 by reporting the results of the different vocabulary learning strategies used by the twenty-two secondary school students participating in this study to discover consolidate and retain the meaning of new words. The frequency of use of all the twenty-seven strategy items is first presented and then the most and the least used strategies. The second section attempts to answer RQ2 by reporting the effectiveness of the VLS used by the students after an Achievement Test which was administered to them. The aim is to show how many words students have learned and retained by the end of the term. The scoring of each student is first presented, and then the correlation between the students' vocabulary learning strategy use and their performance on the test is displayed. The last section answers RQ3 and reports detailed information about teachers' strategies to teach vocabulary.

3.1 Discovery Strategies as the Main Strategies for Retaining Words

In order to answer RQ1 and find out what strategies these twenty-two secondary school students use to understand and remember new words, the participants' responses are calculated and the results are shown in table 3.1 below:

<u>A-DISCOVERY STRATEGIES</u>	Strategies	never	rarely	Sometimes	usualy	always
a- Determination strategies	1-I analyze the parts of a new word to discover its meaning.	03	05	07	03	03
	2-I make guesses to understand new words.	01	04	06	07	04
	3-I use a monolingual dictionary to discover the meaning of a new word.	02	04	07	06	03
	4-I use a bilingual dictionary.	00	01	04	09	08
b- social strategies	5-I f I do not understand something in English, I ask my classmates.	00	02	04	07	09
	6-I ask my teacher for the meaning of a new word.	02	04	05	04	07
<u>B-CONSOLIDATION STRATEGIES</u> a-Social strategies	7-I practise English orally with other students.	02	03	09	06	02
	8-I work in group to practise the meaning of words and learn new ones.	05	07	06	03	01
b-Memory strategies	9- I use English words in a sentence so I can remember them.	02	09	10	01	00
	10-I connect an image to the word to help me remember it.	02	07	11	02	00
	11- I use rhymes to remember the word (e.g. one in bun, two is shoe..)	16	04	02	00	00
	12-I remember new English words by remembering their location on the page or on the board when I first saw them.	03	04	09	01	05
	13-I remember a new English word if I see it is written down.	01	02	08	09	02
	14- I associate new words with the ones I already know.	01	09	06	06	00
	15-I try to identify a familiar word in Arabic that sounds like the new English word to remember it i.e the English word 'fortress' for an Arabic word 'forssa' .	11	08	02	01	00
	16-When I cannot think of a word during a conversation, I use gestures.	04	03	07	05	03
	17-When I cannot think of a word, I use another one similar in meaning.	00	05	11	06	00
18-I use word families to remember new English words.	01	10	09	02	00	

c-cognitive strategies	19-I repeat words mentally to remember them.	04	09	07	01	01
	20-I take vocabulary notes in class.	00	04	07	08	03
	21-I translate the new word into my mother tongue.	00	03	05	07	07
	22-I write down words repeatedly to remember them.	01	07	09	05	00
	23-I make a list of new words and memorize them.	03	08	08	03	00
d-Metacognitive strategies	24-I use spaced word practice in order to remember new words.	17	04	01	00	00
	25-I listen to English radio or songs or T.V program in order to develop my English knowledge.	01	01	03	06	11
	26- I test myself to check if I remember the words.	00	07	10	04	01
	27- I regularly revise words before coming to class.	06	08	04	04	00

A: Determination Strategies

As shown in tables 3.1 the frequency of use of each individual is different.

When we examine the Determination Strategies (ranging from strategy 1 to 4 in table 3.1) we can note that these are used to discover the meaning of new words without asking the others. The strategy 'analyzing parts of a new word to discover its meaning' seems to be 'always' used by 03 students and 03 others admit to 'usually' do it. A majority (07/22) of students sometimes use this strategy while 03/ 22 never use it and 05 'rarely' do it. One student left the space blank and did not answer this question.

Concerning the second strategy 'making guesses to understand new words'. 11/22 students report high use of it (07/22 usually use it and 04/22 always use it). A total of 06 students report that they sometimes use it while 05 students claim that they 'never' or 'rarely' use this strategy.

The strategy called 'using monolingual dictionary to discover the meaning of words' is reported to be 'always' used by 03 participants while 06 students reveal that they 'usually' use it. 07 /22 participants do 'sometimes' use this strategy to discover the meaning of new words while 04 students state that they 'rarely' use it. Finally, 02 claim that they 'never' use this strategy. If we associate the number of students having reported to 'usually' using monolingual dictionary to discover the meaning of words with those who 'always' use it we obtain 09/22 of the participants opting for this strategy which I consider a high number to some extent because students are not expected to use this strategy since monolingual dictionaries are difficult to use and require a certain level of proficiency.

The last strategy used to determine the meaning of words correspond to item 16 in the questionnaire; i.e, 'Using a bilingual dictionary'. 08 students report to always using it while 09/22 participants reveal that they usually use this strategy. 04 students claim that they sometimes use bilingual dictionary. Finally, none of the students report to 'never' using this strategy and only 01/22 states that he rarely uses it. Thus, 17 participants (09 usually use this strategy and 08 always use it) do use this

strategy. Bilingual dictionary is a good strategy to turn to and L2 learners prefer it because it allows the learner to consult rapidly.

B: Social Strategies

Concerning the Social strategies (ranging from 5 to 6), these involve asking other people (peers, teachers...) for information, or interacting with others.

09/22 students report to 'always' asking their classmates if they do not understand something in English and 07 state that they do 'usually' use this strategy. A total of 04 students claim that they 'sometimes' ask others for a better comprehension of vocabulary while 02 'rarely' do it. Thus, 16 participants report to 'usually' or 'always' use this strategy which definitely suggests that students feel more confident with their classmates.

The second and last strategy is 'Asking the teacher for the meaning of a new word.' It is reported to be 'always' used by 07 participants and 'usually' used by 04 students. 05/22 students state that they do sometimes ask their teacher for the meaning of unknown words while 04 claim that they 'rarely' do it. Finally, 02 participants 'never' use this strategy. In sum, half of the participant (11/22) do 'usually' or 'always' choose this strategy.

3.2 Consolidation Strategies

The first category concerning strategies used for consolidating and retaining the meaning of words is the social strategies (n°: 7 and 8 in table 3.1).

A: Social Strategies

The first strategy ('practising English orally with other students') is reported to be 'always' used by 02 students. 06/22 students state that they 'usually' use this strategy while 09 report to 'sometimes' adopting it. Finally, 03/22 students ascertain that they 'rarely' practise English with others and 02 claim that they 'never' do it.

This result shows that in general students do not communicate in the target language perhaps because they do not master the language. Another explanation may be due to the fact they prefer using French more than English probably because they (like most Algerians) have a rich French repertoire compared with the English one.

The last social strategy is ('working in group to practise the meaning of words and learn new ones'). Only 01 participant states that s/he 'always' uses this strategy while 03/22 students claim that they 'usually' do it. A total of 06 students report to 'sometimes' work in group to consolidate the meaning of unfamiliar words while 07 claim that they 'rarely' work in group. Finally, 05/22 students 'never' do it. It is disappointing and unexpected to find out that more than half of the students (12/22) do not or seldom use this strategy. The participants in this study ascertain that they do not practise word meaning in group to consolidate and retain words though the new tendency in teaching favor group working which can be of great help for students as far as word retention is concerned.

To summarize, and in terms of **social strategies**, an interesting finding can be noticed. Our students tend to use social strategies for discovering the meaning of

new items but disfavor working in group (item 23 in the questionnaire) 'I work in group to practise the meaning of word and learn new ones' and item 21 'I practise English orally with other students' to consolidate the meaning of words. They prefer to learn individually which implies that they underestimate the benefits of group work.

B: Memory Strategies

The second category is Memory strategies (from 9 to 18).

These involve relating the new word to be retained with the previously learned words.

As table 3.1 shows, students almost avoid the strategy 'using English word in a sentence'. That is, no student reports always using this strategy to consolidate and retain new words longer and only one student states that s/he usually uses it. A total of 10 students claim that they sometimes use the unknown word in context to remember it while 09 students rarely use this strategy. Finally, 02 report to never using it. In other terms, half of the participants do not make an effort to produce target words in meaningful context so as to consolidate the meaning of the learned words and eventually aid recall. This may be explained by the fact that students have a weak production skill as will be shown when answering Research Question 2.

'Connecting an image to the word to help remember it' is the second memory strategy proposed and it is reported to be usually used by 02 students while none of the students state that they always use it. Half of the participants claim that they sometimes use it and only 07 attest that they rarely connect an image to the new word so as to remember it. Finally, two of the participants report to never using this strategy. This strategy may help students in recalling the learned words but unfortunately it is employed at a medium frequency.

The third memory strategy is 'using rhymes to remember the word'. None of the participants report to 'usually' or 'always' use this strategy. 02 students sometimes use rhymes to remember the word. A total of 16/22 participants never use this strategy while 04 seldom use it. In other words, 20/22 of the participants either ignore or neglect this method. This strategy is known as the Peg Method and it consists in linking the new word to the rhymes of another word. It is supposed to help students in better remembering and recalling of the target words. (Oxford and Crookall, 1990)

The fourth memory strategy presented to the students is 'remembering new English words by remembering their location on the page or on the board.'

The statistical results show that 05/22 of the students always use this strategy while only 01 student usually uses it. A total of 09/22 of the participants report to sometimes remembering new English words by remembering their location on the page or on the board while 04 affirm to rarely using it. Finally, 03 of the students say

that they never use it. The results suggest that this strategy is unpopular among the twenty-two secondary school students as the frequency of use demonstrates that only 09/22 of the students sometimes use it which is below the average.

The fifth strategy is 'remembering new English words if seeing them written down'. Only 02 students report to 'always' using this strategy while 09 state that they usually use it. A total of 08/22 students sometimes use it and 02 students rarely remember the target words when they see them written down and one says that s/he never uses this strategy. The addition of those who usually use this strategy with those who always use it gives us a number of 11/22 .This means that half of the students make use of this strategy.

The sixth memory strategy is 'associating new words with the ones already known'. None of the subjects report to always using the strategy. It is reported to be usually used by 06 students while 06 claim that they sometimes use it. A total of 09/22 students rarely associate new words with the ones already known and only one student states that s/he usually does it. This result indicates that students do not favor strategies that require association of new words with the ones already known. This strategy involves 'deep' meaning elaboration which Craik and Tulving (1975) consider very important for retention of words which in turn is dependent on the level at which the information is processed. This may explain, to some extent, why our students cannot remember words for a long period of time (as will be shown in the analysis of RQ2)

The seventh memory strategy is 'identifying a familiar word in Arabic or French that sounds like the new English word to remember it'. This strategy is known as the Key Word Method. Only 01 student usually adopts this strategy. None of the subjects report to always using it. 02/22 participants sometimes use this strategy and 11/22 of the participants report to 'never' using it while 08 reveals that they seldom use it. This gives a total of 19/22 of the participants who 'never' or 'rarely' use it which is a high number. This strategy consists in associating a picture with the target word. It is a useful aid because the use of visual imagery of words can help students in retaining words more efficiently than if words are learned alone. (Oxford and Crookall, 1990). This strategy is also considered a 'deep' processing strategy which is among those known to enhance retention. These results may explain the reason why our students do not remember words after a period of disuse.

The eighth strategy is 'using gesture when unable to find words'. It is reported to be 'always' used by 03/22 participants while 05 state that they 'usually' use it. A total of 07 students sometimes use this strategy and 03 rarely use it. Finally, 04 participants never use gestures when they cannot think of a word during a conversation.

The results show that students do not favor the use of this strategy, may be because English is an academic subject and it is not used outside the classroom as a means of communication. Thus, students do not feel a need to gesticulate. Besides, all their exams are pen and paper exams as they have no oral examination. So, this strategy cannot be tested.

The ninth memory strategy proposed is the following: 'when I cannot think of a word in English I use another one similar in meaning'. None of the students report to 'always' using this strategy and 06 state that they 'usually' use it. A total of 11/22 participants claim that they sometimes use it while only 05 state that they rarely use a synonym when they cannot think of a word in English. Finally, no one states that s/he never uses this strategy. This strategy involves deep semantic processing which leads to a long term retention but it is not used very frequently. This may explain why the twenty-two secondary school students are unable to store and retrieve new words.

The last strategy is 'using word families to remember new English words', also known as semantic mapping. None of the students report to 'always' using it and 02/22 students only usually make use of it. It is 'sometimes' used by 09/22 students and 'rarely' used by 10 participants. Finally, it is never used by only 01 student. This is an unsatisfactory result because semantic mapping is known to help memory traces becomes more permanent (Oxford and Crookall, 1990).

To summarize **memory strategies**, the results are disappointing. The participants in this study are not aware of how important it is to use memory strategies which are proved to give good results in retention because they involve a deeper processing of words. Most of the students do not seem to consider the role of strategies involving associations like (I associate new words with the ones already known). They do not give importance to strategies related to contextualization or imagery and also those

which involve paying more attention to the form of the new words either orthographical or phonological. Such strategies as (I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them), or (I use rhymes to remember the word), and (I connect an image to the word to help me remember it). Students also seem to disfavor the strategies involving manipulation of meaning like (I use word families to remember new English words) and (when I cannot think of a word in a conversation, I use another one with a similar meaning). Moreover, they do not like to make use of strategies which involve gestures/ body language such as (when I cannot think of a word in a conversation, I use gestures). This may explain why attrition often occurs as a result.

C: Cognitive Strategies

The third category of consolidation strategies examined in this study are Cognitive strategies (from 19 to 23). These involve repetition and the use of mechanical means to study vocabulary. Students do not generally focus on mental process. (Schmitt, 2000)

As table 3.1 above shows, the first cognitive strategy is ('repeating words mentally to remember them'). 01/22 students only states that s/he 'always' uses this strategy and the same number of students (01) claims that s/he 'usually' adopts it. A total of 07 students advocate that they 'sometimes' repeat unknown words mentally so as to retain them. 04/22 students report that they 'never' use this strategy while 09 claim that they seldom use it.

The results show that this strategy is not used by 13/22 participants (04 students report to never using it and 09 rarely using it). This suggests that secondary school students do not seem to favor 'rehearsal' strategies. This is probably due to the fact that the new trend of teaching encourages students not to use such techniques as repeating through rote learning. This also supports Ausubel's (1968) theory of learning which disfavors rote learning and favours meaningful learning.

The second cognitive strategy is ('taking vocabulary notes in class'). 03/22 of the students report that they 'always' use this strategy while 08 students state that they "usually' do it. 07 students say that they sometimes use the strategy. A total of 04/22 students do 'rarely' take vocabulary notes in class. Finally, none state that they never use it. Thus, by adding the number of those who 'usually' use this strategy to those who 'always' use it, we obtain only 11/22 students favoring taking vocabulary notes in class. That is why, teachers should encourage their students to more frequently use this strategy since taking vocabulary notes is considered a good strategy that can enhance retention , "promote independence and assist memory" (Zimmerman, 2009:123). Besides, this strategy allows students to learn more aspects of the word namely its spelling, meaning, and pronunciation and is highly recommended. (Schmitt, 1997; Allen 1983; Zimmerman 2009))

The third cognitive strategy is ('translating the new word into mother tongue'). 14/22 students claim that they 'usually' or 'always' use this strategy. A total of 05 participants report 'sometimes' translating unknown words into their mother tongue.

None of the students state that they 'never' use it while 03 students 'seldom' use this strategy. The results show that more than half of the students do use this strategy.

This shows how much the mother tongue is important in learning vocabulary.

The fourth cognitive strategy is ('write down words repeatedly to remember them').

None of the participants states that s/he 'always' uses this strategy while 05 report that they usually use it. A total of 09 students 'sometimes' write down words repeatedly to remember them and 07 claim that they 'rarely' do it. Finally, one student claims that s/he never uses it. This shows that students use this strategy at a medium level (i.e. sometimes) .This definitely demonstrates that our students more and more disfavor mechanical strategies probably due to the new trend of learning which disfavors this kind of strategies .

The last cognitive strategy is ('making a list of new words and memorize them').

None of the subjects state that s/he 'always' uses it. This strategy is reported as being 'usually' used by 03 students and 08 state that they 'sometimes' do it. A total of 08/22 students do 'rarely' make a list of new words and memorize them while only 03 claim that they 'never choose this strategy to learn words. This shows that half of the students do not make the effort to learn lists of words by heart probably because word list strategy which is a rote learning strategy is believed not to lead to long term retention. (Takac, 2008:61). However, Qian (1996) conducted an experiment with Chinese learners who showed long term retention through learning lists of words. Thus, this 'mechanical' strategy which is disfavored among the participants'

secondary school students can lead to long term retention as it did with Chinese learners.

To summarize the **cognitive strategies**, the results indicate that students do not generally use strategies such as 'repeating words mentally' or 'write them down repeatedly' or 'rote learning of lists of words'. However, they like using translation of unknown words and jotting down what the teacher says or write in a vocabulary note book.

D: Metacognitive Strategies

The fourth category in consolidation strategies is Metacognitive strategies (ranging from 24 to 27) ,these are used to plan, monitor, and evaluate one's vocabulary learning.

The first metacognitive strategy is ('using spaced word practice in order to remember new words'). 17/22students state that they 'never' use this strategy while 04 claim that they 'rarely' use it. Finally, only 01 student reports that s/he 'sometimes' uses spaced word practice so as to remember the target words. What is unexpected is that none of the participants report to 'always' or 'usually' using this strategy. In other words, 21/22 of the participants do not use it. This is a very high number. I suppose that this metacognitive strategy is unpopular among the twenty-two secondary school students and thus they do not know how to use it. It is well-known among researchers that spaced repetition results in higher retention and is more 'secure' than 'massed' repetition. (Nation, 2001; Schmitt 1997; Oxford 1990).

Here again, this may explain why our students forget words after a period of disuse. This also suggests that our students do not know the importance of reviewing the newly learned words. Therefore, introducing the different VLS explicitly and training our students on the use of it is a necessity and should be implemented in the school curriculum. Besides, teachers should raise their students' awareness on the importance of regularly reviewing the newly learned words.

The second strategy is ('listening to English radio or songs or T.V program in order to develop English knowledge). Half of the students claim that they 'always' listen to authentic material to learn new items and 06 report that they 'usually' do it. 03/22 students state that they 'sometimes' use this method. Only 01/22 student advocates that s/he 'seldom' uses this strategy and another one says s/he 'never' uses it. The total number of those who usually use it and those who always use it (06 and 11) shows that this strategy is highly used by secondary school learners.

The third metacognitive strategy is ('I test myself to check if I remember the words'). One of the participants reports 'always' using this strategy and 04 students state that they 'usually' use it. A total of 10/22 students claim that they 'sometimes' test themselves to see if they retain the target words while 07 say that they 'rarely' do it. Finally, none of the students states that s/he 'never' uses this strategy. This strategy is neither 'never' nor 'always' used by students. It falls in the 'middle of the range'; that is, it is 'sometimes' used by the participants.

The results show that the students do not take charge of their own vocabulary and that they are not aware of the importance of self- evaluation which can be of great benefit for their vocabulary growth and retention.

The last strategy is ('I regularly revise words before coming to class')

None of the participants report that they 'always' use this strategy and 04 state that they 'usually' do it. A total of 04 students 'sometimes' revise words before coming to class to consolidate their meaning while a higher number (i.e. 08) report that they 'rarely' use this strategy. 06/22 state that they 'never' use it. Indeed, this is another important metacognitive strategy. The results demonstrate that 14 students 'never' or 'rarely' use this strategy. This is an unsatisfactory result because 14/22 is a high number. Moreover 'regularly' revising means engaging in a 'structural' reviewing and this helps in remembering new words and eventually leads to better linguistic performance (Oxford, 1990 cited in Nemati 2009). All teachers agree that not revising what has previously been learned will definitely engender forgetting and not using this strategy may explain the reason why our students always suffer from word attrition.

The results of the **metacognitive strategies** analysis reveal that the findings are also unsatisfactory. It is true that our students seem to particularly favor exposure to English through the media (i.e.by listening to English radio or songs or T.V programs) as a way of enriching their vocabulary learning which teachers do encourage, but they are completely unaware of the importance of continuously revising the learned

words. Besides, they do not have an idea of what 'spaced word practice' strategy is since it was not used by the majority of the participants, and they do not even practise self-assessment. Hence, our secondary school students are not informed of the necessity of evaluating their own vocabulary learning and of the importance of regularly revising the learned words.

Because Schmitt (1997) advocates that the most interesting results are those which the majority reports that they either use a strategy or not, I am not going to deal with those strategies reported as being 'sometimes' used by students since, in Schmitt's own words, "it is difficult to draw conclusions about strategies occurring in the middle of the range" (1997:219). Thus, after reporting students' overall use of strategies, and to give a more comprehensive answer to what strategies secondary school students use to comprehend and retain words, I have divided the participants' responses into two categories: the most frequently used strategies and they are those strategies being reported as 'always' or 'usually' used by the students, and the least frequently used strategies and they are those which are 'never' or 'rarely' used.

3.3-Strategies most frequently used by students

Table 3.2 displays the Discovery Strategies and the Consolidation Strategies that are mostly used by the students

o	Item	Vocabulary Learning Strategies N° = 08	Type of Strategy	Number of students N°= 22
1	16	I use a bilingual dictionary to understand the meaning of words	DET	17/22
2	13	I listen to English songs or radio or TV program in order to develop my English vocabulary knowledge	MET	17/22
3	20	If I do not understand in English, I ask my classmates.	SOC	16 /22
4	12	I translate the word into my mother tongue and try to understand and memorize it.	COG	14/22
5	14	I make guesses to understand unfamiliar words	DET	11/22
6	22	I ask my teacher for the meaning of new words.	SOC	11/22
7	11	I take vocabulary notes in class	COG	11/22
8	08	I remember the new word if I see it written down	MEM	11/22

Table 3.2.a Strategies most frequently Used by Students

On average, eight strategies out of twenty seven are ‘always’ or ‘usually’ used by most of the students,.

To comprehend and retain words, 17 of the total 22 students are found to highly and equally using both strategies 'bilingual dictionary' and 'listening to authentic materials'. According to a study conducted by Schmitt (1997), the use of bilingual dictionary is a widely used strategy among L2 learners. Besides, the high use of the metacognitive strategy 'listening to authentic material', is not surprising because with the advanced technology and the spread of multi-media, students are continuously taking advantage of technological innovations in order to enhance their vocabulary growth. There is no doubt that using materials that involve authentic language is definitely recommended for learning new vocabulary in context.

When students feel the need for asking the help of others, they favor asking their classmates. This social strategy which is used by 16 students shows clearly that students are ready to interact and cooperate with their peers. Another social strategy 'asking the teacher' for the meaning of new words is used by half of the participants. This also shows that the participants feel more confident with the teacher and still rely on him/her probably because s/he can rapidly help by providing them with the adequate explanation they need. This may suggest that it is not easy for our students to become independent learners.

The fourth most frequently used strategy is 'translating words into mother tongue to understand and memorize them'. This cognitive strategy is used by more than half of the students and it indicates the importance of the mother tongue in learning vocabulary.

The other left strategies are used by half of the students (11/22) and are:

- Taking vocabulary notes in class
- Remembering new words when seeing them written down
- Making guesses

'Using vocabulary notes' is considered a good cognitive strategy because it permits students to learn many aspects of the word namely its spelling, meaning, and its pronunciation. It is recommended by many scholars (Schmitt 1997; Allen 1983)

From the memory strategy 'remembering words when seeing them written down', we can infer that half of our students (and could be more if the sample was larger) are visual learners and retain better when they visualize the covered items.

'Making guesses' is used by most students probably because they are encouraged by their teachers to use this strategy and advised to guess from any information provided or any guessing clues to decipher the meaning of an unknown word especially when taking exams.

An important finding here is that the two determination strategies , (guessing from context) and (using bilingual dictionary) are in line with Clark and Nation's (1980) remark that these two strategies are both important and complement each other. That is why, they advise students first to guess what the unknown word means before looking up the meaning of the target word in a dictionary and then use a dictionary to confirm what has already been guessed. This is also consistent with the findings of Schmitt (1997) in his study undertaken with the Japanese who were also

found to prefer using these two strategies for determining the meaning of new words.

3.4-Strategies the least frequently used by the student

Table 3.2.b displays the Discovery Strategies and the Consolidation Strategies the least frequently used by the students.

No	Item	Vocabulary Learning Strategies N°=08	Type of Strategy	Number of students N°=22
1	6	Using spaced word practice in order to remember words	MET	21/22
2	3	Using rhymes to remember the new word	MEM	20/22
3	10	Using the Key Word Method	MEM	19/22
4	25	Regularly revise words before coming to class	MET	14/22
5	4	Repeating the new word several times	COG	13/22
6	23	Working in group to practise the meaning of words	SOC	12/22
7	01	Using new English words in a sentence so that I can remember them	MEM	11/22
8	27	Making a list of new words and memorize them	COG	11/22

Table 3.2.b: The Least Used Strategies

Eight strategies out of twenty seven are 'never' or 'rarely' used by most of the students.

The results show that 21/22 students do not or 'seldom' use 'the spaced word practice' strategy. It is well-known that spaced repetition involves deep-processing and this result in higher retention and is more 'secure' than 'massed' repetition. (Nation 2001; Schmitt 1997; Oxford 1990). This may explain why our students forget words after a period of disuse. I suppose that this metacognitive strategy is unpopular among the 22 secondary school students because they do not know how to use it. This also suggests that our students do not know the importance of reviewing the newly learned vocabulary. Training in the use of VLS is a necessity and should be implemented in the school curriculum. Teachers should also raise their students' awareness of the fact that regularly reviewing previously learned vocabulary is a necessity.

The second least used strategy is 'Using rhymes to remember words'. This strategy is known as the Peg Method and it consists in linking the new word to the rhyme of another word in English in order to facilitate learning and thus can be remembered and recalled later. 20 out of 22 students 'rarely' or 'never' use this strategy which means that the majority of the participants either ignore or neglect this method.

'Identifying a familiar word in Arabic that sounds like the new English word to remember it' (i.e. the Key Word Method) is the third least used strategy and it is reported as being 'never' or 'rarely' used by 19/22 students This strategy consists in

associating both sound and picture with the target word. It is useful because the use of acoustic and visual imagery can help students in retaining words more efficiently than if learned without any association (Oxford and Crookall, 1990)

The fourth strategy 'Regularly revising words before coming to class' is revealed to be among the least used and it is almost never used by 14 students. This is an important metacognitive strategy because regularly revising means engaging in a 'structured' revision and this helps in remembering new words (Oxford, 1990 cited in Nemati 2009). This also eventually leads to better linguistic performance. Definitely, not revising what has been previously learned engenders forgetting which should be fought.

Table 3.2.b shows that 'Repeating the new word several times' is not used by 13 students. This cognitive strategy reveals the fact that the twenty-two secondary school students do not favor repetition.

It was unexpected for me to find out that students do not favor working in group.. More than half of the participants ascertain 'never' or 'seldom' 'Work in group to practise the meaning of new words'. Students' scant use of this social strategy is probably caused by the belief that individual learning is more fruitful than learning and working in collaboration with others and that "vocabulary learning is an activity best achieved individually". (Schmitt, 1997:226)

An equal number of students (11/22) were observed to be using both strategies 'Using new English Words in a sentence' and 'Making a List of new words and

memorize them This means that only half of the students use these two strategies in their learning process. It should be emphasized that putting the new word in a sentence involves putting it in a meaningful context and it is an important way to consolidate the meaning of the learned word and eventually aids recall. In addition, the Word List Strategy was found to be among the most used strategies by Schmitt (1997) in his study conducted with Japanese second language learners.

Finally, it is worth stressing that these findings support, to some extent; Schmitt's (1997) study undertaken with Japanese EFL learners who were found to favor ten most used VLS. I deem it interesting to compare only similar or identical strategies as used by both Algerian and Japanese language learners in order to see that Japanese and Algerian EFL learners use the same determination strategies to understand new words.

Most used strategies by Japanese Learners	Most used strategies by Algerian Learners
Bilingual dictionary 85%	Bilingual dictionary 77%
Guessing from context 74%	Guessing from context 50%
Asking classmates 73%	Asking classmates 72%
Taking notes in class 64%	Taking vocabulary notes 50%

Table 3.2.c: A comparison between Schmitt's study and the present study

As this table indicates, both second language learners (Japanese and Algerian) agree on the use of the determination and social strategies for discovering the meaning of words .They both use: 1-bilingual dictionary, 2-guessing from context, 3-asking classmates for meaning and 4-taking notes in class. They are aware of the importance of these mostly used strategies for comprehending and decoding the meaning of unfamiliar words. However, two other strategies among the ten most used by Schmitt’s L2 learners that were proved to be effective for word retention are found to be among the least used strategies of the respondents of the present study. They are:

Schmitt’s (1997) study (The most used strategies)	Algerian’s least used strategies
Verbal repetition 76%	Repeating words several times 59%
Word Lists 54%	Word Lists 50%

Table 3.2.d: A comparison between Schmitt’s study and the present study

The Japanese students had been found to particularly favor oral and written repetition which learners in this study completely disfavor. Thus, the L2 learners in both studies agree on the use of determination and social strategies but they differ in the use of consolidation strategies probably due to the different cultures that impose different styles of learning.

At the end of the questionnaire, the participants were given an open-ended question through which they were invited to add any other strategy they use for learning vocabulary. 18/22 students said that they do not know or use other strategies. Only four students report using other strategies mentioned below:

Student 1: I use my prior knowledge of Arabic for understanding unfamiliar words. (Memory Strategy). (This answer was translated by the researcher because the student wrote it in Arabic)

Student 2: I first understand a word, and then I translate it into French for a better comprehension. (Cognitive Strategy)

Student 3: When I do not understand a word, I use an online dictionary. (Determination Strategy)

Student 4: I do not understand in the classroom because I do not like the teacher's method. I use a lot a bilingual dictionary and I take extra tuition to improve my vocabulary. (Determination and Cognitive Strategy)

To summarize, the strategies used by these four students are:

- Memory Strategy (Use of their prior knowledge of L1)
- Determination Strategy (Translation and Usage of an online dictionary)
- Dtermination and Metacognitive Strategies (Use of a bilingual dictionary and self-preparation)

3.5 The importance of the inputs

At the end of the students' questionnaire, and in an attempt to find out what input high school students assess to be very important for the growth of their vocabulary size, the students were asked the following question: **How important do you think the following inputs are for your learning of English in class?** Ten different inputs were given to them and they are: 1-Teacher speaking 2-textbook 3-magazines 4-newspapers 5-novels 6-internet 7-films 8-computer games 9-music 10-class activities. Students were asked to grade these inputs as follows: a-not important b- a little important c-important d-very important e-extremely important

To present and discuss the results, the inputs are divided into three categories:

1-Oral/ Verbal: Teacher- speaking

2-Written: newspapers/novels/text-book/ magazines/ class-activities

3-Audiol-Visual: Internet/ films/ computer-games/ music

Inputs	Not Important	A little Important	Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
<u>a-Written</u>					
Newspapers	02/22	03/22	10/22	05/22	02/22
Novels	01/22	06/22	08/22	03/22	04/22
Text book	01/22	02/22	05/22	09/22	05/22
Magazines	02/22	10/22	08/22	02/22	00/22
Class activities	00/22	01/22	01/22	08/22	12/22

b-Audio Visual					
Internet	00/22	00/22	03/22	08/22	11/22
Films	03/22	00/22	07/22	05/22	07/22
Computer Games	07/22	06/22	01/22	05/22	03/22
Music	00/22	04/22	07/22	03/22	08/22
c-Oral/Verbal					
Teacher-Speaking	00/22	01/22	03/22	05/22	13/22

Table 3.3 : Students' responses on the importance of inputs

The First Category Examined was -Oral / Verbal Input:

1-Teacher Speaking

The findings in table 3.3 reveal that students consider 'teacher speaking' in general to be of great importance for their vocabulary growth. Three of the participants assess 'teacher speaking' as important and the total of five students evaluates it as very important. Thirteen students estimate it to be extremely important. Finally, none of them answer this item 'not important' and only one student claims it to be a little important.

This result reveals a positive and a satisfactory insight for teachers since no student devaluates 'teacher speaking' in class. It is true that this shows that the participants responding to the question concerning the source of input are quite aware of the importance of their teacher's talk in the learning process in general and vocabulary learning in particular but at the same time, teachers might feel that their students

have put a heavy burden on their shoulders because this means also that their students are quite demanding and are expecting a lot from them.

The Second category examined was 'Written' inputs:

1-Newspapers

Table 3.3 demonstrates that newspapers are viewed by two students to be not an important input in the learning of English vocabulary. No more than three students estimate it as a little important while ten students state that it is important. A total of five participants find it very important and finally, two of the students evaluate it as extremely important. The results suggest that newspapers are not considered a valuable input for the learning of vocabulary.

2-Novels

The second suggested written input is 'novels'. The results show that less than half of the students consider reading novels as an important input and six out of twenty-two participants find it a little important while one student states that novels are not important. Finally, three students evaluate it as very important and four see it as extremely important. This suggests that our students do not read in general or at least they have no idea of how reading can be a valuable input for enlarging their vocabulary size and improving their language proficiency.

3-TextBook

Table 3.3 shows that students evaluate the textbook to be a useful input in the classroom but not as important as teacher speaking. A total of nine students find the textbook very important while five evaluate it as important and the same number of students (five) assess it as extremely important. Two students say that the textbook is a little important and one participant estimates it as unimportant. The results reveal that most of the students evaluate the textbook to be of great value in the learning of English vocabulary and this may be justified by the fact that it is the main source of knowledge and activities used by the teacher in the classroom which makes students consider it a valuable input.

4-Magazines

The next input is about magazines. The question is 'how important students think magazines are for their vocabulary growth'.

The results indicate that two students find magazines not to be important whereas ten say that they are a little important and only two students see it as very important. None of them evaluate 'magazines' to be extremely important.

In general, the students do not estimate magazines to be a good input.

5-Class activities

The last alternative proposed to the participants is 'class activities'.

As can be seen in table 3.3, most of the students evaluate class activities as fundamental for learning of vocabulary which is a positive finding for teachers' viewpoint. None of the students see it as unimportant while only one student says that it is a little important. A total of eight students assess it as very important and twelve find it extremely important. It is satisfactory to realize that our students consider this alternative an important means for learning new words and enrich their repertoire. Students are confident that class activities can give them valuable vocabulary input.

The Third Category Examined Was Audio-Visual Inputs:

1- Internet

With the technological advance, the Internet has become another important source of input in the learning process. Today, most secondary schools in Algeria are equipped with computers and Internet connection and thus have the possibility to offer a new learning tool for their students. But unfortunately, only first year students of technological streams have access to these computers because of "Computing", a subject newly introduced by the ministry of education.

The responses presented in table 3.3 show that none of the participants depreciate the Internet and that three of them see it as important. Finally, eight students evaluate it as 'very important' and a total of eleven students estimate it as extremely important. All in all, all the students agree on its importance as input.

2- Films

Table 3.3 shows that only three students view films as not important and no student considers them as a little important. Seven students evaluate this alternative as important followed by seven others estimating them as extremely important and five considering them as very important. Thus, more than half of the participants assess films as a highly important input.

3- Computer Games

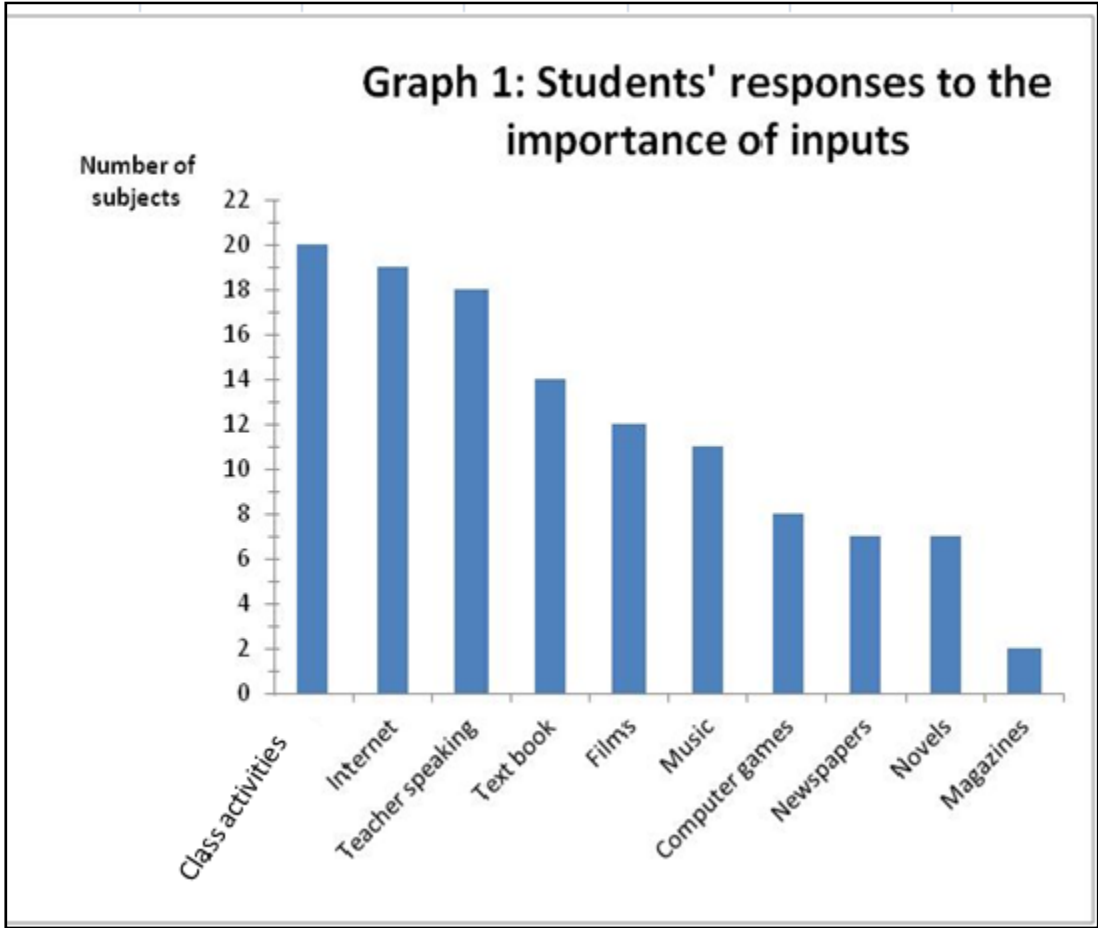
Today, many young people become addicted to computer games for their entertainment. As demonstrated in table 3.3, six students view computer games as little important in the learning process and seven participants see it as unimportant. Only one student finds it important. On the other hand, five students say they are 'very important' for the learning process and three say they are 'extremely important'. This difference suggests that some students consider computer games as a means of entertainment which can lead to vocabulary learning while others see it as a way of getting pleasure in free time only.

4- Music

Most people agree that young people have become music addicted. The results show that none of the participants consider music to be not important while three consider it as very important. Only four students find it a little important and eight see it as extremely important. This shows that our students are to some extent

aware of the importance of listening to authentic material which is perhaps the most efficient way of learning new vocabulary in context.

To summarize, the students' responses to the importance of inputs, 'very important' and 'extremely important' were considered together and merged into 'most important'. The sources of input suggested by the researcher were ranked by students from the most important to the least important and demonstrated in graph 1.



As shown in graph 1, 20/22 of the students assessed 'class activities' to be the most important input followed by 'Internet' (19/22) then comes 'Teacher speaking' with 18

students considering the teacher to be salient in the learning process. Next comes the other inputs, namely, 'Textbook', 'Films', 'music', 'Computer games', 'Newspapers' and 'Novels' which were also evaluated as important. Finally, 'Magazines' were evaluated as the least important.

An interesting finding was also revealed. Students do not favor inputs that involve reading. This appeared in the low number obtained for 'Newspapers', 'Novels' and 'Magazines'. A pivotal task for teachers then is to raise their students' awareness on the importance of extensive reading because, in order for a new word to be learned and retained "it must be encountered again (and again) before it is forgotten" (Zimmerman, 2009:9)

3.6 Shallow Processing As an Ineffective Strategy for Vocabulary Retention

This section answers **RQ2**: How effective are the students' strategies in terms of comprehension and retention?

In order to answer this question and see the effectiveness of the most used strategies in terms of comprehension and retention, I have assessed the number of new vocabulary that students were supposed to have learned and retained by the end of the first term through an Achievement Test. The achievement test (Appendix 3) was chosen because it could best serve the purpose of the present study. It is the kind of test which is given at the end of a course and aims to measure students' mastery of what has been taught. The test was given to students for the purpose of measuring their vocabulary retention by estimating the number of words retained by

the end of the first term. The sections that follow analyse and discuss the results of each activity.

Activity one

The aim of this activity is to test students’ ability to store and recall the retained vocabulary.

In the first activity, students are given five definitions and are asked to find out the words that correspond to these definitions. The five words are: Counterfeiting/ Money-laundering/ Nepotism/ Embezzlement/ Civilization.

Table 1 shows the test takers ‘scores

Number of new items retained and recalled (out of 5 items)	00	01	02	03	04	05
Number of subjects (out of 22)	10	10	01	01	00	00

Table 1: Number of new items stored and recalled by the subjects

As table 1 shows, only one student found three words out of five (Money-laundering/ Nepotism/ Embezzlement) and one student found two words (Money-laundering/ Nepotism). 10/20 students could find only one item, seven of which found the same item (Money-laundering) while the three left found (counterfeiting) The other participants; that is, 10/22 students found zero item which means they recalled no word. This is a high number and it means that almost half of the students have not retained the five target words of both units (mainly in unit two). This may be

discouraging for the teacher to see that the majority of the students are unable to store the key words and retrieve them in this activity despite the fact that they have been working with these key words repeatedly for about a whole term. Their inability to retain words is probably due to the fact that they are more users of Determination Strategies which encourage shallow processing of words, with little or no retention.

Activity two

The aim of activity two is to test students' knowledge of vocabulary in terms of both comprehension and retention.

In this activity, students were asked to match the appropriate synonyms provided in the list on the right with the words on the left. With respect to the scoring of the test items, a correct answer was given '2 points' because answering correctly suggests that the students could identify and remember the form and meaning of the target word itself and its synonyms whereas an incorrect or an unanswered item was given '0'(zero).

The results are shown in table 2

The number of synonyms found	The number of students (out of 22)
00	01 /22
01	03 /22
02	06 /22

03	05 /22
04	04 /22
05	02 /22
06	00/22
07	01 /22

Table 2: number of synonyms found by the students

The results reveal that only one participant could remember the meaning of the target words and chose the appropriate synonyms and two students could link five words with their equivalents. The total of four students recognized the synonyms of four words while five participants knew the equivalent of three words. Six students matched correctly the synonym of two out of seven items while one student found only one synonym and one student left the activity undone which suggests that it was impossible for him to retain and remember the words studied and learned. Thus, only one student got full mark in this activity and two students got more than the average. The other students left got under the average. Here again, the results show that the students did not use the appropriate strategies of deep processing that can help them retain words for a long period of time. This result corroborates with the previous results obtained in RQ1 which showed that deep processing strategies are hardly used by the students.

Activity three

The aim of this activity is to check students' comprehension of the target words (i.e. form and meaning)

In this activity students were given four lists of words. Each list comprises an odd word which students have to identify and cross out. It should be mentioned that each list contains five words which makes a total of twenty words. 16 words are new words learned in both units and the four words left are familiar words that students are supposed to have seen in their previous six years of English. The familiar words are: begin- start- real- true.

Table 3 shows the result of their comprehension of words and their ability to recognize the odd ones (see Appendix 3)

Number of odd words found in the four lists	00	01	02	03	04
Number of subjects (out of 22)	01	04	05	11	01

Table 3: Number of items recognized as 'odd'

When a student could pick out the odd one out of the first list, this means that s/he has understood the five words of the list. And if s/he could not, this could imply that s/he could not recall the meaning of new words and thus was unable to identify the odd ones.

The results of table 3 show that one student only out of twenty two could not pick out the odd words in the four lists. Four students found only one odd word from the four lists while five students could pick out two odd words. Eleven participants recognized three odd words out of four and only one student was able to identify all four odd words.

This implies that half of the participants could identify most of the odd words while ten others could hardly do it. This again may be explained by their inability to use processing strategies which are proved to help retention. However, it is worth noting that this activity contains a 'chance' factor and that students may have crossed out the odd words randomly.

Activity four

The aim of this activity is to check students' comprehension of the overall meaning of the sentences and their ability to infer word meaning from context.

In this activity the students were given five sentences in which eleven basic lexical items were deliberately deleted from them. The deleted words are: corruption- established- flourished- stringent- collapsed- spread- emerged- bribery- expansion- achievements and prospered. The sentences were chosen from different extra-curricular books designed for third year secondary students available in most bookshops. The participants were asked to fill in the blanks by choosing the appropriate vocabulary items. The results are shown in the following table

Number of words inferred (11 items)	Number of subjects (out of 22)
01(spread)	02
02(expansion-bribery-established-emerged-spread-achievement-collapsed- corruption)	05
03(fourished-collapsed-corruption)	02
04(stringent-fourished-expansion-bribery-corruption-collapsed)	04
05(established-achievements-stringent-prospered-bribery-expansion-emerged-collapsed)	03
07(expansion-achievements-prospered-collapsed-fourished-spread-corruption-bribery-established- emerged)	02
08(achievements-stringent-emerged-fourished-collapsed-spread-bribery-corruption)	01
09(established-expansion-bribery-achievements-stringent-emerged-fourished-prospered-collapsed)	01

Table 4: The number of words inferred

As can be seen from table 4, the results of this activity unveil some insights on students' ability to infer words from context which suggests that their ability to comprehend is quite limited. Only two out of twenty-two participants could deduce one word out of eleven words. A total of five students found two words while two students guessed only three words. Moreover, four students recovered four words and three deduced five words. Two students found seven words and one student was able to infer eight words. The same number; that is, one could deduce nine words. Unfortunately, no one could recover all the eleven missing words.

The findings show that four students could infer more than half of the eleven given items which is an unsatisfactory result. This shows that most students were definitely unable to recall the learned words or guess them from the context which suggests the necessity for training them in the use of VLS in secondary schools' curriculum. Guessing meaning from context is a skill which gives the student the opportunity to learn vocabulary without needing the teacher's help (Honeyfield, 1911). Once again, students have proved their inability to retain the meaning of words which they were supposed to have retained from a great deal of exposure in class.

Activity five

The aim of this activity is to check students' ability to produce meaningful sentences using the words appropriately in context and at the same time to see if they have retained the meaning of these words and expressions.

In this activity, the students were given eight words related to the two units studied and were asked to write sentences with the given target words. The words and expressions are: fall to ruins- bloom-decline-wrong doing- tax evasion-false accounting- unethical- theft.

Table 5 shows the statistical result

Number of items used in appropriate context	Number of subjects (out of 22)
00	17
01	02
02	02
05	01

Table 5: The number of items students could put in context

The results of this activity disclose that most students do not know how to make use of the words they are supposed to have learned and how to produce sentences to express comprehensible meaning. 17/22 students gave no answers for this activity. 02 students could only produce two sentences using the two key words (unethical and tax-evasion). Only 1/22 student could put the five words unethical/ tax-evasion/ false-accounting/ bloom/ theft in a context. This suggests that the inability of our students to use these words in meaningful sentences may be due to the fact that

they could not remember their exact meaning, or that they have forgotten them altogether (attrition).

Activity six

The aim of this activity is to see to what extent students can dig in their mental lexicon and add more words related to the units.

In this last activity, the participants were asked to add three words related to the topic of (civilization, unit one) and three related to (Ethics in Business, unit two). The students were supposed to add from Unit One the following words: fall- empire – mature-disappear (appear)... and from Unit Two: Fraud (defraud) - eradicate- whistle blowing- probity- smuggle- integrity...

The results are shown in table 6 below:

Table 6: The number of words remembered and recalled

Number of words recalled	00	01	02
Number of students (out of 22)	17	03	02

Table 6: The number of words remembered and recalled

The results as the previous ones, reveal that 17/22 of the students could not remember any word which is a quite high number that confirms their inability to remember new words. Three of the participants could retrieve one word while two

recalled two words. The words retained and retrieved were: fraud- ruins- empire- and embezzlement.

It is worth noting that I accepted 'embezzlement' in this activity because the two students who could remember it were unable to recognize this word through its definition given in activity one (receptive vocabulary). And by remembering this word (though only its form), the aim of the activity (which is to check students' ability to retain new words and use them (productive vocabulary) is considered fulfilled.

The following table demonstrates the individual scores obtained by students and ranked from the highest score to the lowest score

The number of students	Score obtained out of 47 items
1	26
1	25
1	21
1	20
1	19
1	17
1	16
2	15

2	13
4	11
2	10
2	08
2	07
1	03

Table 7: students' individual scores

The results show that the majority of the test takers have a poor ability to store words and recall them. In this class, there are more students of lower scores than higher scores. The score obtained reflects the number of words retained. Thus, the highest score in the class is 26/47 which means that the number of words retained is 26 out of 47. This is slightly above the average. Seven students retained between 15 and 21 words while two students could retain only 13 words. A total of four students remembered 11 words whereas two students retained the form and meaning of 10 words. Moreover, two students could remember and retrieve eight words and two others could recall seven words. Finally, one student retained only 3 words out of 47.

A closer look at the results show that the majority of the students do not have a good retention of the words studied in the two taught units. According to the test's results, I classified students' retention into three categories:

1- Very poor retention and this concerns the students who could retain less than 10 words out of 47. They are 05/22 students.

2- Poor retention and this concerns students who could retain between 10 - 20 words out of 47 and they are 13/22 students.

3- Average retention and this concerns students who were able to retain 20 words and more out of 47. They are only 04/22.

Let us relate these results to students' responses to the questionnaires. We note that:

- Students' responses in the questionnaire show that they do not use effective memory and metacognitive strategies to retain new words. These strategies have been proved to favour retention (Schmitt, 1997). This may explain the results of the Vocabulary Achievement Test which showed that students were unable to remember and recall words.

Activity seven

At the end of the test, students were asked to:

a-Write down all the words of the test related to both units (1 and 2) that they do not remember having seen before.

b-Write down all the words of the test that they have seen but do not remember what they mean.

-No student answered question (a)

Only eleven students answered (b) and stated that they had seen the words tested before but could not remember them. The following table illustrates the items seen but not remembered.

Number of students	Items seen but not remembered
1	false accounting- bloom- stringent laws- nepotism- embezzlement
2	vanished- evolved- refinement- nepotism- embezzlement
3	stringent laws
4	Outlawed
5	Embezzlement
6	genuine- embezzlement
7	civilization- fraudulent- ethics-
8	established- flourished- collapsed- emerged
9	original- fake- outlawed
10	Expansion
11/22	I have seen all the words but I do not remember them. 50% of students have read /seen all the words, but have not learned / retained them!

Table 8: Words seen but not remembered

These final results show a strong correlation between the outcomes of the test and the actual strategies used by the students; that is, more Discovery Strategies and less Consolidation Strategies. Thus, throughout the seven activities the students have been users of 'shallow' strategies, processing words from their form (i.e. their phonology and morphology) in contrast to deep strategies which are more concerned with the semantic processing of the words, such as association and grouping. (Schmitt, 1997). As shown in the last activity, students had seen most of the key words but they could not remember what they mean.

We may therefore conclude that these secondary school students are not active users of deep strategies (complex strategies) which lead to retention.

As a matter of fact and in response to RQ2, the strategies used by our students are not effective since the test has shown that the participants were unable to retain the 47 tested items. The majority demonstrated poor retention of words and continuous attrition.

In sum, the overall results of the Vocabulary Achievement Test confirm that students have a low rate of retention probably because they do not know how to retain the words needed for the test, could not infer meaning from the context, or use words in a meaningful context. A closer look at the VLS used reveals an interesting insight:

-The two students who performed better than the others and could retain slightly more than half of the words required are found to use, in addition to Determination

Strategies, three other strategy types of memory, cognitive and metacognitive which are:

- (1)- connect an image to the word
- (2)-analyze parts of speech
- (3)-repeat the word mentally
- (4)- use synonyms when there is a communication breakdown
- (5)- regularly revising words before coming to class.

These students have used these strategies more significantly than the mid-scoring group; that is, those who showed poor retention in the test are found to use them at a low frequency rate, whereas the group of students who showed a very poor retention did not use them at all. (These two students could be identified thanks to their pseudonyms).

The students suffer from poor ability to retain items as they seldom associate target words with the ones already known, a strategy which enables them to use their prior knowledge successfully to learn new ones. Moreover, almost all of them never use the Key Word Method (item 10 in the questionnaire) which has been shown in many studies (discussed in the first chapter) as a good strategy that leads to better recalling of words. They seldom revise the new items and never use the Spaced Word Practice to remember words.

As a matter of fact, an urgent task for the teachers is to know the strategies their students use to comprehend and retain vocabulary and then gradually introduce the

ones which involve deep-processing and ensure to a great extent the successful learning and retention of vocabulary.

3.7 'putting words in context' and 'using a Dictionary' are two dominant teachers' strategies

This section attempts to answer **RQ3**: What strategies do teachers use to help their students retain new words?

It deals with the different strategies teachers use to help their students learn and retain words for a later use.

Three teachers teaching third year classes participated in this study. They were handed a questionnaire which comprised eleven questions. (See appendix 2). The aim was to map how teachers in secondary schools deal with vocabulary in class and what techniques they use to facilitate the learning and the storing of new items. In addition, they were asked about what aspects of teaching they consider the most important in the learning process and the obstacles that may hinder students' learning.

Responses to Question One

The three teachers were required to state how many years they had worked as English teachers by ticking one of the following alternatives:

a-5 years or less b- 6-12 years c- 13-19 years d- 20 years or more

The youngest teacher has worked for less than five years. The second one has an experience in English teaching ranging from 13 to 19 years while the third teacher has worked as an English teacher for more than 20 years.

All in all, two out of three teachers are supposed to be well-equipped with the main and most efficient teaching strategies due to their long experience in the field of education.

Responses to Question Two

‘What is the most difficult aspect of teaching?’

The teachers were given four alternatives: Grammar – Reading – Writing – and Vocabulary.

3/3 teachers agree that the most difficult aspect of teaching is ‘Writing’. This is probably because writing requires different language skills and a certain proficiency which most students lack, though writing is the very skill that can help students remember and retain new vocabulary for a long time. Moreover, what makes ‘Writing’ difficult to teach is that it involves the use of grammar, adequate vocabulary and the ability to produce meaningful sentences and texts written correctly and appropriately.

Responses to Question three

In the third question, the teachers were asked whether teaching vocabulary is a part of their everyday instruction, and the three answered ‘YES’. The three teachers

agree on the importance of vocabulary as an essential vehicle for learning a language and as Zimmerman (2009:06) puts it “every language teacher is a vocabulary teacher”.

Responses to Question four

This question asked the three teachers: ‘Do you think that reading facilitates vocabulary acquisition?’.

The three teachers answered positively. They seem to be aware of the importance of reading in enhancing vocabulary acquisition. The teachers were then asked to justify their answer. Their responses (Reading enriches one’s vocabulary/ Reading allows learning new words everyday/The more students read, the better they acquire vocabulary) definitely indicate that they view reading as a way to vocabulary growth. They share Harmer’s view (2001) that because reading is important for the development of students’ word recognition, students need to be involved in both extensive and intensive reading.

Responses to Question five

Teachers ‘responses to Q5: ‘When do you think it is necessary to use students’ native language in explaining new English words?’ indicate that the use of L1 is necessary to explain a key word. Also when the lexical item cannot be deduced through the context in which it is used. Finally, when all other techniques lead to no result in this case, the teacher uses the students’ native language.

This suggests that translation can be a successful strategy used by both teachers and students to deal with vocabulary learning.

Responses to Question six

Question 6: “Do you think that the teacher should be the only source for helping students to learn new English words?” was followed by a request to justify their responses in case the answer is ‘Yes’. The three teachers replied that they should not be the only source of input for their students. One teacher added that: *students have a wide range of sources that can help them learn English vocabulary.*

It is clear that the teachers value other sources of input available for students to learn English and so do the students (refer to the students’ questionnaire). Other inputs such as: the Internet, the text book, T.V programs, music, novels...etc were also regarded as important for vocabulary learning.

Responses to Question Seven

Question seven asked the teachers: “How do you help your students remember words?” Seven different teaching strategies were provided.

Table 09 shows their responses

Teaching strategies	Teacher1 (5years approximately)	Teacher2 (13-19 years)	Teacher 3 (20 years and more)
a-Grouping words	x		

b-Repeating words mentally	x		
c-Writing words repeatedly			
d-Translating	x		
e-Connecting new words to the ones learnt previously	x		x
f-Using the word in a sentence	x	x	x
g-Creating opportunities for encountering the word	x		x
h-Drawing the word's meaning on the board	x	x	
i-Others:	No answer		

Table 09 Teachers' responses to strategies for remembering words

As the table indicates, 3/3 teachers consider the memory strategy 'Using the word in a sentence' as the most important strategy for storing words in long term memory. 2/3 teachers consider 'connecting the new word to the ones already learned' and 'creating opportunities to encounter the word again' as useful strategies that can be of great help for students' retention. Finally, none of the teachers state that they advise their students to 'write down the new words several times' which explains why students reported (in the questionnaire given to them) not to use this strategy which can be quite useful for long term retention.

It is also worth noting that the two teachers with more than 12 years of teaching

experience said that they use a limited range of strategies whereas the teacher with less than five years uses a wider range of strategies to teach vocabulary.

Furthermore, none of the teachers report helping their students to remember new items by teaching them how to use strategies such as the 'Key Word Method' , 'Semantic mapping', 'Spaced Word Practice'...etc

On the other hand, the teacher with less than five years experience identified most of the strategies given as good strategies for helping students store words. She seemed quite aware of the importance of these strategies. The reason might be due to the fact that experienced teachers hold a four-year university degree in English while the new one holds a five- year university degree from Ecole Normale Supérieure. ENS (the School of Education) is supposed to prepare future secondary school teachers in five years, and the last year being devoted to learning issues such as learning strategies including vocabulary learning strategies.

Responses to Question eight

This questions asked teachers: 'What do you evaluate as most important in your teaching of English?' The six alternatives given to them are presented and discussed below:

1- Making students able to communicate

The responses to this question show that 2/3 teachers consider 'ability to communicate' the most important aspect of teaching while 1/3 teacher considers communication in the target language not very important.

2-Teaching the culture of the target language

One teacher only views teaching the culture of the target language important while 2/3 teachers believe the opposite.

3-Teaching the students' English vocabulary

2/3 teachers view the teaching of vocabulary as an important component in teaching while 1/3 teacher does not consider it important. As Celce-Murcia (2001) rightly remarks, teaching vocabulary is a central part of teaching language.

4-Making the students read to learn new words

All teachers agree that reading increases vocabulary. As Zimmerman states "reading is an asset to everyone, at every level, who is interested in learning new words" (2009:127)

5-Making students remember words

2/3 teachers ascertain that making students remember as many words as possible from the lesson is not important in learning English. This raises a query: How can we raise the awareness of our students of the importance of vocabulary if most of their teachers do not see it as important? This may explain why attrition occurs.

Question nine

Teachers were required to answer the following question: “How successful do you think your students are in learning vocabulary?” In other words, can the students use vocabulary in any situation not encountered before?

The three teachers evaluate their students to be just ‘successful’ in learning vocabulary. None of them consider the students ‘extremely successful’ or ‘unsuccessful’. This is contradictory because the Vocabulary Achievement Test shows that students were unable to retain words.

Although according to these results, the teachers have a ‘positive’ opinion about their students’ retention of vocabulary, one cannot deny the fact that many students are struggling to learn and achieve the minimum of a learning task. These students need to be encouraged by teachers and be provided with more opportunities and possibilities to expand their vocabulary in particular.

Responses to Question ten

Eleven alternatives were given to English teachers for the following question: ‘What do you see as the biggest obstacles in the pupils’ learning of vocabulary?’ The eleven alternatives and the teachers’ responses are shown in the following table:

The obstacles	Number of Teachers
I am not good enough as an English teacher	00
Too many pupils in class	01
Over loaded curriculum	01
Lack of motivation of the pupils	00
Too much noise in class	00
Too much difference in proficiency among the students	01
Students do not like learning new words	00
Students do not like reading	03
Students do not use the dictionary to check meaning	01
Students do not know how to retain vocabulary	02

Table 10: Teachers' responses to the obstacles

As revealed in this table, the three teachers agree that the biggest obstacle that prevents students from learning vocabulary is that: 'Students do not like reading'. Two teachers stated that 'Students don't know how to retain words'. The teachers also expressed other problems such as:

- Too many pupils in class
- Overloaded curriculum

-Too much difference in proficiency levels among the students

-Students do not use the dictionary to check meaning

Although in question nine, the three teachers agreed that their students are successful in learning vocabulary, they also admit here that one of the biggest obstacles in learning vocabulary is that their students are unable to retain words.

None of the teachers mentioned 'motivation' or 'noise' as obstacles to learning. The literature reports that when students are unmotivated, learning decreases or is greatly impaired because 'motivation' is a main factor for success. So, teachers should always bear in mind when preparing the lesson that motivating the students is the first task to do. (Lightbown and Spada, 2006)

'Noise' was not regarded as a problem for learning. Teachers seem to cope well with noisy classes, which may be regarded as a positive point since Algerian classes are very large and teachers seem to be well- equipped with strategies to deal with noise!

Responses to Question eleven

In this last question, teachers were required to answer the following question: 'When your students encounter a new word, what strategies do you advise them to use in order to comprehend and retain it?' Four alternatives were given to them namely:

-Making guesses

-Dividing words into roots and affixes

-Asking the students to look up the new word in the dictionary

-Others

Table 11 illustrates teachers' responses

Teaching strategies	The number of teachers
Making guesses	02
Dividing words into roots and affixes	02
Looking up words in the dictionary	03
Others	No answer

As shown in the table above, the three teachers (3/3) claim that they advise their students to look up the new word in the dictionary. 2/3 teachers report that when encountering new words, they advise their students to 'make guesses' or to 'divide the new word into roots and affixes'. No one proposes other strategies.

The three teachers agree that 'Looking up the dictionary' is the strategy most advised to students for comprehending new items. And I believe that for word retention in Long Term Memory, looking up meaning in dictionary is a good strategy for productive vocabulary. However, it is also good to encourage students to use the 'Guessing from context' strategy because students are not supposed to have a dictionary all the time in class. Moreover, dictionaries are not allowed in exams.

Therefore, to guess from context can be a useful strategy for L2 learners with a limited repertoire of vocabulary.

At the end of the questionnaire, teachers were invited to add other strategies they use which were not mentioned. None of them proposed other strategies. Thus, 'using the dictionary' is a strategy much favored by teachers, probably because dictionaries provide students with exhaustive information (i.e. pronunciation, spelling, and the different contexts), that they may not have themselves followed by 'Making guesses' and 'Dividing words into roots and affixes'.

One can clearly see from these responses that teachers do not use appropriate teaching strategies to help students retain words and practice vocabulary retention which may explain why secondary school students fail to retain words.

To summarize the teachers' responses to the questionnaire, we may state that the teachers consider 'reading to learn new words' the most important aspect of vocabulary learning followed by: 'grammar', 'vocabulary', and 'communicating in English'. However, making students remember as many words as possible from the lesson is not regarded as essential except for 1/3 teacher.

A closer look at the responses reveals that the teacher with over 20 years experience values 'grammar' and 'reading' and considers them as the most important aspects for teaching English while 'vocabulary' and 'communicating in English' are viewed as less important. This may be explained by the fact that this teacher has been and is still influenced by structural teaching which regards learning a language

as mastering its grammar primarily. The second teacher whose experience ranges from 13-19 years sees 'vocabulary' and 'reading to learn new words' important aspects, but on the other hand, 'making students learn as many words as possible from the lesson' is seen less important .

From the teachers' responses to the questionnaire, we can infer the causes behind the inability of our students to retain words.

1-The teachers' responses show that the most dominant teaching strategy for learning new words is "Putting the new word in a context", that is using it. The results obtained from Vocabulary Achievement Test revealed that students were unable to retain most of the target words. This implies that teachers may have to use a more efficient teaching strategy for word retention.

2-All teachers do not focus on helping students remember as many words as possible from the lesson. This means that they do not recycle the new vocabulary and ensure that it has been learned and retained. This absence of teaching strategy may be the cause of attrition.

3-The three teachers agree that the biggest obstacle to the students learning of vocabulary is that they do not like reading. Here again, since students dislike reading, then the opportunity to encounter new words in context and to retain them is reduced. This may explain why words are not retained longer and are easily forgotten.

4-Two of the three teachers ascertain that students do not know how to retain words. This suggests that learners should be informed about the appropriate VLS for comprehending and storing words in Long Term Memory and trained on the use of these strategies.

3.8-Summary of the Research Findings: Student Strategy Use

In this summary, the findings of the present research carried out in order to answer the three RQs presented earlier are summarized as follows:

The responses to **RQ1** reveal the kind of VLS secondary school students use in order to understand and retain words. The Algerian secondary school students who participated in the study did not use appropriate strategies for storing and recalling the learned vocabulary. Among the 27 strategies given in the questionnaire, only 08 strategies were used to a great extent. I will summarize their strategy use at two levels of vocabulary learning: receptive and productive.

a-What students do at a receptive/ comprehension levels: Discovery Strategies

When determined to comprehend a new word, students tend to use one of these discovery strategies: use a bilingual dictionary or ask their classmates. When these strategies do not help them in understanding the target words, then they opt for guessing from context which is a well-known strategy among second language students. (Schmitt, 1997)

b-What students do at a productive level: Consolidation Strategies

In order to remember the meaning of a new word and use it at will, students are found to use strategies which involve shallow mental processing. They rarely associate new words with the ones already known or connect an image to the new word to help remember it. Besides, they do not put the new word in a new context and avoid those strategies which require the manipulation of meaning like using word families to remember new English words or using another word with a similar meaning when unable to remember the word in a conversation. Besides, they do not work in group to practise the meaning of the word learned.

In terms of cognitive strategies the findings reveal that secondary school students prefer taking vocabulary notes in class and translating unknown words, but they do not favor 'mechanical' rehearsal strategies such as verbal repetition and written repetition which are said to increase word retention.

With regard to the use of metacognitive strategies, students seem to particularly favor exposure to authentic material through listening to English songs or radio or T.V program in order to develop their English vocabulary knowledge. Unfortunately, they do not revise the newly learned words and do not recycle their knowledge of vocabulary. Indeed, students do not seem to be familiar with the spaced word practice as the majority report not using this strategy probably because they were not taught how to use it. Moreover, they do not test themselves to check if they have

retained the unknown words. But it should be noted that self-assessment grids which are included in the textbook do not target vocabulary knowledge specifically.

Finally, the participants regard 'class activities' as the most important input for learning vocabulary, even before the 'Internet' and 'Teacher speaking'. However, 'Newspapers', 'Novels' and 'Magazines' are assessed as least important which suggest that students dislike inputs which involve reading. Because they are considered extremely important, class activities should target vocabulary knowledge and vocabulary learning strategies in order to develop learners' lexical competence. Moreover, it should give priority to productive exercises whereby the students can check and test how much new vocabulary they have retained and how well they can use it in writing.

Concerning **RQ2**, the results of the Vocabulary Achievement Test show that most students did not retain the target words of the two units "Exploring the Past" and "Ethics in Business" that were supposed to have learned and retained by the end of the first term. This finding demonstrates that there is a strong correlation between what strategies were used to teach new words and what strategies were used by students to retain them. It also reveals that the two students who could retain 25 and 26 words out of 47 are those who made use of different memory, and metacognitive strategies such as: association (associate the word with its coordinates), imagery (image word's meaning), revising words and self-testing. The other students who showed poor ability to retain words and recall them for appropriate use are users of

'shallow' strategies that do not involve elaboration of meaning such as repeating words, asking classmates or just using gestures when unable to think of a word in a conversation.

With regard to **RQ3**, the findings show that the three teachers who took part in this study advise their students to use the dictionary strategy to discover the meaning of words and use the new word in a sentence to retain it. They agree on the necessity of translating into the mother tongue when new items are key words. The findings also reveal that teachers are in general agreement about the importance of reading for vocabulary learning and they evaluate it as the most important aspect of teaching. But they admit that their students do not like reading which constitutes the main obstacle for learning vocabulary, although they report that vocabulary is part of their everyday instruction.

But the three teachers involved in the study do not seem to be aware of efficient strategies which can offer great opportunities to their students to understand and store words in Long Term Memory. Such strategies as the KeyWord Method, the Peg Method (using rhymes to remember the word...). This may explain to a greater or lesser extent why our students face the problem of word retention and attrition.

It goes without saying that what is important is not the number of strategies used but rather the ability to well use these strategies. (Zimmerman, 2009)

Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications

The intention behind this study was to shed light on the problem of word retention and attrition our students are continuously exposed to by describing the strategies used by 22 final year secondary school students (3^oAS), it was my concern to understand the reasons they cannot retain words in Long Term Memory, retrieve them when needed and use them appropriately. The data collection was based on two instruments:

- A questionnaire for students and teachers
- A Vocabulary Achievement Test

The students' Vocabulary Learning Strategies questionnaire used to collect data was adapted from Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy.

The findings revealed interesting insights. Students are great users of Discovery Strategies that mostly favor passive vocabulary learning and neglect the Consolidation Strategies that encourage active vocabulary learning. The results demonstrate that there is a strong correlation between students' vocabulary learning strategies and their inability to retain words as shown in the Vocabulary Achievement Test. Teachers are also found not to use strategies that may help their students store words and use them appropriately.

In the following section, the pedagogical implications for learning and teaching English vocabulary strategies will be mentioned. The limitations of the present study will be presented and some suggestions for further research will be offered.

1- Pedagogical Implications

Based on the results drawn from the present study, some pedagogical implications are worth mentioning:

1-Teachers should have knowledge of the different VLS and those specifically related to word retention in order to teach them to their students.

2-They should raise student awareness of the importance of using appropriate strategies for an effective learning of vocabulary not only to pass the tests, but to retain new words longer.

3-Teachers are advised to introduce Deep Processing Strategies gradually to achieve a step by step progress in their students' retention. In other words, they are recommended to encourage their students to increasingly use memory and metacognitive strategies such as:

- Using imagery, associations and grouping.

- Putting the new word in context.

- Regularly revising their new vocabulary then gradually increasing intervals of revision (Spaced Word Practice).

- Periodically testing themselves to check their degree of retention.

Students should make use of these vocabulary retention strategies and try them out throughout their learning process.

4-Teachers are required to devote time at the end of each session for revising the newly learned vocabulary of the lesson and then using these new words in context as warming up at the beginning of each new session. They are strongly recommended to insist on productive tasks rather than receptive ones.

Teachers and students are strongly advised to cooperate continuously in order to succeed in the learning process and overcome the challenge of learning a foreign language. This cooperation may be described as follows: the teacher presents the appropriate strategies for learning vocabulary and then trains his students on the use of these strategies through vocabulary activities. Then, students will try to apply them each time they encounter a new word.

2- Limitations of this study and Suggestions for Future Research

Although the present study has provided interesting insights concerning students' vocabulary learning strategies use and has hopefully shed light on the problem of word retention, it still has limitations that future research should take into consideration:

These findings cannot be generalized because it is a small scale study undertaken with a limited number of subjects and a very limited number of language teachers. A larger scale of study from more secondary schools with a larger sample of students and teachers would definitely yield more conclusive results.

This study is descriptive, with a quantitative approach mainly using the two instruments only: a questionnaire to students and teachers and a vocabulary achievement test. Further research investigating the actual use of students' VLS and their ability to retain vocabulary can be undertaken by combining both quantitative and qualitative approach and by using other sources for collecting data such as:

observation, think aloud procedure and diaries. We may deepen our knowledge of vocabulary retention across two or three years at school (middle or secondary) or at university.

Future research could also investigate specific strategies for vocabulary retention and compare the effects of one or more strategies on students' long term retention. For example, comparing the Keyword method and the Rote Learning method and examine which one produces better recall of new words.

Finally, future research should deal with the strategies students think more useful for learning and retaining vocabulary. This may include strategies used in their L1 or L2. This can be beneficial to teachers and might help in reducing the memory fading rate.

In conclusion, it is hoped that this study will be useful for teachers, who, like me, worry about their students' inability to retain new words. Teaching students appropriate vocabulary learning strategies and focusing on not only comprehension, but also production and retention, may help increase their lexical competence and by the same token, their communicative competence.

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APPENDIX 1:

Questionnaire to students

Dear student,

The aim of this questionnaire is to determine how **you** understand and retain English words. For each of the following statements, you can choose one of the following:

1-I never do

2-I rarely do

3-I sometimes do

4-I usually do

5-I always do

Tick the response that best describes how you comprehend and retain words.. There is no right or wrong answer to these statements.

Thank you for your cooperation

Statements	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
1-I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.					
2-I connect an image or picture of the word to help remember it.					
3-I connect unrelated words with rhymes so I can remember them (e.g. <u>one</u> is bun, <u>two</u> is shoe...).					
4-I repeat the word mentally in order to remember it.					
5-I remember new English words by remembering their location on the page or on the board when I first saw them.					
6-I practise revision at spaced intervals.					
7-I analyze the parts of a new word to discover its meaning.					
8-I remember the new English words if I see it written down					

9-I associate new words with their synonyms(or antonyms					
10-I try to identify a familiar word in Arabic that sounds like or resembles the new English word to remember it. E.g. the English word 'fortress' for an Arabic word 'Forsa'					
11-I take vocabulary notes in class					
12-I translate the word into my mother tongue to understand it and memorize it.					
13-I listen to English radio, songs or T.V program to develop my English vocabulary knowledge.					
14-I make guesses to understand unfamiliar words.					
15-I use a monolingual dictionary (English-English) to discover the meaning of a new word.					
16-I use a bilingual dictionary (English-English) to discover the meaning of a new word.					
17-I test myself to check if I remember the words					
18-When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English I use gestures.					
19-When I can't think of a word during a conversation, I use another one with a similar meaning.					
20-If I do not understand something in English, I ask my classmates (friends)					
21-I practise English orally with other students.					
22-I ask my teacher for the meaning of a new word.					
23-I work in group to practise the meaning of words and learn new ones.					
24-I use semantic maps to remember new English words.					
25-I regularly revise words before coming to class (the next lesson)					
26-I write down words repeatedly to remember them.					
27-I make a list of new words and memorize them.					

28-If you have any other technique for learning words, write it here

.....

.....

.....

.....

29- -How important do you think the following are for your learning of English vocabulary in class?

	Not important	A little important	Important	Very important	Extremely important
Teacher speaking					
Textbook					
Magazines					
Newspapers					
Novels					
Internet					
Films					
Computer games					
Music					
Class activities					

7-How do you help your students remember words? Please, tick one or more statements

- a-by telling them to group words (e.g. animals: Tiger, Lion, Elephant...)
 - b-by telling them to mentally repeat words
 - c-by telling them to write down the new words several times
 - d-by giving them the word in mother tongue and ask them to translate it into English
 - e-by connecting new words to the ones students have learnt previously.
 - f-by asking them to use the new word in a sentence
 - g-by creating opportunities for encountering the new word
 - h-by drawing the word's meaning on the board
 - i-others
-
-

8-What do you evaluate as most important in your teaching of English?

Please tick one or more statements

- a-making the students able to communicate in English
- b-teaching the students the culture of the target language
- c-teaching the students English grammar
- d-teaching the students English vocabulary
- e-making the students read to learn new words
- f-making the students remember as many words as possible from the lesson

9-How successful do you think your students are in acquiring vocabulary?

- a-Extremely successful
- b-Very successful
- c-Successful
- d-Not very successful
- e-Extremely unsuccessful

10-What do you see as the biggest obstacle in the pupils' learning of vocabulary?

Please tick one or more statements

- a-I am not good as an English teacher
- b-Too many pupils in class
- c-Too loaded curriculum
- d-Lack of motivation of the pupils
- e-Too much noise in class
- f-Too much difference in proficiency levels among the students
- g-Students don't like learning new words
- h-Students don't like reading
- i-Students don't use the dictionary to check meaning
- j-Students don't know how to retain vocabulary

11-When your students encounter a new word, what strategies do you advise them to use in order to comprehend and retain it?

- a-making guesses
- b-dividing words into roots and affixes roots into affixes
- c-asking students to look up the new word in the dictionary
- e-Others

Thank you for your cooperation

Appendix 3

Vocabulary Achievement Test

Activity one: Find in the text words whose definitions follow

- 1-.....is something made in imitation of another thing in order to deceive.
- 2-.....consists in hiding the illegal origin of money.
- 3-.....is the act of favoring by a person of high position to his relatives.
- 4-.....is a type of fraud where someone illegally gets money from their employer.
- 5-.....refers to the sum of human accomplishment.

Activity two: Match the words with their synonyms

Words	Synonyms
1-civilization	a-disappeared
2-tombs	b-developed
3-evolved	c-refinement
4-vanished	d-graves
5-deceive	e-original
6-fraudulent	f-mislead
7-genuine	g-deceitful

Activity three: Cross the odd one out

1-Illegal-lawful-unauthorized-lawless-outlawed

2-Develop-begin-originate-start-emerge

3-Authentic-genuine-real-original-fake

4-imitated-copied-true-forged-duplicated

Activity four: Fill in the blanks with the following words

<p>Corruption-established-flourished-stringent- collapsed-spread-emerged-bribery- expansion-achievements-prospered</p>

1-The Inca were native American people who.....an extensive empire over the Andes in South America in the 15th century. However, they did not undertake any major..... . One of their remarkable.....was the construction of rope suspension.

2-The level of corruption in the third world countries is very high because of the lack of..... Laws.

3A lot of civilizations.....,, and But unfortunately they.....

4-Both the Phoenicians and the Greeks' civilization started in the East of the Mediterranean. Then, they.....out across the Mediterranean islands, North Africa and the Black sea.

5-.....is to offer money or service to anyone who holds power in exchange for an undue advantage.is to accept that money.

Activity five: Write sentences or two short paragraphs using the following words:

a-Wrong doing- tax evasion- false accounting- unethical- theft

b-Fall to ruins- bloom- decline

Activity six: Add at least three words related to the nouns below

-Civilization-.....

- Ethics.....

Activity seven:

Please, at the end of this test, answer the following statements:

-I don't remember having seen these words before (write them down)

.....

- I have seen these words but I don't remember what they mean (write them down)

.....

الاحتفاظ بالكلمات و فقدانها في تعلم مفردات اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية

دراسة حالة طلبة القسم النهائي بالثانوية

تهدف هذه الدراسة الوصفية إلى معرفة قدرة طلبة الأقسام النهائية على الاحتفاظ بالمفردات التي تم تعلمها بعد مدة من الزمن و هي تعتمد على أعمال أكسفورد (Oxford 1990) و شमित (schmitt 1997) .

انطلاقا من عينة تتكون من 22 طالبا في السنة النهائية من التعليم الثانوي شعبة اللغات الأجنبية و 3 أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية ,كانت غايتنا تحديد استراتيجيات تعلم المفردات التي يستعملها الطلبة و مدى نجاعتها في الاحتفاظ و التذكر و كذا البحث في الاستراتيجيات التي يستعملها أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية من اجل تدريس المفردات الجديدة .

تم جمع المعطيات عن طريق استجوابين. احدهما مخصص للطلبة حول استراتيجيات تعلم المفردات المستعملة, والثاني للأساتذة حول استراتيجيات تدريس المفردات , كما تم جني المعطيات بواسطة إنشاء اختبار لمعرفة مدى قدرة التلاميذ على الاحتفاظ ب48 كلمة جديدة درست خلال الثلاثي الأول و ذلك بحساب عدد الكلمات المحتفظ بها. والهدف من هذا الاختبار هو معرفة ما إذا كانت استراتيجيات تعلم المفردات فعالة .

ملخص النتائج المتحصل عليها في هذه الدراسة:

بعد تحليل المعطيات تبين ما يلي:

فيما يخص السؤال البحثي رقم 1 المتمثل في معرفة نوعية الاستراتيجيات المستخدمة من

طرف التلاميذ من أجل فهم المفردات والاحتفاظ بها , تبين أن التلاميذ (العينة) الذين

شاركوا في هذه الدراسة لا يستعملون الاستراتيجيات المناسبة للاحتفاظ و تذكر المفردات .

من بين 27 إستراتيجية المقترحة في الاستجواب , لاحظنا أن هناك 8 استراتيجيات فقط

تستعمل بشكل كبير, حيث تم تلخيص الاستراتيجيات الثمانية المستعملة على مستويين

مختلفين وهما :

أ- على مستوى التلقي (Receptive level) :

من أجل فهم المفردات, يستعمل التلاميذ الاستراتيجيات التالية: القاموس ثنائي اللغة

(bilingual dictionary) و سؤال زميل الدراسة (ask a classmates) و في حالة

عدم تمكن التلاميذ من فهم معاني المفردات بواسطة هذه الاستراتيجيات, يلجؤون إلى

استعمال التخمين من السياق . و هي استراتيجيات معروفة كثيرا وسط التلاميذ الدارسين

للغة الانجليزية سميت (Schmitt, 1997) .

ب - على مستوى الانتاج (Productive level) :

من أجل تذكر معاني المفردات الجديدة و استعمالها, يلجأ التلاميذ إلى استعمال

الاستراتيجيات البسيطة (shallow strategies) التي لا تتطلب جهدا ذهنيا كبيرا

فمثلا, نادرا ما يربط التلاميذ بين المفردات الجديدة و المفردات المكتسبة قبليا او يربط

الكلمة الجديدة بصورة تساعد على تذكرها.

بالإضافة إلى ذلك فان التلاميذ لا يجيدون وضع الكلمة في جملة مفيدة و يتجنبون استعمال

الكلمات من نفس العائلة (Word Families) لتذكر المفردات الجديدة, أو استعمال مرادف

الكلمات عندما يتعذر عليهم تذكر الكلمة المراد استعمالها خلال المحادثة. زيادة على ذلك

فإنهم لا يعملون جماعيا للتمرن على استعمال الكلمات .

- فيما يخص الاستراتيجيات المعرفية (Cognitive Strategies), اثبتت النتائج ان تلاميذ

الطور الثانوي يفضلون استعمال دفتر المفردات في القسم و ترمجة الكلمات الجديدة لكنهم لا

يفضلون ترديد الكلمات لحفظها (كتابيا او شفويا) و التي هي معروفة برفع مستوى

. الاحتفاظ .

أما فيما يخص الاستراتيجيات ما وراء المعرفة (Metacognitive Strategies) فقد

لوحظ أن تلاميذ الأقسام النهائية يفضلون كثيرا الاستماع إلى الأغاني ومشاهدة البرامج باللغة الانجليزية لتحسين معارفهم المعجمية .

لكن مع الأسف فإن العينة قد أثبتت عدم مراجعة المفردات الجديدة مما يؤدي إلى حتمية النسيان .

كما أكدت التحاليل أن أغلبية التلاميذ (22/21) ليسوا متعودين على ممارسة و استعمال الكلمات على فترات (Spaced Word Practice) وهو ما يؤدي إلى احتمال عدم إدراكهم لكيفية الاستعمال و الاستفادة من هذه الإستراتيجية .

إضافة إلى هذا, فإنهم لا يمتحنون أنفسهم لمعرفة ما إذا كانوا قد تمكنوا من الاحتفاظ بالكلمات الجديدة. تجدر الإشارة إلى أن "التقييم الذاتي" الموجود في الكتاب المدرسي لا يستهدف المفردات .

و أخيرا, فإن المشاركين في هذه الدراسة يعتبرون "التمارين المنجزة في القسم" مهمة جدا من اجل تعلم المزيد من المفردات. بل إنهم يعتبرونها أكثر أهمية من "الانترنت" و "حديث الأستاذ" لكنهم يعتبرون "الجرائد", "الروايات" و "المجلات" ذات أهمية قليلة جدا مما يجعلنا

نستنتج أن التلاميذ لا يحبذون القراءة. و بما أن "التمارين المنجزة في القسم" ذات أهمية قصوى عند التلاميذ, فإننا ننصح أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية بتقديم التمارين التي تطور كفاءات التلاميذ المعجمية. و عليهم كذلك إعطاء الأولوية إلى التمارين التي تنمي قدراتهم الإنتاجية حيث يتسنى لهم امتحان كفاءتهم المعجمية و عدد المفردات الجديدة التي تم الاحتفاظ بها.

أما فيما يخص السؤال البحثي الثاني, فان نتائج الاختبار التحصيلي للمفردات أظهرت أن أغلبية التلاميذ لم يتمكنوا من الاحتفاظ بالمفردات الجديدة المتعلقة بالوحدتين (استكشاف الماضي Exploring the Past-) و (الأخلاقيات في مجال الأعمال التجارية Ethics in Business-) التي كان يفترض بهم الاحتفاظ بها مع نهاية الفصل الأول.

إن هذه النتائج تظهر جليا أن هناك ارتباط وطيد بين الاستراتيجيات المستعملة من طرف الأساتذة لتدريس المفردات الجديدة و بين الاستراتيجيات المستعملة من طرف التلاميذ من اجل الاحتفاظ و التذكر. كما أن النتائج تبين جليا أن التلميذان اللذان استطاعا الاحتفاظ ب25 و 26 كلمة من بين 47 يستعملان إستراتيجية التذكر واستراتيجيات ما وراء المعرفة مثل ربط الكلمة بمرادفتها, و إعطاء صورة لمعنى الكلمة, وكذا مراجعة المفردات على فترات.

أما التلميذان اللذان اظهرا ضعفا في قدرة الاحتفاظ بالمفردات و استرجاعها و وضعها في

سياقها المناسب, فان تحليل المعطيات اظهر أنهما يستعملان الاستراتيجيات البسيطة التي لا تتطلب جهدا ذهنيا مثل :

- تكرار المفردات (Repeating Words).

- سؤال زميل الدراسة عن معاني الكلمات اماءات عندما يتعذر عليهم إيجاد الكلمات أثناء

المحادثة (Ask Classmates).

فيما يخص السؤال البحثي الثالث , فان نتائج تحليل المعطيات أظهرت أن الأساتذة الثلاثة المشاركين في هذه الدراسة ينصحون تلاميذهم باستعمال القاموس الثنائي اللغة من اجل فهم واكتشاف معاني الكلمات الجديدة مع وضعها في جمل مفيدة ويتفقون على ضرورة الترجمة إلى اللغة الأم عندما تكون المفردات الجديدة مفردات أساسية .

كما أثبتت نتائج تحليل المعطيات أن جميع الأساتذة المشاركين في هذا البحث يعتبرون القراءة مهمة جدا للرفع من قدرات التلاميذ المعجمية ويتفقون تماما على أن القراءة عنصر مهم جدا في تدريس اللغة لكنهم يعترفون أن تلاميذهم لا يحبون القراءة مما يشكل عائق كبير في تعلم المفردات رغم أنهم قالوا إن الكلمات أو المفردات هي جزء من التعليم اليومي.

هذا و قد لوحظ أن الأساتذة ليسوا على دراية كافية بالاستراتيجيات الفعالة التي قد توفر فرص كبيرة للتلاميذ من اجل الفهم والاحتفاظ في الذاكرة طويلة الأمد , ومن هذه الاستراتيجيات :

- أسلوب الكلمة الرئيسية (The Key Word Method).

- طريقة الربط بالقافية (The Peg Method).

و يجدر القول في النهاية أن المهم ليس عدد الاستراتيجيات المستعملة بل القدرة على

الاستعمال الجيد و الفعال لهذه الاستراتيجيات (زيمرمان 2009, Zimmerman).

و أخيرا , قدمت بعض الاقتراحات إلى أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية لتحسين التذكر و الكفاءة المعجمية عند طلبة اللغة الأجنبية .

الاقتراحات :

1- يجب أن يكون الأساتذة على دراية شاملة بمختلف استراتيجيات تعلم المفردات و خصوصا الاستراتيجيات المتعلقة بالحفظ لأطول مدة ممكنة من أجل تدريسها للتلاميذ.

2- يجب توعية التلاميذ على أهمية و وجوب استعمال الاستراتيجيات المناسبة و الفعالة لتعلم المفردات ليس فقط من اجل النجاح في الامتحان بل كذلك للاحتفاظ بها في الذاكرة على المدى الطويل .

- ننصح الأساتذة بتقديم الاستراتيجيات المعالجة العميقة تدريجيا لتحقيق الاحتفاظ خطوة بخطوة . و بمعنى آخر هم مطالبون بتشجيع تلاميذهم على استعمال الاستراتيجيات التالية - استعمال تصوير المعاني و الربط والجمع (Making association, imagery and Grouping) .

- وضع الكلمة الجديدة في سياقها المناسب (Putting Words in Context) .

- المراجعة المنتظمة للمفردات الجديدة ثم زيادة فترات المراجعة تدريجيا (Spaced Word Practice) .

- إن الأساتذة مطالبون بتكريس وقت في نهاية كل حصة لمراجعة المفردات الجديدة التي تم تعلمها حديثا ثم بعد ذلك استعمال هذه الكلمات في سياق مناسب في بداية الحصة الموالية . و نوصي بشدة الإصرار على التمارين الإنتاجية عوضا عن التمارين القبلية

ننصح كل من الأساتذة و التلاميذ على التعاون المستمر من اجل النجاح في عملية التعلم والتغلب على تحديات تعلم اللغة الأجنبية .

يتمثل هذا التعاون في ما يلي :

يقدم الأستاذ الاستراتيجيات المناسبة من اجل تعلم المفردات و بعدها يدرب تلاميذه على استعمال هذه الاستراتيجيات عن طريق تمارين حول المفردات , ثم يحاول التلاميذ تطبيقها في كل مرة يصادفون كلمة جديدة .

الاقتراحات للبحث في المستقبل :

بالرغم من أن هذه الدراسة قد سلطت الضوء على مشكل الاحتفاظ بالمفردات لدى طلبة التعليم الثانوي , إلا أن هناك بعض النقاط التي يجب إن تأخذ بعين الاعتبار مستقبلا :

1- لا نستطيع تعميم نتائج هذا البحث لأن هذه الدراسة هي ذات نطاق صغير.

(a small scale study) تمت مع عينة محددة من تلاميذ التعليم الثانوي و الأساتذة .

دراسة ذات نطاق اكبر قد تسفر بالتأكيد نتائج حاسمة .

2- هذه الدراسة وصفية , اتبعت نهج كمي (quantitative approach) و استعملت

وسيلتين لجمع المعطيات و هما الاستجواب و الاختبار التحصيلي.

يجب القيام بمزيد من الدراسات والبحوث يتم فيها الجمع بين المنهج الكمي و النوعي في

جمع المعطيات .

3- يرجى كذلك القيام بالمزيد من البحوث لمقارنة مثلا استعمال إستراتيجية معينة مع

إستراتيجية أخرى لمعرفة أي منهما تؤدي إلى الاحتفاظ الطويل المدى مثلا مقارنة التعلم

عن ظهر قلب (rote learning) و طريقة الكلمة المفتاح (keyword method).

خلاصة القول نرجو أن تكون هذه الدراسة مفيدة للأساتذة الذين هم قلقون على قدرة

تلاميذهم على الاحتفاظ بالمفردات الجديدة.و يجب التركيز ليس فقط على استعمال

الاستراتيجيات الفعالة للفهم بل أيضا للحفاظ ووضع الكلمة في سياقها المناسب. كل هذا قد

يرفع من كفاءتهم المعجمية (Lexical competence) و على نفس المنوال كفاءتهم

التواصلية (Communicative competence).

