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**UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES IN THE
KURDISH CONTEXT**

MASTER THESIS
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all materials and results that are not original to this study.

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ABSTRACT

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES IN THE KURDISH CONTEXT

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The purpose of this study was to reveal the vocabulary learning strategies which were employed by students at the college of languages English department at the Salahaddin University. This study further aimed to compare the vocabulary learning strategies employed among the first, second, third and fourth-grade students. A quantitative method was used to collect the data from the participants. A questionnaire consisting of 40 items of vocabulary learning strategies was distributed to a total of 221 students studying at the Salahaddin University in the north of Iraq. The results showed that in general students gradually integrate more vocabulary learning strategies as they pass into the next grade. Fourth-grade students were found to employ vocabulary learning strategies more frequently than all the other grades in 27 items, which revealed that vocabulary learning strategies were positively applied by them. Hence, the first grade students were mostly seen as the least users of vocabulary learning strategies.

Key Words: Vocabulary Learning Strategies, Grade, Undergraduate Students

ÖZET
KÜRT BÖLGESİNDEKİ ÜNİVERSİTE ÖĞRENCİLERİN KELİME ÖĞRENME
STRATEJİLERİ

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Bu çalışmanın amacı, Sallahadin üniversitesinde, İngilizce bölümündeki dil kolejinde olan öğrencilerin kullandıkları kelime öğrenme stratejilerini ortaya çıkartmaktır. Buna ek olarak, bu çalışma birinci, ikinci, üçüncü ve dördüncü sınıflarda okuyan öğrencilerin kullandıkları kelime öğrenme stratejilerini karşılamayı hedeflemektedir. Öğrencilerden verileri toplamak için nicel bir metod uygulanmıştır. 40 maddelik kelime öğrenme stratejisi içeren bir anket, Kuzey Irak'daki Salahaddin üniversitesinde okuyan 221 öğrenciye dağıtıldı. Genel olarak sonuçlar, öğrencilerin bir üst sınıfa geçtikleri zaman daha fazla kelime öğrenme stratejileri kullandıkları ortaya çıkmıştır. Dördüncü sınıfta okuyan öğrencilerin, anketin 27 maddesinde daha sık kelime öğrenme stratejileri diğer sınıflara göre kullandıkları ortaya çıkmıştır. Bunun sonucu olarak, kelime öğrenme stratejilerinin olumlu bir şekilde uygulandığı ortaya çıkmıştır. Ayrıca, birinci sınıfta okuyan öğrencilerin en az kelime öğrenme stratejisi kullananlar arasındaydı.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kelime öğrenme stratejisi, sınıf, lisans öğrencileri.

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ABBREVIATIONS

VLS: Vocabulary Learning Strategies

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Science

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

M: Mean Score

SD: Standard Deviation

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Overview

This chapter presents the background of the study in which the importance and usage of vocabulary learning strategies are explained. This chapter also discusses the problem statement, the aim of the survey, the significance of the study followed by the limitations of the study.

The Background of the Study

Students are consciously and subconsciously using different types of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) to learn vocabulary items since vocabulary is the key to communication in every language. Pan and Xu (2011) stated that “vocabulary is the basic material to put into the pattern, cause there is no sentence, no essay, and even no language without vocabulary” (p.1586). Moreover, vocabulary is necessary for any language specifically in language learning, as it is used in the main skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. In his research Zhi-liang (2010) illustrated that 89% of his participants strongly agreed and 11% agreed that learning vocabulary is very important in learning English, while none of the participants disagreed and/or strongly disagreed with this statement.

A noteworthy change has taken place concerning vocabulary learning strategies. As researchers have focused typically on how language learners use vocabulary learning strategies, they have established the presence of a series of techniques or strategies learners put into the process in the vocabulary learning procedure. Ghazal (2007) argued that

“different learning approaches should be taught to the learners by instructors” (p. 87). Asgari and Mustapha (2011) pointed out that “learning vocabulary is one of the most difficult parts of language learning” and is a challenge during the language learning process considering the language skills. They also put forth that learners should learn vocabulary by employing various strategies.

There are many strategies that learners can employ to learn vocabulary. These vocabulary learning strategies are seen to complete each other. Therefore, it is essential for English language learners to use most of the VLS to acquire the target language effectively. Nation (2001) believes that students can gain variety of vocabulary through using various strategies. Sener (2015) presents VLS to the foreign language learners as essential and assists her students to employ these strategies to increase their vocabulary knowledge. Marttinen (2008) stated that “vocabulary knowledge is essential when using a foreign language since one is unable to communicate without words. However, learners are usually aware of the importance of words in the language and they often realize the fact that learning strategies can help them in their vocabulary learning” (p.5).

Context. The process of this study was held at the English language department of the University of Salahaddin in Northern Iraq. Salahaddin University-Erbil was established in 1968 and it is the only biggest public university in Kurdistan region, Northern Iraq. The aim of this department is to teach English as a foreign language. English as the foreign language is compulsory in schools and all colleges in the northern Iraqi context. Nowadays, the English language is also required in almost every job opportunity in this specific context. Therefore, many people want to study at English language departments in universities and colleges. According to Atif and Farhadi (n.d) the college of languages was established in

2005 and consists of seven language departments namely the departments of Kurdish, Arabic, Turkish, English, French, German and Persian languages (As cited in <http://su.edu.krd/content.php?topic=141&articleNo=1135&lang=en>). English language departments require more overall scores from students for registration than all the other aforementioned language departments. The graduate students of this department can become translators, interpreters and/or teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) at secondary or high schools.

The Problem Statement

I was informed by the Head of the English language department that there were teachers who taught students in different grades for example (first grade to fourth grade) therefore, we can argue that, it is imperative for teachers to be aware of VLS that students use in each grade, so that, the teachers would be able to have a proper plan of teaching lexis accordingly. Nunan and Carter (2001) argued that “one student might benefit from more visually presented rather than auditorially presented material. Such knowledge helps teachers systematically to initiate strategy instruction and improve language instruction” (p 171).

Second, from my experience, students are not familiar with many VLS when they are at the early stage of learning the language. By the time they find out all about the strategies to be able to learn vocabulary they are usually in their last year of university. In other words students in the first grade lack the employment and awareness of VLS. For this reason, they usually rely on memorizing, asking questions to the teacher to and/or use dictionaries to learn vocabulary items.

It can be argued that teachers do not pay much attention to the teaching of vocabulary or to the training of strategies in this context because most of the teachers give greater priority to the teaching of grammar. Rojananak and Vitayapirak (2015) argued that “the neglect of vocabulary is mainly due to the fact that teachers have been told a great deal about new discoveries in English grammar, but they have heard much less about ways to help students learn new words” (p. 1).

The Aim of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find out the VLS which are used by EFL students at the college of languages, English language department at the Salahaddin University, Erbil in the north of Iraq. This study also aims to compare the VLS used among first, second, third and fourth-grade students. Sener (2015) argued that currently teachers are “fascinated to find out in what way learners acquire vocabulary” (p. 17).

The following research questions are posed in order to carry out this study:

- 1- What are the vocabulary learning strategies used among undergraduate EFL students?
- 2- In what ways do the vocabulary learning strategies change with regard to the students' grades?

The Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will make EFL teachers teaching at the Salahaddin University aware of the VLS used by each grade for them to deal with each grade accordingly. The study will also highlight the VLS that students most and/or least prefer to

use. It is hoped that by realizing the strategies used or not used by students in each grade, might give knowledge to EFL teachers in order to design a better vocabulary teaching approach that will be appropriate to fit the different grades of students at the university. This might help teachers to have a better understanding of how their students learn vocabulary items. Zhi-liang (2010) argued that teachers should use “different approaches towards different students” and the teaching and learning plans should be improved to enhance educational progress in the stage of language and language learning.

The use of variety of VLS in appropriate ways is encouraged by scholars. Jeon (2007) argued that “students of different vocabulary achievement level favour different” VLS, “teachers are required to attempt to teach students how to use” VLS “properly, particularly considering students’ vocabulary ability levels” (p. 47). It is believed that introducing different types of VLS to the students by their teachers will help students to become more well-organized language learners. Fundamentally, the findings of the study can progress student’s knowledge with respect to VLS, and it can also increase teacher's awareness regarding the use of VLS among students. Zhi-liang (2010) suggested that

as a teacher, one should pay more attention to vocabulary teaching, consciously try to seek successful learning strategies, stimulate and help students to use a strategy that suited them and let them put what they have learned into practice and actual use as much as possible. And then stimulate the students' interest in English learning (pp. 162-163).

In addition, Jeon (2007) argued that teachers should first observe the most suitable strategies that meet the students' cognitive progressive stage and language skill level, and then train them to use the strategies successfully.

The Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to freshman, sophomore, junior and senior students of the English language department in Salahaddin University in the North of Iraq. The study will consider the VLS used only by them. The questionnaire is also limited as it does not include all the VLS. The questionnaire consists of 40 VLS only which were adapted from Schmitt (1997) and then modified before carrying out the present study.

Conclusion

This chapter introduced the background of the study focusing on the context in which this study took place. In addition, the problem, the significance and the aim of this study were presented followed by the limitations. The following chapter will present the literature related to this study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This chapter illustrates the definition of vocabulary, vocabulary learning strategies and presents the classification of vocabulary learning strategies. Furthermore, some of the recent studies of vocabulary learning strategies are reviewed.

Vocabulary

Nation (1990) suggested that to know a word a person must master different sorts of knowledge such as knowledge of the meaning of the word, written form, spoken form, grammatical behaviour, collocations, register, associations and finally the frequency of the word. He also labeled them as “types of word knowledge”. In language situations, it is essential for a person to be able to use words in many different ways as they come across (as cited in Schmitt, 2000, p. 5).

It is believed that learners should pay more attention towards increasing their vocabulary knowledge. Zhang (2009) suggested that it is vital for teachers and students to notice vocabulary items, and thus, effort must be paid to increase students' vocabulary size.

It is quite clear that some words are more important to understand than others. Furthermore, it is evident that an unknown word in the headline of an article is much more important than the words in the article (Coady, Magoto, Hubbard, Graney, & Mokhtari, 1993). Learners might not come across the uncommon words learned from a dictionary. In

contrast, improving students' understanding of common vocabulary has been revealed to lead to enlarged reading skills (as cited in Richard, 2008, p. 220).

Grabe and Stoller (2004) recommended that teachers concentrate on students' attention on words that are used a lot and worthwhile to obtain and words that are linked to the main ideas of the text (as cited in Richard, 2008, p. 220). While students do not understand the meaning of a word from the context, possibly teachers could tell them about the critics of the vocabulary, for example, teachers could tell them that this word is commonly used in English.

Many researchers have already talked about the importance of vocabulary regarding learning the language. Teachers are seen to motivate and encourage learners to learn vocabulary items. According to Gazal (2007) "vocabulary is central to language and is of great significance to language learners. Words are the building blocks of a language since they label objects, actions, ideas without which people cannot convey the intended meaning" (p. 84).

There is no doubt that a student who knows lots of words can express the language better than those who know few words. Thus, it is imperative for students to acquire many words to use the language in an appropriate and right way. McCarten (2007) claimed that learners would be able to comprehend nearly 80 percent of the words in a normal text if they know 2000 common words. Furthermore, students' understanding will be increased to 88.7 percent if they know 5000 words (as cited in Carneiro, 2014, p. 696). Al-Khasawneh, (2012) argued that "knowledge of vocabulary is the essential part when using second or

foreign language because one is unable to communicate with others without a sufficient amount of words” (p. 1).

Types of vocabulary

Gogoi (2015) argues that there are two types of vocabulary namely, active vocabulary and passive vocabulary. Active vocabulary means words in which the learners can identify the meaning, and use them correctly. Therefore, one can use them efficiently in their writing and speaking.

Gogoi (2015) claims that in language active vocabulary is raised when:

- the correct vocabulary item is utilized in the proper place.
- remembering the meaning of the words naturally.
- right tenses inflections and word order are used according to grammar patterns.

Besides the pronunciation, sound and stress of a word should be used correctly in speaking. On the other hand, Gogoi (2015) believes that passive vocabulary refer to those words in which people can identify the meaning of them once they are appear. However, people are unable to use passive vocabulary in speaking or writing as they are unaware of those words completely.

Gogoi (2015) argued that passive vocabulary requests the following:

- to be able to know the meaning of vocabulary as heard or read.
- the grammatical items and forms of the vocabulary must be associated.

- the skill of stimulating rapidly the sense of large word groups

According to online TOEFL tutoring (2013), passive vocabulary represents those words that you understand when you read them in the context, or you hear them when somebody is speaking. Nevertheless, you are unable to use in your writing or speaking. Moreover, the online TOEFL tutoring (2013), defines active vocabulary as words that you understand and have the ability to retrieve them from your memory and use them perfectly. It is also argued that people have less active vocabulary than passive vocabulary. People usually tend to use their passive vocabulary when they are reading the newspaper and/or listening to the news on the radio. Because of their passive vocabulary, they are able to understand the message. However, one would use their active vocabulary when they are talking about what they had heard or read. Instead of repeating the exact words such as “devastation” and “death toll;” they would likely express the same meaning by using their active vocabulary such as “large amount of damage” and “number of people who died”. One of the best ways to progress in your language learning is to change many passive vocabulary items into active vocabulary items. This can be done through studying those words one is familiar with and then utilizing them in communication.

Vocabulary Learning Strategies

There are many different strategies and methods learners can put in practice to obtain the meaning of vocabulary. Cameron (2001) defined that “vocabulary learning strategies as actions that learners take to themselves understand and remember vocabulary” (p. 92). Sener (2015) stated that those tactics practiced by the language

learners as they come across to unfamiliar vocabulary items are called vocabulary learning strategies.

There are many vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) which are used according to the level of students. Some students learn vocabulary through visualizing, memorizing, some students learn vocabulary by listening, writing or reading comprehension.

Vocabulary learning is an important and necessary part of any language learning process.

Recently, many researchers have written about the usage and the importance of VLS. Nirattisai and Chiramanee (2014) suggested that the best way of improving vocabulary can be done by utilizing VLS. A similar idea was illustrated by Yunhao (2011) who specified that “vocabulary achievement can be gained by applying VLS” (p. 4). Siriwan (2007) stated that language learners should be educated about VLS since it is beneficial and essential in learning vocabulary because, VLS “enable learners to know the way of finding the meaning of unknown vocabulary, the way of memorizing, and the way of utilizing them by applying and increasing their vocabulary” (p. 3). According to Siriwan (2007) students are applicably taught different types of vocabulary learning strategies, so that they can be successful learners. He also clarifies that learners must learn various suitable methods to manage with unfamiliar words.

In addition, Hedge (2000) put forth that teaching vocabulary is part of a teacher’s profession and they ought to explain convenience VLS so that learners’ independence in using strategies might be built (as cited in Siriwan, 2003 p. 43). Furthermore, Schmitt (1997) affirms that “introducing language learners to a wide range of strategies is very useful since they can choose the individual strategies that suit their individual learning

styles” (as cited in Sirwan, 2003, p. 43). According to Nation “strategy training seems to have a very useful role in second language vocabulary development” (as cited in Seneri, 2003, p.19). Similar ideas have been raised by Aktekin and Güven (2013) who claimed that learners could be “assisted to accumulate additional words if they are trained about VLS” (p. 339).

Vocabulary Learning Strategy Classification

Schmitt (1997) established taxonomy, based on Oxford’s (1990) classification. He improved the taxonomy by adding a determination strategy (see Figure 1) Schmitt (1997) divided VLS into two main types.

- First, discovery strategy which consists of: determination strategies and social strategies. These strategies are used to discover the meaning of new words.
- Second, consolidating strategies consists of social strategies, memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and metacognitive strategies. These types of strategies are used to get the meaning of a word once it is encountered (see Figure 1).

	Discovery strategies	Determination strategies Social strategies
Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS)	Consolidation strategies	Social strategies Memory strategies Cognitive strategies Metacognitive strategies

Figure 1. Vocabulary Learning Strategy Classification By Schmitt (1997).

Review of Related Empirical Studies

Rojananak and Vitayapirak (2015) conducted a study in King's Mongkut's Institute of Technology Lakrabang, 356 students of the second year from nine faculties participated in this study. The questionnaire was adopted from Schmitt's taxonomy, and a five-point Likert scale was used to collect data. The aims of this study were to find out the use of VLS among students and also to compare the use of VLS by good and weak students. The result indicated that a bilingual dictionary was the most common strategy used by second-year students. Moreover, guessing the meaning from the context was used mostly by good students, while 'asking classmates for the meaning of words' was used by weak students more.

Doczi (2011) carried out a study to explore VLS applied by Hungarian secondary school students in three different years of university. A questionnaire was used to collect data. The researcher administered a questionnaire based on Schmitt's (1997). The results indicated that the higher grader students use less active strategies. They seem to use more strategies such as 'skip a new word' and they care for 'the pronunciation' more.

Alsadik (2014) investigated 302 undergraduate students in the quantitative part of his study at River University in the south of Iraq to find out the level and the use of VLS. She modified and adapted a questionnaire which consisted of 42 VLS. The researcher found out River University students were medium strategy users with a mean score of 2.62, while 27% of the students reported low strategy use and only 9% indicated that they used VLS at a high level. Strategies in the social category were the least used while strategies in the determination category were the most frequently used.

Subon (2013) conducted a survey research regarding VLS. He adapted a VLS questionnaire from Gu and Johnson (1996), and Fan (2003). The questionnaire consisted of 28 statements. The statements were divided into eight categories (dictionary, rehearsal, management, source, guessing, encoding, activation and perception). The questionnaire which consisted of a five-point Likert scale was used to find out the most and the least frequently used categories of VLS by the sample students in their language learning. In addition, the first four most commonly used types of VLS were guessing, perception, encoding, and sources. The least used category of VLS was management. The study also revealed that female students had higher mean rank in almost all the categories of strategy use compared to male students.

Askar (2014) investigated about VLS by distributing a questionnaire to 223 ELT students from the Faculty of Educational Sciences and 243 ELL students from the Faculty of Humanities at the Duhok University, to find out the use of VLS among the two groups in terms of gender, level, ELL and ELT. A questionnaire was used to collect data which consisted of 36 statements with a five-point Likert scale. The data were analyzed by a Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS, version 20). According to this research Duhok University students were medium strategy users. Moreover, the cognitive strategies were the most popular strategies and social strategies were found to be the least favoured strategies. Moreover, the female students used VLS to some extent higher than male students. Furthermore, ELL learners employed less VLS than ELT students. The study discovered significant differences regarding the use of VLS and grade levels.

Mokhtar, Rawian, Yahaya, Abdulla and Mohamed (2012) investigated VLS by adapting a questionnaire by Gu and Johnson (1996) which was further translated to the

Malay language. The 78 vocabulary learning behaviors were divided into seven major parts, specifically: metacognitive regulation, guessing strategies, dictionary strategies, note-taking strategies, memory strategies (rehearsal), memory strategies (encoding) and activation strategies'. The aim of the study was to identify the VLS preferred by university students. The participants consisted of 360 freshman and sophomore students studying at the University of Teknologi (MARA, Perlis). The finding indicated that just two strategies, guessing and dictionary strategies, were favoured by the students amongst the seven VLS examined. He also stated that it is unsatisfactory because according to Hatch and Brown (1995) vocabulary learning involves five steps: encountering new words, getting the word form, getting the word meaning, consolidating word form and meaning in memory, and using the word (as cited in Mokhtar et al, p. 142). According to Schmitt (2000) the two preferred strategies, however, were only strategies for the discovery of a new word meaning. Thus, VLS should be combined integrating strategies for "recognizing and knowing" as well as "using" words.

In his study Zhi-liang (2010) examined VLS used by the non-English major students in Chinese Independent Colleges. The purpose of his research was to find out the answers to 'What is the attitude of vocabulary learning for Chinese independent college students and what kind of strategies do they usually use?; What is the problem of vocabulary learning in English study and how helpful are the strategies they used?; What are the similarities and differences in vocabulary learning during different grades?'. The researcher sent a questionnaire online to 309 students from grade one to three in Beihai College of Beihang University. Nonetheless, 301 students completed and returned the questionnaire. The analyzed data from the questionnaire revealed that 89 strongly agreed

11 agreed, 0 disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement 'learning vocabulary is very important in learning English'. Moreover, the male learners used less VLS than female learners. The poor students also used less VLS than the good learners. Thus, the good learners study hard and are willing to reuse the learned vocabulary. The study also revealed that the freshmen students usually relied on their teacher while the third-grade students were independent on using VLS. On the other hand, the second-grade students were trying to learn the language but had not yet discovered their methods. The study illustrated that many ranges of VLS are used by students when they are faced with unfamiliar vocabulary items in their learning process.

Gu (2010) surveyed on 100 Chinese EFL learners in which 73 were male and 27 female. They were in Singapore to study a six-month pre-university English language improvement program. A 90 itemed questionnaire with a seven-point Likert scale was distributed to the participants in this study. The questionnaire was distributed to the participants at the beginning and end of the program. The first questionnaire which was distributed asked the participants to recall how they learned vocabulary in the past two years. At the end of the program when the second questionnaire was distributed the participants this time were asked to respond on how they learned vocabulary throughout the six-month program. The questionnaires were contrasted and the results revealed that the participants used more varieties of VLS and more frequently after the program compared to the beginning of the program. The study also showed that the participants were active vocabulary learners before they started the program. The students did not rely on the memorization of vocabulary items and assumed that words should be used so that they can learn them. These results illustrate that the use of VLS changed during this

program. This study revealed the following VLS used before starting the program and after completing the program: first, nothing changed regarding the most and least used VLS, the use of strategies stayed the same. Second, at the end of the program participants used more VLS. Third, by the end of the program the participants depended and relied on VLS.

Asgari and Mustapha (2011) examined the type of VLS utilized by Malaysian EFL students at the Faculty of Education Studies in the University of Putra, Malaysia. Ten randomly selected students were interviewed separately. The study concluded that strategies such as the learning of a word through reading, the use of the monolingual dictionary, the use of various English language media, and applying new English words in their daily conversation which were related to memory, determination, metacognitive strategies respectively, were popular strategies and the learners were keen on using them. Moreover, several students indicated that they were using the English to English dictionary as one of the common strategies for learning vocabulary. Dictionary strategy is used by students since it gives learners more detail and information as regards to grammar, pronunciation, and explanation.

Gu (2003) evaluated and analyzed VLS based on the experience of empirical research on second/foreign language learners. The study concentrated on “task-dependent guessing strategies, dictionary strategies, note-taking strategies, rote rehearsal strategies, and encoding strategies. Instead of searching for the best strategies that produce the best results, the author argued that the choice, use, and effectiveness of vocabulary learning depend on the task, the learner, and the learning context”. Gu (2003) claims that classroom learning atmosphere should include a variety of VLS from informal learning contexts.

Moreover, the obtainability and fullness of input/output opportunity should also regulate the approaches students choose to use.

Alhaysony (2012) carried out research about vocabulary discovery strategies in which 746 mixed gender students at the University of Ha'il in Saudi Arabia participated. The results revealed that guessing and dictionary strategies were used less often. There was a statistically significant difference in guessing and skipping strategy use by females. Females also used social and dictionary strategies more than males according to the mean score results illustrated in the study.

Martinez (1995) conducted a study to identify the types of learning strategies employed by Secondary School and University students when learning English in Spain. The study was carried out by interviewing 80 students and 25 teachers to collect data. The results revealed that: first, most of the students were reasonably familiar with learning strategies. Second, many students responded that they were using cognitive strategies. Third, university students did not use a higher number of a wider range of strategies than secondary school students. Fourth, most of the teachers were unaware of the strategies their students employed.

A more recent study carried out by Amirian and Heshmatifar (2013) investigated VLS and aimed at determining the most and least employed VLS among university students at the University of Hakim, Sabzevari. Seventy-four EFL students participated in this study. The results indicated that "Guessing from the context, using the monolingual dictionary, repeating the word verbally, analyzing the parts of speech, studying the sound of the phrase and kipping a vocabulary notebook" were the most used strategies among

students. They found out that the least used VLS were “skipping and passing the new words, asking the teacher to make a sentence, using flash cards, asking the teacher for first language translation, putting English labels on real objects and remembering word’s initial letter” (p. 639). Amirian and Heshmatifar (2013) further interviewed ten students to find out the most and least employed VLS in order to validate the result. The study revealed that a monolingual dictionary was used by nine of the participants. Moreover, ‘guessing from context’ was used by eight participants. Interestingly, ‘asking the teacher for first language translation’ was employed by two out of ten students. However, ‘asking classmates for meaning’ was used only by one out of ten of the students.

Conclusion

This chapter presented related literature regarding vocabulary learning strategies, highlighting information with respect to vocabulary, vocabulary learning strategies, the classification of learning strategies followed by recent research.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overview

This chapter will present the methodology of this research. The research design is explained in detail followed by the participants, data collection procedures, data collection instruments, reliability and validity, and data analysis.

Research Design

This study was designed quantitatively employing a questionnaire to investigate Kurdish university students' studying at the college of languages, English language department at the University of Salahaddin in Erbil in the North of Iraq employment of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS). A descriptive survey approach was used in the study to reveal the aforementioned research questions (see Chapter I).

Participants

Two hundred and twenty-one randomly mixed gender undergraduate students of English major were selected from freshmen, sophomore, junior and senior students in the college of languages, English department in Sallahaddin University in Erbil city in the north of Iraq. The participants of the study consist of four groups namely, freshman, sophomore, junior, senior. The freshmen group consisted of 51, the sophomore 56, the junior 55, and the senior 59 students who participated in this study (see Table 1).

Table 1

Number of Participants according to Grades

Grades	Number of Participants
Freshmen	51
Sophomore	56
Junior	55
Senior	59
Total of participants	221

Data Collection Procedures

In this study, a questionnaire was used to accumulate data. The researcher contacted the Head of the Department of the Salahaddin University for permission and to set the date and time to administer the questionnaire to the participants. A written consent form was filled in before the study was carried out (see Appendix A).

The aim of the survey was explained to the students. In addition, all necessary information regarding the items and the questionnaire was explained in detail to the participants by the researcher in order to make sure understanding was clear. The students were also informed to ask questions if something in the questionnaire was not clear. In addition, brief information regarding VLS was given to the participants of this study. The purpose of this was to make sure students knew exactly what they were doing and to be able to select the appropriate box identified in the five point Likert scale.

The questionnaires were distributed to the 221 mixed gender participants and they were kindly asked to fill in the questionnaire honestly. The participants were not given limited time; they had completed all the items in a comfortable manner. They returned the questionnaire as they completed it. The questionnaires were gathered on the same date. All the copies of the questionnaire were collected and the information was entered into the SPSS program version 20 and interpreted. In addition, a one-way ANOVA was used to get the results of each grade individually which will be discussed in the data analysis section of this chapter.

Data Collection Instrument

A questionnaire consisting of 40 items was adapted from Schmitt (1997). The 40 items of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) were amended in order to simplify the explanations to make understanding possible. Getting help from three English teachers from Kurdistan I decided to use an adaptation of Schmitt's (1997) questionnaire.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts:

- In Part A, the participants were asked to indicate their grades.
- Part B consisted of 40 statements of VLS with a five-point Likert-scale.

In the first part, the participants were asked information with respect to their grades. In the second part, there were 40 statements with a five-point Likert scale ranging from always as number 5, regularly as number 4, sometimes as number 3, occasionally as number 2 and never as number 1. The participants were kindly asked to rate their use of the given statements.

Constructs. There are five constructs in the questionnaire. Table 2 illustrates the range of statements which are consisted in each construct.

Table 2

Items and Categories

Items	Categories
From Statement 1- 6	Determination strategies
From Statement 7 -13	Social strategies
From Statement 14 – 29	Memory strategies
From Statement 30 – 35	Cognitive strategies
From Statement 36 – 40	Metacognitive strategies

Table 2 demonstrates the strategies used in this questionnaire which were divided into five categories adapted from Schmitt’s (1997) classification; determination, social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies. The determination strategies consisted of six statements, the social strategies consisted of seven statements, the memory strategies consisted of 16 statements, the cognitive strategies consisted of six statements, and the metacognitive strategies consisted of five statements.

Reliability and Validity

The content validity was checked by five jury members in the University of Salahaddin, and then the pilot study was administrated. They all confirmed that the statements were comprehensible and suitable for the use of the study. The pilot study was

carried out in order to verify the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. Thirty students participated in the pilot study. The collected data were entered into the SPSS program version 20. The reliability was .70 which showed that it was reliable.

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was employed to analyze the questionnaires. Descriptive statistical frequencies, percentages, mean scores and standard deviation were used to answer the first research question (see Chapter I). Furthermore, one-way ANOVA was used to compare freshman, sophomore, junior and senior students regarding their usage of VLS to answer the second research question.

Ethical Considerations

The study was introduced to the participant and they were all informed about the aim of the study. Additionally, the participants were informed that it was their choice of taking part in the current study. They were also informed that their identity is confidential and that their opinions will only be used for research purposes.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the methodology of the current study. The research design, the participants, the data collection procedures, the data collection instrument, reliability and validity, data analysis and ethical consideration were all discussed in detail. The following chapter will present the results of this study.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Overview

This chapter will present the findings and discussions of this study. The data collected through the administered questionnaire were analyzed and further interpreted. The aim of the current study was to reveal the vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) employed by Kurdish students studying at the college of languages in the department of English at the Salahaddin university in northern Iraq in general and to find out whether these students' grades affect their choice of VLS in particular.

This chapter will reveal the answers to the research questions of this study:

- 1- What is the vocabulary learning strategies used among undergraduate EFL students?
- 2- In what ways do the vocabulary learning strategies change with regard to the students' grades?

VLSs Employed Among University Students

In order to be able to reveal the first research question stated above a questionnaire consisting of five categories adapted from Schmitt's (1997) classification, namely, determination, social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies was used. The determination strategies consisted of six statements, the social strategies consisted of seven statements, the memory strategies consisted of 16 statements, the cognitive strategies consisted of six statements, and the metacognitive strategies consisted of five

statements. Overall, the cognitive strategies were found to be the mostly used strategies (see Table 3).

Table 3

The mean score of the five categories of VLS

Category	Mean
Determination	3.33
Social	3.10
Memory	3.26
Cognitive	3.34
Metacognitive	3.16

The results in Table 3 illustrate that the participants of this study used cognitive strategies with a mean score of 3.34 more frequently than all the other categories. The result of this study goes in line with Asker's (2014). In his study he also mentioned that the participant of his study preferred cognitive strategies the most. Determination strategies were the second preferred and used among the learners with a mean score 3.33. It can be seen that there are similarities in using aforementioned categories the participants of this study. As both categories were the most favored strategies among learners. In terms of memories strategies the mean score was 3.26, followed by metacognitive strategies with a mean score of 3.16. Social strategies were the least used strategies among all the other strategies. In his research Askar (2014) also indicated that the social strategies were the least used strategies and the cognitive strategies were the most used strategies.

The following section will discuss each strategy in detail.

Determination strategies. Table 4 illustrates the six statements that belong to the determination strategy classification. As shown in Table 4 (determination strategies) statement 5 ‘I use a bilingual dictionaries’ was seen to be the most employed strategy while statement 6 ‘I use a monolingual dictionaries’ was seen to be the least employed strategy among the determination strategies. According to the results, 5.9% of the students had never used a bilingual dictionary and 29% always used this strategy. Statement 6 in Table 4 ‘I use a monolingual dictionaries’ was seen to be the least employed strategy among the determination strategies. 8.6% of the respondents reported that they never used monolingual dictionaries when learning English vocabulary items while 20.4% responded that they always use monolingual dictionaries.

Table 4

Frequencies of Determination Strategies

Items	Always	Regularly	Sometimes	Occasionally	Never
S1. I analyze parts of speech to learn new vocabulary.	24.4%	21.7%	21.7%	19.4%	12.7%
S2. I analyze affixes and roots to find out the meaning of new words to understand the meaning of the word.	25.8%	22.2%	24.4%	20.4%	7.2%
S3. I consider available pictures or gestures to understand the meaning of the word.	24.4%	20.4%	24.9%	21.3%	9.0%
S4. I guess from textual context so as to comprehend the new vocabulary.	29.4%	18.6%	22.2%	24.0%	5.9%
S5. I use bilingual dictionaries	29.0%	21.3%	21.3%	22.6%	5.9%
S6. I use monolingual dictionaries	20.4%	19.0%	29.4%	22.6%	8.6%

Table 5 illustrates the descriptive statistics for the determination strategies. According to the results as mentioned earlier, statement 5 'I use a bilingual dictionaries' was the most employed determination strategy with a mean score of 3.45 and standard deviation of 1.28. This finding is in line with Schmitt's study (1997) who revealed that Japanese students mostly used bilingual dictionaries, and 95% of his participants believed that using bilingual dictionaries were helpful. Moreover, Alsadık (2014) found out that using bilingual dictionaries were the most used strategy. Furthermore, Siriwan (2007) stated that "students' reported the use of 14 individual vocabulary learning strategies to discover the meaning of new vocabulary items, mainly for learning vocabulary items in the classroom. However, it is apparently evidenced that, the only VLS students reported employing is an English-Thai Dictionary at the high level" (p. 206).

With regard to statement 6 'I use a monolingual dictionaries' 8.6% of the participants reported that they never used this strategy while 91.4 % of the participants used the monolingual dictionary to improve vocabulary learning with a mean score of 3.20 and standard deviations 1.242 which was the least employed vocabulary learning strategy (see Table 5). In the study of Asgari and Mustapha (2011) monolingual dictionaries were the second common employed strategy. This finding contradicts to an earlier carried out study by Schmitt (1997) who revealed that the minority of his participants (35%) used a monolingual dictionary. Walz (as cited in Huang & Eslami, 2013 p.1) argued that in language learning a dictionary is seen as a vital factor to find out details about a vocabulary item. According to Knight (as cited in Gu, 2003, p. 7), language learners who use both guessing and dictionaries to find the meaning of

unknown vocabulary items in a context, they directly learn the new word and can recall it after a couple of weeks. He also argued that his participants who had less speaking skills took more advantage of the dictionary than the participants who were more skilled in the speaking skill. On the other hand, the more skilled participants in the speaking skill took more advantage of the guessing strategy.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics of Determination Strategies

Items	M	SD
S1. I analyze parts of speech to learn new vocabulary	3.26	1.356
S2. I analyze affixes and roots to find out the meaning of the new word.	3.39	1.266
S3. I consider available pictures or gestures to understand the meaning of the word.	3.30	1.294
S4. I guess from textual context so as to comprehend the new vocabulary.	3.42	1.293
S5. I use a bilingual dictionary.	3.45	1.28
S6. I use a monolingual dictionary.	3.20	1.242

According to Table 5, S1 ‘I analyze parts of speech to learn new vocabulary’, indicated that 24.4% of the participants reported always, while 12.7% reported never. Table 5 reports the descriptive statistics of determination strategies and reveals that the item in question had a mean score of 3.26 with a standard deviation of 1.356. It is interesting to note that very few of the participants indicated never, which means students have tended to use this strategy to improve their vocabulary. Amirian and Heshmatifar (2013) found in their research that analyzing parts of speech achieved the highest fourth mean score of 3.84. Moreover, Schmitt (1997) reported that 75% of the participant indicated this strategy as useful while 32% of them analyzed parts of speech.

Statement 2 in Tables 4 and 5 ‘I analyze affixes and roots to find out the meaning of new words to understand the meaning of the word’ revealed that 25.8% of the participants analyzed affixes and roots to find out the meaning of the new words with a mean score of 3.39, (SD=1.266). Seven percent of the participants rejected to use this strategy. It is believed that students might not always get the right meaning of new words by using this strategy, however analyzing the affixes and roots may lead them to have clear pictures and understanding of the new words. Schmitt (1997) put forth that this strategy is not often “dependable”. However, from its root or affixes, students can acquire “clues about the meaning” (p. 13). In addition, Nation (as cited in Schmitt, 1997) suggested that affixes are limited, therefore, teaching affixes to the students might be helpful for the benefit of improving vocabulary.

Following statement 2, as regards to statement 3 ‘I consider available pictures or gestures to understand the meaning of the word’, revealed that only a few 9% of the respondents rejected to use this strategy while the majority 91.1% responded that they used gestures or pictures to understand the meaning of words. The result revealed according to the mean score was 3.30 and the standard deviation was 1.294. Nirattisai and Chiramanee (2014) found in their research that any available pictures or gestures in order to understand the meanings of words with respect to determination strategies achieved a mean score of 2.74 and standard deviation 1.31.

In statement 4 ‘I guess from textual context so as to comprehend the new vocabulary.’ 5.9% of the participants never used this strategy, while the majority 94.1% used this strategy to be able to learn new words. In addition to this, the mean score according to the participants who always used this strategy was 3.42 with a standard

deviation of 1.293. This shows that most of the students in English departments in the Salahddin University are familiar with employing guessing strategies when learning vocabulary. This data could suggest that the students were very well aware of the outcomes of guessing unknown words for vocabulary improvement. In the study of Amirian and Heshmatifar (2013) guessing from the context was the most used strategy with the highest mean score ($M=4.21$) and standard deviation of 1.00. Askar (2014) discovered that the majority of undergraduate students tend to use the guessing strategy to suspect the meaning of new words in context. In contrast, Alhaysony (2012) explained that with a mean score of 2.57 and standard deviation 1.07 the guessing strategy was the least used strategy among his participants. He also reported that the data results were expected because the majority of the participants were at the beginner and elementary levels regarding English proficiency. According to Sternberg, as words are seen by students in the context, they attempt to guess for the meaning. In this procedure, learners have to analyze quite a few sentences. Moreover, he also pointed out that many words are learned from context (as cited in Zhang, 2011, p. 11).

Social strategies. The results in Tables 6 and 7 with regard to the social strategy, revealed that the 221 participants who took part in this study mostly employed the strategy S9 ‘I learn new words through the explanation of a word by my teachers’ and least employed the strategy S13 ‘I interact with English native-speakers’.

As aforementioned statement 9 ‘I learn new words through the explanation of a word by my teachers’ were seen to be the most employed social strategy when learning vocabulary items. Only 9% of the learners indicated that they never applied this strategy and all the other participants indicated that they used this strategy. Having a mean score

of 3.82 and standard deviation of 1.049 this strategy was the most used strategy among other strategies in (see Tables 6 & 7). This result tells us that students pay considerable attention to teacher explanation of new words. This might be due to the fact that students in this particular context believe that the teacher is the resource of learning.

Statement 13 in Tables 6 and 7 ‘I interact with English native-speakers’ was the least employed social strategy. 22.60% of the respondents stated that they never employed such a strategy while only 5% stated that they always employed this strategy, with a mean score of 2.52 and standard deviation of 1.158. However, students in Salahaddin University-Erbil use this strategy more compared to the result of other studies carried out in the past. Nirattisai and Chiramanee (2014) revealed a mean score of 1.94 and standard deviation of 1.36 for this item. In addition, Alsadık’s (2014) research findings also revealed a low mean score of 1.54. He added that the students in his study did not have much chance to converse with English native speakers in southern part of Iraq.

Table 6

Frequencies of Social Strategies

Items	Always	Regularly	Sometimes	Occasionally	Never
S7. I ask the teacher to translate a word into my language	8.6%	13.6%	29.9%	31.2%	16.7%
S8. I ask the teacher to paraphrase.	12.7%	16.3%	33.9%	28.1%	09%
S9. I learn new words through the explanation of a word by my teachers.	30.8%	31.7%	23.1%	10.4%	1.8%
S10. I discuss with my classmates to find out the meaning of a new word	16.3%	28.1%	28.1%	19.5%	8.1%
S11. I can realize the new meaning through group work activity	20.4%	21.7%	28.5%	22.6%	6.8%
S12. I practise meaning of words in a group of words.	23.5%	18.1%	28.1%	24%	6.3%
S13. I interact with English native speakers.	05%	16.7%	26.7%	29%	22.6%

Statement 7 in Table 6 and 7 ‘I ask teachers to translate a new word into my language’ was the second least employed social strategy. This result is in line with most research findings related to the social strategy. A recent study carried out by Askar (2014) indicated that 40% of the participants in his study reported that they never and 30% stated that they occasionally ‘ask teachers for Kurdish translation’ he also reported that this strategy was the least used strategy among the social strategies with a mean

score of 2.03 and standard deviation 1.10. Another recent study conducted by Sener (2015) found out that ‘asking teachers for translation’ was reported to be the least employed strategy in the classification group of social strategies with a mean score of 2.15. The study conducted by Amirian and Heshmatifar (2013) indicated that ‘asking the teacher for first language translation’ was found to be one of the least used strategies among their participants.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics of Social Strategies

Items	M	SD
S7. I ask the teacher to translate a word into my language	2.66	1.163
S8. I ask the teacher to paraphrase.	2.95	1.147
S9. I learn new words through the explanation of a word by my teachers.	3.82	1.049
S10. I discuss with my classmates to find out the meaning of a new word.	3.25	1.182
S11. I can realize the new meaning of words through group work activities.	3.26	1.211
S12. I practise meaning of words in a group of words.	3.29	1.211
S13. I interact with English native speakers.	2.52	1.158

The results regarding statement 8 demonstrate that 9% of the participants stated that they never used ‘I ask the teacher to paraphrase’. On the other hand, 12.7% of the participants stated that they always employed the statement. This item was seen to be the third least employed item with a mean score of 2.95 and standard deviation 1.147. This may be due to the fact that as learners progress in their proficiency levels, the help they

receive from their teachers' decreases in terms of vocabulary learning as they start to rely more on dictionaries.

According to Tables 6 and 7, 8.1% of the learners reported that they never and 16.3% stated that they always 'discussed with classmates to find out the meaning of the word' (Statement 10). This item was the fourth least employed item among the social strategies with a mean score of 3.25 and standard deviation 1.182. However, in the study carried out by Alsadık (2014) this item was the most used strategy among the social strategies in which 20% of his participants always and 26% often asked a classmate for the meaning (M=3.44). This finding did not go in line with that of Askar (2014) who illustrated that 17.6% of the participants stated never and 10.9% stated always with a mean score of 2.86.

It was noticed that only 6.8% of the participants responded that they never used statement 11 'I can realize the new meaning through group work activity'. Interestingly, 22.6% stated that they occasionally, 28.5% stated that they sometimes, 21.7% stated that they regularly and 20.4% stated they always employed this strategy when learning vocabulary, with a mean score of 3.26 and standard deviation 1.211. In his study Askar (2014) stated that 'learning by group work' was a widely used strategy with a mean score of 3.18 which is respectively lower than the results of this study.

Furthermore, statement 12 revealed the results regarding 'I practise meaning of words in a group of words', reported that only 6.3% of the participants in the current study stated that they never employed such a strategy while all the other participants responded that they used this strategy quite often. Twenty-four percent of the participants

indicated that they occasionally, 28.1% sometimes, 18.1% regularly and 23.5% stated that they always employed the strategy when trying to learn vocabulary items, with a mean score of 3.29 and standard deviation 1.241. The results for both statement 12 'practicing the meaning of words in a group' and statement 11 'realizing the new meaning of words through group work activities' tells us that there are similarities in terms of using these strategies.

Memory strategies. Table 8 and Appendix D reveal the results for the memory strategy according to the 221 participants who took part in this study. The data reveals that statement 16 'I relate the word to a personal experience' was used by the participants of this study the most while statement 24 'I say the new word aloud when studying' was employed by the participants the least among the memory strategies.

Furthermore, 10.9% of the participants reported that they never used statement 14 'studying the word with a pictorial representation of its meaning' and 10.4% stated that they always used this strategy while 32.1% stated that they sometimes with a mean score of 2.88 and standard deviation of 1.144.

Regarding statement 15 'visualizing the meaning of the word', revealed that 11.3% of the participants identified that they never, 16.7% of participant identified that they always and 30.3% identified that they sometimes used this strategy with a mean score of 3.28 and standard deviation of 1.203. Askar (2014) reported that imaging a word's meaning was the fourth frequent used strategy in his study related to memory strategies with a mean score of 3.53 and standard deviation of 1.11.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics of Memory strategies

Items	M	SD
S14. I study the word with a pictorial representation of its meaning.	2.88	1.144
S15. I visualize the meaning of the word.	3.28	1.203
S16. I relate the word to a personal experience.	3.80	1.24
S17. I associate the word with its connotation	3.17	1.169
S18. I connect the word to its synonym.	3.30	1.298
S19. I connect the word to its antonyms.	3.41	1.299
S20. I search for sentences to find out the meanings of the words.	3.29	1.283
S21. I choose a group of words in a story.	3.40	1.288
S22. I practice the spelling of a word.	3.23	1.192
S23. I study the sound of a word.	3.10	1.101
S24. I say new the words aloud when studying.	3.21	1.161
S25 I underline the initial letter of the word.	2.69	1.008
S26. I memorize vocabulary.	3.21	1.193
S27. I paraphrase the words' meaning.	3.30	1.382
S28. I learn the meaning of an idiom together.	3.16	1.201
S29. I mime the words when learning them.	3.66	1.187

Moreover, statement 16 'I relate the word to a personal experience', showed that 7.7% of the respondents stated that they never, 16.7% stated that they always and 33% stated that they sometimes employed this strategy with a mean score of 3.80 and standard deviation of 1.240. This strategy as previously mentioned was the most employed strategy among the other memory strategies. This did not go in line with the results in another research. Alsadik (2014) stated that 45% of the participants reported never and 17% indicated always used this strategy with a mean score of 2.60.

With respect to statement 17 'associating the word with its connotation', revealed that 7.7% of the learners specified that they never employed this strategy and 16.3%

stated that they always employed this strategy while 33% stated that they sometimes used this strategy with a mean score of 3.17 (SD=1.169). Students should study connotation because connotation is widely used in English daily conversation. Schmitt (1997) presented that 54% of the participants marked this strategy as helpful, however only 13% of the participants utilized this strategy.

Following statement 17, statement 18 'connecting the words to its synonym', indicated that only 9% of the learners indicated that they never employed this strategy while 24.9% indicated that they always employed this strategy with a mean score of 3.30 (SD=1.298). A similar result was found in another research. For example, Askar (2014) illustrated the mean score was 3.27 in using this strategy among ELT student who have participated the study.

Regarding statement 19 'connecting the word to its antonyms', showed that 7.7% of the respondents reported that they never employed this strategy whereas 28.1% stated that they always employed this strategy with a mean score of 3.41 (SD=1.299). In both strategies (statement 18 & 19) over 90% of the participants reported that they used these strategies. However, in Schmitt's study (1997), he reported that only 41% of his participants indicated using 'connect the word to its synonym and antonyms'.

The results for statement 20 'searching for sentences to find out the meaning of the words' indicated that 92.3% of the participant occasionally, sometimes, regularly and always used this strategy while only 7.7% indicated that they never employed this strategy while learning vocabulary, with a mean score of 3.29 and standard deviation of 1.283. Moreover, the results regarding statement 21 'I choose a group of words in a

story', revealed that 8.6% of the respondents indicated that they never used this strategy while 27.6% of them identified that they always employed this strategy with a mean score of 3.40 (SD=1.288). In contrast to this finding, Askar (2014) revealed that 4.3% of the participants in his study reported that they always employed this strategy with a mean score of 2.71 and standard deviation of 1.01.

The following statement 22 'practicing the spelling of words' reported that very few of the participants (5.9%) indicated that they never used this strategy while 20.8% reported that they always and 33.5% sometimes used this strategy, with a mean score of 3.23 and standard deviation of 1.192. This result was also apparent in the findings of Alsadik (2014) with only a few differences. He reported that 4.6% of his participants stated that they never employed this strategy and 18.5% stated that they always employed this strategy, with a mean score of 3.40 (SD=1.080). In contrast to this finding, Alsadik (2014) indicated that the mean score was 2.80 for practicing the spelling of a word.

What is more, statement 23 'I study the sound of a word', showed that 6.8% of the participants stated that they never and 12.2% stated that they always used this strategy while 35.3% stated that they sometimes used this strategy, with a mean score of 3.10 and standard deviation of 1.101. Amirian and Heshmatifar (2013) revealed that, studying the sound of a word was the fifth most frequently used strategy among their participants with a mean score of 3.80 (SD=1.03).

Statement 24 'saying the new word aloud when studying' indicated that 7.2% of the respondents never employed the strategy and 16.7% always with a mean score of 3.21 (SD=1.161). Only slight differences could be found regarding this strategy in the study of

Alsadik (2014) who reported that 17.8% of the participants in his study indicated that they always employed this strategy, with a mean score of 3.23. According to a previous study carried out by Doczi (2011), 65.5% of the students in his study used the strategy in question when learning vocabulary items.

Statement 25 ‘underlining initial letter of the word’ among the memory strategies indicated that 10.9% of the participants never and 6.3% always employed this strategy while 40.7% stated that they sometimes used this strategy, with a mean score of 2.69 and standard deviation of 1.008. This strategy was reported the least employed strategy among the memory strategy.

The data showed that 4.1% of the participants indicated never and 95.9% stated occasionally, sometimes, regular and/or always to using statement 26 ‘memorizing vocabulary’ when learning vocabulary items, with a mean score of 3.21 and standard deviation of 1.193. Out of 221 participants only nine participants indicated that they never memorized vocabulary items. All the other participants seem to employ memory strategies to some extent when learning vocabulary items which shows that students are familiar with the memory strategy. In their investigation regarding memorizing vocabulary items Yang and Dai (2011) stated that “as for the opinions they held for the strategies which they preferred to use when they involve in memorizing vocabulary items, 2/3 of respondents held positive view of memorizing words by means of semantic strategies and by analysis of word structure” (p. 210). However, in another study Gu (2003) stated that students did not rely on the memorization of vocabulary.

For the statement 27 ‘paraphrasing the words’ meaning’ the participants indicated that 13.6% never and 27.6% always employed this strategy, with a mean score of 3.30 and standard deviation of 1.382. A lower mean was found in another research. Alsadik (2014) explained that the mean score was 2.93 among the ELL participant. Paraphrasing words might need background knowledge of language, thus, this strategy was mostly used by higher grade students.

In addition, statement 28 ‘I learn the meaning of an idiom together’ revealed that 10% of the participants never and 14.9% always employed this strategy, with a mean score of 3.16 (SD=1.201). Doczi (2011) explained that ‘learning words of an idiom together’ is the most used strategy among the memory strategies. He illustrated that 73.8% of his participants in his research used this strategy when learning vocabulary.

Statement 29 ‘I mime the words when learning them’ identified that 18.1% the participants never and 10.9% always employed this strategy, with a mean score of 2.66 and standard deviation of 1.187. In another study Firmansyah (2014) illustrated that the use of ‘physical actions when learning a word’ had a mean score of 2.25 and was considered the second least used strategy among memory strategies.

Cognitive strategies. Tables 9 and 10 illustrate the results of the findings with respect to the cognitive strategy according to the 221 participants who took part in this study. It was apparent in the findings that the most employed strategy was ‘I take notes about the new words’ (S32) and the least employed strategy was ‘I put English labels on real objects’ (S34) among the six strategies presented to the participants.

Table 9

Frequencies of Cognitive Strategies

Items	Always	Regularly	Sometimes	Occasionally	Never
S30. I say new English words several times.	18.6%	17.2%	29.9%	29%	5.4%
S31. I write new English words several times.	11.3%	25.8%	38%	18.6%	6.3%
S32. I take notes about the new words.	31.7%	27.6%	24.4%	11.36%	05%
S33. I use the vocabulary section in my textbook.	24%	22.6%	25.3%	17.2%	10.9%
S34. I put English labels on real objects.	12.7%	21.7%	37.1%	20.8%	7.7%
S35. I keep a vocabulary notebook.	28.5%	27.1%	28.5%	11.3%	4.5%

The most employed strategy regarding cognitive strategies was statement 32 ‘I take notes about the new words’. Only 5% of the students reported that they never employed the strategy. On the other hand, 31.7% stated that they always employed this strategy with a mean score of 3.70 and standard deviation of 1.173. This data illustrates that students were keen on taking notes in the classroom. In the study of Askar (2014) ‘taking notes’ was the second most used strategy with a mean score of 3.77 and standard deviation of 1.03. Doczi (2011) also stated that note taking is often used among his

participants. In addition, Alharthi (2014) argued that note taking is a strategy in which students tend to employ quite often.

The least employed strategy among the cognitive strategies was ‘I put English labels on real objects’ (S34). 7.7% of the participants stated that they never, and 12.7% stated that they always employed this strategy while 37.1% stated that they sometimes used this strategy, with a mean score of 3.11 and standard deviation 1.111. However, in Askar’s (2014) research the mean was 2.62 and standard deviation was 1.14. According to Amirian and Heshmatifar (2013) ‘putting English labels on physical objects’ was the fifth least strategy with a mean score of 1.98 and standard deviation.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics for Cognitive Strategies

Items	M	SD
S30. I say new English words several times.	3.14	1.186
S31. I write new English words several times.	3.17	1.061
S32. I take notes about the new words.	3.70	1.173
S33. I use the vocabulary section in my textbook.	3.32	1.304
S34. I put English labels on real objects.	3.11	1.111
S35. I keep a vocabulary notebook.	3.64	1.142

Following the most and least employed cognitive strategies, statement 33 ‘I use the vocabulary section in my textbook’ indicated that 10.9% of the participants never employed this strategy while 24% always used this strategy with a mean score of 3.32 and standard deviation 1.304. According to Schmitt (1997) 76% of the participants reported this strategy as useful, nevertheless, only 48% utilized textbooks.

The results considering statement 35 'keeping a vocabulary notebook' revealed that only 4.5% of the participants never used this strategy while 28.5% stated that they always used this strategy with a mean score of 3.64 and standard deviation 1.142. It is interesting to find out that the learners keep a vocabulary notebook, because the learners then can take advantages of the strategy. The findings contradict those of Alsadik (2014) who reported that the mean score was 2.10 for this strategy.

With respect to the findings related to statement 30 'I say new English words several times', 5.4% of the participants stated that they never and 18.6% stated that they always used this strategy with a mean score of 3.14 (SD=1.186). Alsadik (2014) explained that writing a word many times was the eighth most used strategy among the cognitive strategies with a mean score of 3.10.

The results regarding statement 31 'writing new English words several times' revealed that 6.3% of participants never and 11.3% always used this strategy when learning vocabulary, with a mean score of 3.17 and standard deviation of 1.061. According to Schmitt (1997) writing repetition is common among learners. Furthermore, Schmitt stated that 91% of the participants indicated this strategy as useful, however, 76% applied writing repetition.

Metacognitive strategies. Taking into account the metacognitive strategies, five specific Strategies were presented to the 221 participants who took part in this study. The results related to the metacognitive strategies revealed that statement 40 'I repeat the learnt new words over time' was the most employed strategy and statement 38 'I use spaced word

practice’ was the least employed strategy among the five metacognitive strategies (see Tables 11 and 12).

Table 11

Frequencies of Metacognitive Strategies

Items	Always	Regularly	Sometimes	Occasionally	Never
S36. I use English-language media (songs, movies, newscasts, etc).	27.1%	19.5%	20.8%	21.3%	11.3%
S 37. I test myself with word tests.	10%	14.9%	33.9%	31.2%	10%
S38. I use spaced word practice.	3.6%	14%	13.5%	41.6%	7.2%
S 39. I skip new words.	23.1%	22.6%	23.5%	0,24	6.8%
S40. I repeat the learnt new words over time.	33%	23.5%	29.4%	10.4%	3.6%

It is apparent in both Tables 11 and 12 that the most employed metacognitive strategy was ‘I repeat the learnt new words over time’ (S40). 3.6% of the participants who took part in this study reported that they never and 33% always employed this strategy when learning vocabulary, with a mean score of 3.72 and standard deviation of 1.137. In contrast to this finding Al-Khasawneh (2012), revealed that in his study the statement in question was not always used with a mean score of 3.70.

The least employed strategy among the metacognitive strategies was statement 38 ‘I use spaced word practice’. The students at the Salahaddin university students did not prefer to use this strategy. Only 3.6% of students indicated that they always while 41% stated occasionally with a mean score of 2.65 and standard deviation of 0.935.

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics of Metacognitive strategies

Items	M	SD
S36. I use English-language media (songs, movies, newscasts, etc).	3.30	1.166
S37. I test myself with word tests.	2.84	1.112
S38. I use spaced word practice.	2.65	0.935
S39. I skip new words.	3.31	1.253
S40. I repeat the learnt new words over time.	3.72	1.137

Following the most and least employed metacognitive strategies, statement 36 ‘I use English-language media (songs, movies, newscasts, etc)’ revealed that only 11.3% of the participants stated that they never whereas 27.1% stated that they always used this strategy with a mean score of 3.30 and standard deviation of 1.366. In contrast, Alsadik (2014) indicated that students were not keen on using this strategy as much. Only 8.3% of his participants reported that they always used this strategy with a mean score of 2.8. However, the study by Asgari and Mustapha (2011) reported that using the English-language media was among the high-frequency strategies and was used by the participant.

With respect to statement 37 ‘I test myself with word tests’ the participants of this study reported that they never used this strategy (10%) and 10% indicated that they

always used this strategy while 33% stated that they sometimes used this strategy, with a mean score of 2.84 and standard deviation of 1.112. Alsadik (2014) specified that ‘testing my English with word test’ was the least preferred strategy among his participants related to metacognitive strategies with a mean score of 2.06. In another study Fimansyah (2014) also indicated that this strategy was the least employed with a mean score of 2.44 among the five metacognitive strategies.

According to statement 39 ‘I skip new words’, 6.8% the participants indicated that they never employed this strategy whereas 23.1% indicated that they used this strategy, with a mean score of 3.31 and standard deviation of 1.253. Amirian and Heshmatifar (2013) discovered that ‘skipping the word’ was the first least used strategy among the metacognitive strategies with a mean score of 1.56 and standard deviation (SD=0.80). Besides, in his research Schmitt (1997) illustrated that ‘skip or pass new words’ was the least used strategy as only 41% of his participants reported that they used this strategy (p.13). In addition to this, Amirian and Heshmatifar (2013) revealed that skipping and passing the new words was found to be the least used strategy among his participants related to metacognitive strategies.

Differences between Groups in terms of Grade

The second research question was ‘In what ways do the vocabulary learning strategies change with regards to grade?. Significant differences were found concerning all statements in the questionnaire via One –Way ANOVA. Sheffe test revealed the significant differences between the responses of the participants with different grades.

Table 13

VLS use among the grade level

Grade	Mean
First Grade	2.94
Second Gade	2.86
Third Grade	3.33
Fourth Grade	3.60

Table 13 illustrates the average mean scores of all the strategies according to the grades of the participants (first, second, third and fourth grade). As can be seen in Table 13 the fourth grade participants employed VLS the most with a mean score of 3.60 followed by the third grade participants with a mean score of 3.33 while the second grade participants employed VLS the least with a mean score 2.86 followed by the first the first grade participants with a mean score of 2.94

The following section will present detailed information regarding each questionnaire statement (see Appendix E) individually and will discuss each group of the participants.

With regard to Statement 1 ‘I analyze parts of speech to learn new vocabulary’, statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 39.850, p < .005$]. While the first grade students agreed with S1 with a mean score of

2.27, the fourth grade participants agreed with this item with a mean score of 4.15. These results illustrates that each year students dramatically increased in terms of using 'analyzing parts of speech.' Schmitt (1997) stated that more mental effort was needed for this strategy, however, the value of this strategy was noticed by advanced students. Using this strategy could be beneficial. Lai (2005) stated that analyzing parts of speech gives hints and makes it logical for the learners to guess; it is regarded as useful and often used in the classroom when learning vocabulary.

With regard to statement 2 'I analyze affixes and roots to find out the meaning of new words to understand the meaning of the word' statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3,217) = 28,016, p < .005$]. The first grade students were the least users of this strategy compared to the other, with a mean score of 2.61. However, it is apparent that the second grade students used it more than the first grade students with a mean score of 2.82. There is a dramatic increase in using this strategy among the third-grade students with a mean score of 3.82. Taking the fourth-grade students into account, with a mean score of 4.2, it could be concluded that as students pass to their next levels, their usage of this strategy increases. In contrast to this finding Lai (2005) argued that analyzing affixes in the early stages when guessing is labeled as beneficial, it is usually utilized in the classroom. According to Nation, thousands of English vocabulary items could be learned by students if this strategy is used appropriately (as cited in Lai, 2005, p.26). Nakayama (2008) affirmed that many researchers support utilizing affix information as one of the highest common strategies

that helps improve vocabulary. In his research, Nakayama (2008) found out that applying prefix understanding in vocabulary learning have positive outcomes, even though the advantages of using this strategy is different because of the level of students (pp. 68-69). Pan and Xu (2011) stated that “to teach lexical items effectively, teachers must familiarize students with these common roots, prefixes, suffixes.

With respect to statement 3 ‘I consider available pictures or gestures to understand the meaning of the word’, statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 25,517, p < .005$]. The first-grade participants disagreed with this statement with the lowest mean score of 2.53, while the fourth grade participants agreed with this statement with a mean score of 4.15 which was the highest mean score among the four grades. These results interestingly reveal that the first and second grade participants are unfamiliar with this strategy. It is argued that the first and second grade participants have more limited vocabulary than the third and fourth grade participants. Therefore, utilizing pictures and gestures will give them essential hints and clues when learning vocabulary items. Rowe, Rebecca, Silverman and Mullan (2012) stated that recent research studies proposed that language learners can be assisted to learn new words by seeing gestures and pictures. McDevitt and Esch “taught monolingual English-speaking adults Japanese verbs with iconic gestures and found that adult L2 learners acquired new words most effectively when the new words were taught with gestures that reinforced their meanings” (as cited in Rowe, Rebecca, Silverman & Mullan, 2013 p. 110).

As regards to statement 4 'I guess from textual context so as to comprehend the new vocabulary' statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 25,483, p < .005$]. Both the first grade participants and the second grade participants disagreed (did not use) with this statement with similar mean scores ($M=2.80, M= 2.68$) while the third and fourth grade students agreed (used) with this statement with mean scores over 4 ($M=4.04, M=4.07$). These results reveal that the third and fourth grade students use guessing from textual context more than the first and second grade students. This could be due to the fact that the more one has vocabulary knowledge the more they are able to guess. Studies related to this statement revealed that guessing from the context should be considered the first step before consulting a dictionary (as cited in Alhaysony, 2012, p. 527). According to Oxford "contextual guessing strategies can be made based on a wide range of clues; namely, linguistic and nonlinguistic clues" (as cited in Huang & Eslami, Z., 2013, p. 2). Language learners often use the dictionary or simply guess the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary. The more intelligent a learner is, the more they seem to employ guessing when learning vocabulary items. Rojananak and Vitayapirak (2015) found out that guessing the meaning from the context is most commonly used by good students. Nation "recommended that teachers ought to improve their students' guessing skills through the following steps: 1- Giving students the chance to choose the text of which they were capable. 2- Motivate them to read more. 3- Teach them how to read correctly and fluently. Train them how to guess unknown words from the context" (as cited in Alsaawi, 2013, p. 9).

With respect to statement 5 ‘I use a bilingual dictionaries’ statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 7,150, p < .005$]. The fourth grade participants disagreed with this statement with a mean score of 2.86 while the first, second and third year participants agreed ($M=3.82, M=3.75, M= 3.42$). This dramatic decrease reported by the fourth year students revealed that they are the least users of this strategy. In the study of Alsadik (2014) the second grade students were seen to have the highest mean score of 4.16 whereas this study reveals that the first-grade participants are considered the top users of this strategy. As aforementioned the fourth and third grade students probably have more knowledge about the English language. Therefore, they are capable of using the guessing strategy when unknown words appear. As a result, they usually do not depend on dictionaries in general and the bilingual dictionary in particular. According to Qian’s study, a bilingual dictionary was used by many intermediate language learners to learn the meaning of a new word (as cited in Huang & Eslami, 2014, p. 2). In their study Rojjananak and Vitayapirak (2015) explained that a bilingual dictionary is more frequently employed strategy by second year students.

According to statement 6 ‘I use a monolingual dictionary’ (see Appendix E) statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 6,039 p < .005$]. The first grade participants seem to employ this strategy the least ($M=2.82$) and the fourth grade employ this strategy the most ($M=3.61$). The first grade

students might not be able to understand the meaning of new words through English to English dictionaries. Therefore, they prefer to use a bilingual dictionary instead.

Thompson (1987) claimed that there are several negative remarks considering the monolingual dictionary in many language education settings. Especially, when the learners do not know which vocabulary to search for. However, the definition in another language might not address them when the students want to find the meaning of a vocabulary item. He also argued that bilingual dictionaries are possibly more efficient and more encouraging for the students.

There was a significant difference related to the grades of the participants with regard to statement 7 'I ask the teacher to translate a word into my language' statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 19,570$ $p < .005$]. The first grade participants had the highest mean score of 3.51 which reveals that they employed this statement the most, while the fourth grade participants had the lowest mean score of 2.03 and are considered the least users of this statement. This might be due to students' previous learning and teaching. The teacher-centered classrooms foster students to demand on their teachers. They are used to asking questions and rely on their teachers while they were learning English in general and vocabulary in specific in their high school years. This finding is in line with Zhi-liang's study (2010) who specified that the freshmen learners usually rely on their teachers in learning vocabulary. This finding indicates that as students become more proficient in the English language they tend not to rely on their teachers. The first and second grade students might use this strategy because

they are not sure about the precise meaning of the new word they might want to double check the meaning by receiving conformation from their teachers.

Regarding statement 8 'I ask the teacher to paraphrase' statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 10,567$ $p < .005$]. This strategy is commonly employed by the first grade participants with a mean score of 3.53 while the fourth grade participants employed this strategy the least with a mean score of 2.39. From my experience as a student at the Salahaddin University, teachers focus on teaching vocabulary through paraphrasing or giving the students the synonyms of unknown words in the first and second grades. Students in this specific context make this a habit and get used to this strategy which leads them to later ask other teachers in other classes to paraphrase and/or give the synonym of unknown vocabulary items. According to Pan and Xu (2011) teachers usually use synonyms to explain new words in vocabulary teaching.

Related to statement 9 'I learn new words through the explanation of a word by my teachers' (see Appendix E) statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 0,062$ $p < 0,980$]. Even though, all the participants in the four groups had similar mean scores, the first grade participants seem to employ this strategy the least with the lowest mean score of 3.78 while the fourth year students use this strategy the most with the highest mean score of 3.86. The result shows that learners were keen on listening to their teachers. We can also argue that teachers might explain the vocabularies

in proper ways. That is why most of the students agreed with this strategy. All four grades marked using this strategy at the high level. As students ask teachers for explanation there will be more dialogue in the classroom which might also enrich the lesson and everyone in the classroom might benefit as well. Because of the communication between students and the teachers this strategy might also change passive vocabularies into active.

With regard to statement 10 'I discuss with my classmates to find out the meaning of a new word' statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 10,940$ $p < .005$]. The second grade participants used this strategy the least with a mean score of 2.61 whereas the third grade students used this strategy the most with a mean score of 3.69. Lip (2009) revealed that all the participants in his research indicated that they constantly preferred to ask their classmates to find out the meaning of new vocabulary, and they found the strategy beneficial. While, according to Rojananak and Vitayapirak (2015) asking classmates for the meaning of words was usually used by weak students. In his research Alsadik (2014) indicated that fourth grade students applied this strategy with a mean of 4.16 more than all the other grades. We can argue that students in grade one and two might not have a very good relationship with their classmates as compared to grade three and four. It is believed that students can take advantages of each other in the process of learning. Lip, P. C. H. (2009) revealed that all the participants in his research indicated that they constantly preferred to ask their classmates to find out the meaning of new vocabulary, and they found the strategy beneficial.

With respect to statement 11 ‘I can realize the new meaning through group work activity’ statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 13,879$ $p < .005$]. There is an enormous significant difference among the findings related to the first and fourth grade participants. The first grade participants employ this strategy the least with a mean score of 2.96 while the fourth grade participants employ this strategy the most with a mean score of 4.4. There are more than forty students in the classrooms of the college of languages, Salahaddin University. Therefore, dividing students into groups could be much more beneficial to these students in terms of learning new words. Wright and Lawson realized that group work motivated learners to attend the lesson and made them feel that the class is smaller (as cited in Burke, 2011, p. 90).

With respect to statement 12 ‘I practise meaning of words in a group of words’ statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 11,176$ $p < .005$]. The second grade participants with the lowest mean score of 2.96 were the least employers of this strategy while the fourth grade students with the highest mean score of 4.03 were the most employers of this strategy. Teachers should divide students in groups so that they can share their knowledge with each other. Burke (2011) argued that learners do not like being put into groups, though grouping is for the benefit of both students and instructors. He also specified that students who take part in groups gain higher marks and are seen to be content with their learning.

According to statement 13 'I interact with English native-speakers' statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 12,345$ $p < .005$]. The second grade participants with a mean score of 1.96 used this strategy the least among the other groups while the fourth grade participants used the strategy the most among the other groups with a mean score of 3.15. The first year participants with a mean score of 2.33 and the third year participants with a mean score of 2.6 employed this strategy the second and third most frequent. However, the highest significant can be seen between second grade and fourth grade. According to Doczi (2011), the higher in English proficiency the learner is the more they will engage and converse with native speakers. There are so many advantages in interacting with English native speaker in the process of learning a language; the learners might learn vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, the culture, proverbs, and idioms. In their research Wu, Yen and Marek (2011) identified that

even a small amount of authentic in English made students more comfortable in applying their skills, more confident in what they learned, and more inspired to make global cross-cultural connections. Therefore, EFL instructors should strive to use student-centered active learning and to offer their students interactions with native speakers, including interactions via distance technology. (p. 118)

In terms of statement 14 'I study the word with a pictorial representation of its meaning' statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third

and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 13,664$ $p < .005$]. The first grade participants achieved a mean score of 2.94, the second grade participants achieved a mean score of 2.77, the third grade participants achieved a mean score of 2.25 and the fourth grade participants achieved a mean score of 3.51. It is evident from these findings that the third grade participants used this strategy the least while the fourth grade participants used this strategy the most among the four groups of participants. Schlag, Florax, and Ploetzner (2007) argued that most students are not usually taking advantages from the extra valuable information given by images and symbols because they are not capable of connecting manuscript and pictorial representation successfully.

According to statement 15 'I visualise the meaning of the word' statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 14,030$ $p < .005$]. The first grade participants with a mean score of 3.02, the second grade participants with a mean score of 2.80, the third grade participants with a mean score of 3.18 and the fourth grade participants with a mean score of 4.5 showed that all group participants employed this strategy. However, the second grade participants employed this strategy the least while the fourth grade participants employed this strategy the most among the group of participants. It can be easier for learners to recall vocabulary items when they are visualized. Gambrell and Jawits put forth that visualization, or visual imagery, is another very important comprehension tool that students need to learn and use independently in order to enhance their vocabulary knowledge, When students form pictures in their minds

of what they read, they are better able to remember and understand words and texts (as cited in Ghaedi & Shahrokhi, 2016, p. 33). It seems that students in all grades use this strategy. This strategy will help students to remember the unknown word easier. Ghaedi and Shahrokhi (2016) argued that difficult words can be understood easily by learners when they are visualized. Thus, vocabulary learning will be more exciting when the pictures are employed because learners can recall the meaning of the vocabulary item without getting assistance from anyone or the dictionary.

According to statement 16 'I relate the word to a personal experience' statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 28,772$ $p < .005$]. The first grade participants achieved a mean score of 2.75, the second grade participants achieved a mean score of 2.39, the third grade participants achieved a mean score of 2.98 and the fourth grade participants achieved a mean score of 4.12. It could be seen from the findings that the second grade participants ($M=2.39$) employed this strategy the least while the fourth grade participants ($M=4.12$) employed this strategy the most among the groups of participants. One of the reasons behind this could be that by the fourth grade the learners have more knowledge in English vocabulary. In the process of the four year English education they gain more knowledge so it is apparent to see these findings when compared to other grades. Thus, students in the fourth grade are able to connect words into their personal experience. The more vocabulary they know, the more they would be able to connect vocabulary items with past situations or experience. Schmitt (1997) argued that "new words can also be associated with a particularly vivid personal

experience of the underlying concept, for example, a learner mentally connecting the word snow to a memory of playing in the snow while a child” (p. 11).

With regard to statement 17 ‘I associate the word with its connotation’ statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 29,436$ $p < .005$]. The first grade participants achieved a mean score of 2.9, the second grade participants achieved a mean score of 2.38, the third grade participants achieved a mean score of 3.25 and the fourth grade participants achieved a mean score of 4.07. This finding indicates that the second grade participants use this strategy the least and the fourth grade participants use this strategy the most among the group of participants. In general it could be said that the beginner levels of English learners might find it difficult to associate words with its connotation because the connotation from one language might have a different meaning in another language as I believe connotations are linked the culture of the learner and their previous knowledge. This was also made evident in the study of Hermagustina (n.d) who stated that connotations are part of culture. Thus, he suggested that teachers should consider culture as they are teaching for students to improve their culture consciousness. Students might know the meaning of the word but might not be able to use it in a sentence. Cakir (2006) argued that if learners do not have sufficient information about the culture they will not always be able to utilize the language effectively. Learners should be encouraged by teachers so that students would be able to improve the knowledge about the language related to cultural differences. In their research Pan and Xu (2011) illustrated an example, “Dragon” has the positive

meaning in Chinese culture nevertheless in English speaking culture dragon has the negative meaning.

According to statement 18 'connecting the words to its synonym' statistically significant statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [F (3, 217) = 16,543 p<.005]. The first grade participants achieved a mean score of 2.80, the second grade participants achieved a mean score of 2.66, the third grade participants achieved a mean score of 3.82 and the fourth grade participants achieved a mean score of 3.86. From these findings it is evident that the second grade participants (M=2.66) were considered the least users of this strategy with the lowest mean score while the third grade participants (M= 3.82) were the most users of this strategy with the highest mean score. A study carried out by Askar (2014) revealed that fourth grade students at the university level used this strategy the most among the other grades. It is believed that fourth grade participants are aware of most of the vocabulary items in the English language. Therefore, fourth grade students are considered to have better ability to connect the word to its synonym. Third and fourth grade students are at the last stages of studying and they are required to prepare research papers and/or academic texts, this might be one of the reasons to why these grades used this strategy the most/ this strategy to get to know more vocabularies and synonyms. To be able to write an academic text a person needs to know many associated words because in academic writing, writing the same words many times is not seen to be professional. Hoshino (2010) claimed that vocabulary items which have a connection can be learned easier than the vocabulary items which have no connection.

He also stated that it will be helpful for the second language student to study vocabulary in the same categories.

With respect to statement 19 'connecting the word to itsonyms/ synonyms' statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 20,324$ $p < .005$]. The first grade participants achieved a mean score of 2.78, the second grade participants achieved a mean score of 2.80, the third grade participants achieved a mean score of 3.80 and the fourth grade participants achieved a mean score of 4.15. This finding indicates that the first grade participants used this strategy the least with the lowest mean score ($M=2.78$) whereas the fourth grade participants employed this strategy the most with the highest mean score ($M=4.15$). This drastically increasing result may be due to the fact that first grade participants are still at the stage of learning and have limited vocabulary as regards to antonyms compared to the other grade students studying university. The more vocabulary items students know, the better they will be able to connect them to their antonyms. One of the most advantages of this strategy employed by the students show that students are learning two words at the same time, doubling their vocabulary knowledge. This strategy can be one of the best methods when teaching vocabulary because students are able to learn two words at the same time and have a less chance of forgetting the words. This strategy was also valued by the participants who took part in Schmitt's (1997) study who found that 88% of his participants used synonyms and antonyms as helpful when learning vocabulary items.

According to statement 20, 'searching for the sentence to find out the meaning of the words' statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 19,207 p < .005$]. The first grade participants achieved a mean score of 3.06, the second grade participants achieved a mean score of 2.46, the third grade participants achieved a mean score of 3.60 and the fourth grade participants achieved a mean score of 4.00. It is evident from this finding that the second grade participants used this strategy the least with the lowest mean score of 2.46 while the fourth year participants employed this strategy the most with the highest mean score of 4.00. As students are trying to find the meaning of the new word through sentences, they might find many different sentences which contain the word. This strategy might make them know how the word is used in many situations. In this case, they will be familiar with the word and might be able to use it in the right place and appropriate ways. According to Pan and Xu (2011) teaching vocabulary in context, is useful for the learners who could master the different meanings for the words in different situation.

Regarding statement 21 'I choose a group of words in a story' statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 19,010 p < .005$]. However, not much difference could be seen when the means are compared. The first grade participants achieved a mean score of 3.04, the second grade participants achieved a mean score of 2.63, the third grade participants achieved a mean score of 3.78 and the

fourth grade participants achieved a mean score of 4.08. This finding reveals that this strategy was mostly employed by the fourth grade participants and least employed by the second grade participants. According to Askar (2014) the fourth grade students were the most users of this strategy with a mean of 2.75.

According to statement 22 'I practice the spelling of a word' statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 4,964$ $p < .005$]. The first grade participants mean scores was 3.04, the second grade participants mean scores was 3.38, the third grade participants mean scores was 2.84 and the fourth grade participants mean scores was 3.61. This result indicates that there was not much difference with the usage of this item among grades. However, the third grade participants employed this strategy the least with a mean score of 2.84 while the fourth grade participants employed this strategy the most with a mean score of 3.61. In contrast, Doczi (2011) stated that students of year four avoided using the strategy of studying the spelling.

With regard to statement 23 'I study the sound of a word' statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 8,891$ $p < .005$]. The results regarding this strategy were actually quite similar. The mean scores of the first grade was 3.04, the second grade participants was 2.61, the third grade participants was 3.13 and the fourth grade participants was 3.61. The results indicate that the second grade participants

employ this strategy the least while the fourth grade participants employ this strategy the most. This finding is in line with that of Alsadik (2014) who illustrated that fourth grade students employed this strategy the most with a mean score of 3.12 while the second grade students employed this strategy the least with a mean score of 2.46.

According to statement 24 'saying the new word aloud when studying' statistically significant differences were found between the underlying features of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students at Salahadeen University grades [$F(3, 217) = 4,896$ $p < 0.003$]. The first grade participants achieved a mean score of 2.92, the second grade participants achieved a mean score of 3.11, the third grade participants achieved a mean score of 3.07 and the fourth grade participants achieved a mean score of 3.68. Even though the mean scores among the groups are close, the first grade participants seem to employ this strategy the least while the fourth grade participants employ this strategy the most among the grades. In his research Askar (2014) reported that fourth grade students were the least users of this strategy with a mean of 3.14. A study carried out by Gathercole and Conway revealed that the strategy of reading aloud was seen to be beneficial in terms of vocabulary learning (as cited in MacLeod, Gopie, Kathleen, Houriha, Neary & Ozubko, 2010, p. 672).

With respect to statement 25 'I underline the initial letter of the word' statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 5,547$ $p < 0.005$]. The first grade participants mean score was 2.80, the second grade participants mean score

was 2.66, the third grade participants mean score was 2.56 and the fourth grade participants mean score was 2.73. Even though there was not much difference considering the mean scores of the grades, the third grade participants employed this strategy the least while the first grade participants employed this strategy the most among the groups. However, all four grades apply this strategy moderately. This strategy was not used frequently compared to the other strategies, it could be because they have not found it useful or might be because they are not familiar with this strategy.

According to statement 26, 'memorizing vocabulary' statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 15,117 p < .005$]. The results revealed that the first grade participants employed this strategy with a mean score of 3.71, the second grade participants employed this strategy with a mean score of 3.70, the third grade participants employed this strategy with a mean score of 2.96 and the fourth grade participants employed this strategy with a mean score of 2.56. These findings indicate that the fourth grade participants employ this strategy the least while the first grade participants employ this strategy the most. Teachers use English language in the classroom and the first grade students do not have much vocabulary as they are on the first stage. Thus most of them rely heavily on memorizing vocabularies on daily basis in order to understand their teachers. In this specific context in which this study took place, learners subconsciously practice some methods to memorize vocabulary. Yang and Dai (2011) put forth that the majority of learners focus on remembering words, generally they write, say or read again and again to memorize the vocabulary item.

With regard to statement 27 'I paraphrase the words' meaning' statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 30,450$ $p < .005$]. The first grade participants used this strategy with a mean score of 2.53, the second grade participants used this strategy with a mean score of 2.54, the third grade participants used this strategy with a mean score of 3.85 and the fourth grade participants used this strategy with a mean score of 4.17. This finding illustrates that the first grade participant employed this strategy the least while the fourth grade participants employed this strategy the most among the grades of participants. In his research Schmitt (1997) illustrated that 77% of students believed that 'paraphrasing the word's meaning' as a useful strategy when learning vocabulary.

According to statement 28 'I learn the meaning of an idiom together' statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 21,076$ $p < .005$]. The first grade participants employed this strategy with a mean score of 2.61, the second grade participants employed this strategy with a mean score of 2.55, the third grade participants employed this strategy with a mean score of 3.56 and the fourth grade participants employed this strategy with a mean score of 3.83. It is evident in these findings that the second grade participants used this strategy the least when learning vocabulary items while the fourth grade participants used this strategy the most when learning vocabulary items among the grades. Learners of the English language should

consider learning a word with its idioms together since, firstly, the English language is rich in terms of idioms, and secondly, the English native speakers use idioms on a daily basis. Scholars have listed the most common used idioms for learners to read and study.

According to statement 29 'I mime the words when learning them' statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 15,313$ $p < .005$]. The first grade participants mean score was 3.14, the second grade participants mean score was 3.18, the third grade participants mean score was 2.31 and the fourth grade participants mean score was 2.07. This result indicates that the fourth grade participants employed this strategy the least while the second grade participants employed this strategy the most. Alsadik (2014) illustrated that fourth year students utilized this strategy more than the third grade students. It can be argued that physical action (Mime) usually can be done generally when students are learning verbs such as drawing, swimming, riding, walking, beating, biting, blowing, drinking, eating, climbing, swinging, grabbing, sweeping, mopping, peeling, cooking, bending. It seems that the first and second-grade students still in the process of learning verbs. On the other hand, the third and fourth grade students might have already been familiar with some of the verbs thus, may use less physical action when learning vocabulary compared to the first and second grades.

In terms of statement 30 'I say new English words several times' statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 31,009$ $p < .005$]. The

first grade participants employed this strategy with a mean score of 2.94, the second grade participants employed this strategy with a mean score of 2.71, the third grade participants employed this strategy with a mean score of 2.64 and the fourth grade participants employed this strategy with a mean score of 4.20. This finding indicates that the third grade participants employed this strategy the least followed by the second grade participants while the fourth grade participants employed this strategy the most followed by the first grade participants. Repeating a vocabulary item several times has many advantages. Schmitt (1997) argued that repeating new words several times is a worldwide used strategy that students usually use in the process of learning. In addition, Gu (2003) stated that “some students will repeat the new word a number of times until they are comfortable with it. Others will go beyond simple rote repetition to commit the word to memory” (p. 4).

Related to statement 31 ‘writing new English word several times’ statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 15,990 p < .005$]. The results indicate that the first grade participants employ this strategy with a mean score of 2.86, the second grade participants employed this strategy with a mean score of 2.70, the third grade participants employed this strategy with a mean score of 3.87 and the fourth grade participants employed this strategy with a mean score of 3.24. This finding reveals that the second grade participants employed this strategy the least followed by the first grade participants while the third grade participants employed this strategy the most followed by the fourth grade participants. Repeating a word seems to be an excellent

exercise for learners. This strategy might help students to be well aware of the spelling of learned vocabulary. Students who are good at spelling might get a better mark in their essays, articles and composition writings. Alharthi (2014) argued that written repetition is one of the effective strategies which help learners to learn the vocabulary item and it will increase remembering the specific vocabulary item.

With regard to statement 32 'I take notes about the new words' statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 7,144$ $p < .005$]. The findings regarding this strategy illustrated that the first grade participants employed this strategy the least ($M = 3.31$) followed by the second grade participants ($M = 3.39$) while the fourth grade participants employed this strategy the most ($M = 4.17$) followed by the third grade participants ($M = 3.85$). Taking notes about the new words in the class may make students concentrate more to their teachers; as they have pen and papers ready they are eager to gain some knowledge so that they could write it down. This strategy will make it easier for the students to remember the vocabulary since they have the written vocabulary in their notes they can also review them from time to time. Therefore, teachers should encourage students to take notes in the class.

Regarding statement 33 'I use the vocabulary section in my textbook' statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 26,558$ $p < .005$]. The findings related to this strategy indicate that the first grade participant employed this

strategy the least ($M=2.39$) followed by the second grade participants ($M=2.88$) while the third grade participants employed this strategy the most ($M=4.02$) followed by the fourth grade participants ($M=3.88$). It can be argued that third grade students might be trying to take advantage of this strategy since they are studying the following subject (poetry, drama, and novel). Furthermore, for the benefit of learning and getting higher grades students might take advantage of using the section of the textbook. Schmitt (1997) claimed that vocabulary sections can be practiced by learners as a support to study target words. On the other hand, Sanchez and Perez (2009) claimed that “it is true that textbooks are limited tools for language learning, since they are limited in size and the communicative situations available” (p. 874).

With regard to statement 34 ‘I put English labels on real objects’ statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 6.055, p < .005$]. The results indicate that the first grade participants employed this strategy the least with a mean score of 2.84, followed by the fourth grade participants with a mean score of 2.85 while the second grade participants employed the strategy the least with a mean score of 3.14, followed by the third grade participants with a mean score of 3.60 among all the grades of participants. In terms of teaching vocabulary through labeling objects Elyas and Alfaki (2014) stated that the process of taking objects to the classroom to teach new vocabulary is called realia. On one hand, it is one of the best methods teach vocabulary, but, on the other hand, this type of method allows teachers to teach somewhat limited vocabulary items. For instance, “such as pen, cup, book, hand, desk, ruler, etc.” (p. 44).

According to statement 35 'I keep a vocabulary notebook' third grade with a mean of 4.16 uses a strategy 'I keep a vocabulary notebook' statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [F (3, 217) = 17, 388 p<.005]. The findings revealed that the first grade participants employed this strategy the least with a mean score of 2.94, followed by the second grade participants with a mean score of 3.32 while the third grade participants used this strategy the most with a mean score of 4.16, followed by the fourth grade participants with a mean score of 4.05. These findings show that the fourth and third-grade students were well-aware of the value of applying this strategy. There is no doubt that keeping a vocabulary notebook makes the students well-organized vocabulary learners. Students hear many words from teachers or friends at the university and they see and read many words in the classroom so being at the university with a notebook can be beneficial.

As regards to statement 36 'I use English-language media (songs, movies, newscasts, etc)' statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [F (3, 217) = 52,906 p<.005]. The results indicated that the first grade participants employed this strategy the least with a mean score of 2.78, followed by the second grade participants with a mean score of 2.90 while the fourth grade participants employed this strategy the most with a mean score of 4.19, followed by the third grade participants with a mean score of 4.05 fourth grade. Asker (2014) reported that fourth grade students with

a mean of 2.75 were the most users of this strategy. It is believed that, in general students in the last years of studying English have the ability to understand English much better compared to the students at the early stages of studying the English language. The background knowledge of students might lead them to listen or watch English programs. In his research Oroujlou (2012) demonstrated that information regarding the civilization and culture of the language can be obtained in the media language. He also stated that “media offers the essential contribution in language and improves learners’ capacity of language and communicative” (p. 24).

With regard to statement 37 ‘I test myself with word tests’, statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 1,613 p < .005$]. The findings indicated that third grade participants used this strategy the least with a mean score of 2.65 followed by the fourth grade participants with a mean score of 2.71 while the first grade participants used this strategy the most with a mean score of 3.06 followed by the second grade participants with a mean score of 2.95. Doczi (2011) put forth that more advanced students in English proficiency tend to less frequently use the ‘test themselves with word tests’ strategy. In his research Schmitt (1997) claimed that out of 50 participants only eight of them reported ‘testing oneself with word test’, the exploration illustrated that students of one class were taught and encouraged by their teacher about this strategy. The idea of using this strategy is obvious, as the more learners practice, the better they become. There is a well-known English proverb “practice makes perfect”.

With respect to statement 38 “using spaced word practice’ statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 3,144$ $p < .005$]. It was evident in the findings that the third year participants employed this strategy the least with a mean score of 2.45 followed by the fourth year participants with a mean score of 2.53 while the second year participants employed this strategy the most with a mean score of 2.95 followed by the first grade participants with a mean score of 2.69 among the grade of participants. Dunlosky and Rawson (2015) described spaced practice as “a schedule of practice that spreads out study activities over time” (p72). Using this strategy in learning vocabulary can be useful because studying lots of vocabulary at the same time at once might be difficult, therefore using spaced word practice is seen to be necessary when learning vocabulary items.

With regard to statement 39 ‘skipping new word’ statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 24,445$ $p < .005$]. The findings indicated that the second grade participants used this strategy the least with a mean score of 2.59 followed by the third grade participants with a mean score of 3.65 while the fourth grade participants used this strategy the most with a mean score of 4.12 followed by the first grade participants with a mean score of 2.80. According to Doczi (2011) skipping a new word was mainly utilized by higher grader students. Students who have less vocabulary knowledge should not always skip or pass the unknown words because

skipping the new words more than usual might result in ignoring new words which will have adverse effects on learning vocabulary items. In his research Al-Qahtani illustrated that the skipping strategy was regularly employed by his participant, particularly by the advanced students (as cited in Alhaysony, 2012, p. 526). Lai (2005) argued that “from a long-term perspective, learning to skip unimportant words wisely for more efficient reading seems to be of more significance” (p. 42).

With regard to statement 40 ‘I repeat the learnt new words over time’ statistically significant differences were found between the responses of the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, second and fourth, second and first, third and second, third and first and fourth and first grade undergraduate students [$F(3, 217) = 10,622$ $p < .005$]. The findings indicated that the first grade participants employed this strategy the least with a mean score of 3.06 followed by the second grade participants with a mean score of 3.73 while the fourth grade participants employed this strategy the most with a mean score of 4.20 followed by the third grade participants with a mean score of 3.80. These findings contradict that of Schmitt (1997) who reported that only 45% of his participants utilized this strategy.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings and discussion of this study according to the research question which were posed to guide this study. The following chapter will present the conclusions and recommendations of the current study.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

This chapter will present the conclusions regarding vocabulary learning strategies followed by the recommendations of this study. In addition, implications for further study will also be presented.

Summary of the Findings

This study was carried out to reveal the vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) employed by 221 students studying at the Salahaddin university in the north of Iraq. In addition, this study aimed to compare the students according to their grade (first, second, third and fourth grade) regarding using VLSs. A questionnaire containing 40 strategies was distributed to the participants.

The findings related to the first research question of this study revealed that all students employed the 40 strategies presented in the questionnaire. However, with respect to the determination strategies statement 5 'I use a bilingual dictionaries' was seen to be the most employed strategy while statement 6 'I use a monolingual dictionaries' was seen to be the least employed strategy among the determination strategies. In addition, with regard to the social strategies the 221 participants mostly employed the strategy S9 'I learn new words through the explanation of a word by my teachers.' and least employed the strategy S13 'I interact with English native speakers'. Furthermore, the data revealed that statement 16 'I relate the word to a personal experience' was used by the participants

of this study the most while statement 24 ‘I say the new words aloud when studying’ was employed by the participants the least among the memory strategies. What is more, the results related to the metacognitive strategies revealed that statement 40 ‘I repeat the learnt new words over time’ was the most employed strategy and statement 38 ‘I use spaced word practice’ was the least employed strategy among the five metacognitive strategies. In addition, with respect to the cognitive strategies the most employed strategy was ‘I take notes about the new words’ (S32) and the least employed strategy was ‘I put English labels on real objects’ (S34) among the six strategies presented to the participants.

In terms of the grades of the participants, the fourth grade participants employed VLS the most, followed by the third grade participants while the second grade participants employed VLS the least followed by the first grade participants. The following section will summarize the findings for each statement.

Regarding statement 1 the fourth grade students used this strategy the most while the first grade students used this strategy the least among the grades. In addition, related to statement 2 the fourth grade students used this strategy the most and the first grade students used this strategy the least among the grades. For statement 3 the fourth grade students used this strategy the most and the first grade students used this strategy the least among the grades. With respect to statement 4 the fourth grade students used this strategy the most and the second grade students used this strategy the least among the participants. Regarding statement 5 the fourth year students used this strategy the least while the first year students used this strategy the most. With respect to statement 6 the second year students used this strategy the least while the fourth year students used this strategy the

most among the grades. For statement 7 the fourth year students used this strategy the least while the first year students used it the most among the participants. Regarding statement 8 the fourth grade students used this strategy the least while the first grade students used this strategy the most among the grades. For statement 9 the first grade students used this strategy the least while the fourth grade students used this strategy the most among the grades. With respect to statement 10 the second grade students used this strategy the least while the third year students used it the most among the grades. For statement 11 the second grade students used this strategy the least while the fourth grade students used it the most among the grades. Regarding statement 12 the second grade students used this strategy the least while the fourth grade students used it the most among the grades. As regards to statement 13 the first grade students used this strategy the least while the fourth grade students used it the most among the grades. For statement 14 the third grade students used this strategy the least while the fourth grade students used this strategy the most. For statement 15 the second grade students used this strategy the least while the fourth grade students used it the most among the grades. With regard to statement 16 the second grade students used this strategy the least while the fourth grade students used this strategy the most among the grades. For statement 17 the second grade students used this strategy the least while the fourth grade students used it the most among the grades. Regarding statement 18 the second grade students employed this strategy the least while the fourth grade students employed it the most among the grades. With respect to statement 19 the first grade students used this strategy the least while the fourth grade students used it the most among the grades. For statement 20 the second grade students employed this strategy the least while the fourth grade students employed

it the most among the grades. Related to statement 21 the second grade students used this strategy the least while the fourth grade students used it the most among the grades. For statement 22 the third grade students used this strategy the least while the fourth grade students used this strategy the most among the grades. With regards to statement 23 the second grade students used this strategy the least and the fourth grade students used it the most among the grades. For statement 24 the first grade students used this strategy the most while the fourth grade students used this strategy the least. Regarding statement 25 the second grade students used this strategy the least while the fourth grade students used this strategy the most among the grades. For statement 26 the fourth grade students used this strategy the least while the first grade students used it the most among the grades. With respect to statement 27 the first grade students used this strategy the least while the fourth grade students used it the most. Regarding statement 28 the second grade students used this strategy the least while the fourth grade students used it the most among the grades. For statement 29 the fourth grade students used this strategy the least while the second grade students used it the most among the grades. Regarding statement 30 the third grade students used this strategy the least while the fourth grade students used it the most among the grades. For statement 31 the second grade students used this strategy the least while the fourth grade students used this strategy the most among the grades. Regarding statement 32 the first grade students used this strategy the least while the fourth grade students used this strategy the most among the grades. For statement 33 the first grade students used this strategy the least and the third year students used this strategy the most among the grades. With respect to statement 34 the first grade students used this strategy the least while the second grade students used this strategy the most.

Regarding statement 35 the first grade students used this strategy the least while the third grade students used this strategy the most among the grades. For statement 36 the second grade students used this strategy the least while the fourth grade students used this strategy the most among the grades. Regarding statement 37 the third grade students used this strategy the least and the first grade students used this strategy the most among the grades. For statement 38 the third grade student used this strategy the least while the second grade students used this strategy the most among the grades. Regarding statement 39 the second grade students used this strategy the least and the fourth grade students used this strategy the most among the grades. With respect to statement 40 the first grade students employed this strategy the least while the fourth grade students employed this strategy the most among the grades (also see Appendix E).

The results of this study clearly show that students in the fourth grade are very well aware of the varied range of VLS and employ them the most compared to the other grade of students.

Recommendations for Future Studies

A further investigation could be carried out to find out whether there are other VLS that students employ when learning a foreign language. In addition, another study could be carried out with different participants and compare their results according to their gender. Furthermore, my main suggestion for further studies is to focus on each strategy separately. In that case, it will be quite clear for readers to realize the importance of each strategy.

Conclusion

This chapter summarized the findings of this study and further presented implications for further studies. It is evident that university level students employ VLS and the fourth grade students are seen to be the most employers of VLS.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A

Letter of Consent


<p>حكومة إقليم كردستان - العراق وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي رئاسة جامعة صلاح الدين - أربيل مخبرية اللغات/ قسم اللغة الانجليزية</p>		<p>حكومة تى هه ريمى كوردستان - عيراق ومزاره تى خویندنى بالا و تویتزینه وهى زانستى سه روکایه تى زانکوى سه لاهه ددين / هه وئیر کۆنیزى زمان / به شى زمانى نینگلیزى</p>
<p>Kurdistan Regional Government – Iraq/ Council of Ministers/ Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research – Salahaddin University – Erbil/College of Languages/ Department of English Language</p>		

To Whom it May Concern

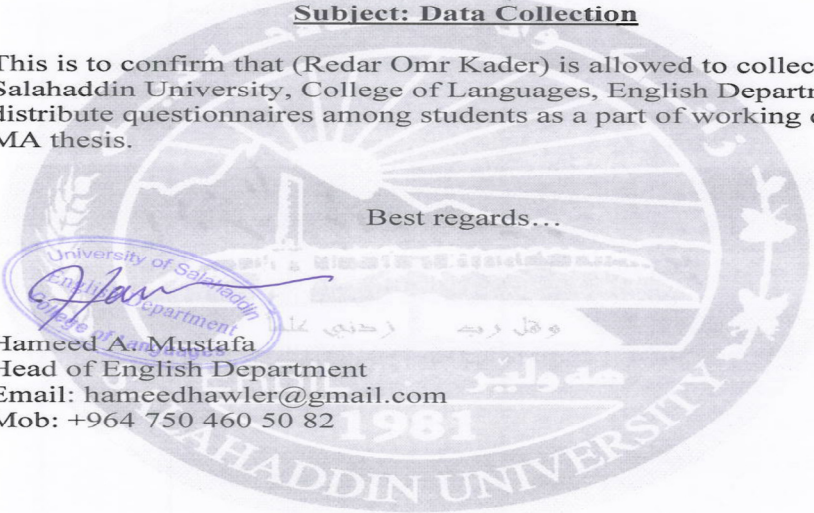
Subject: Data Collection

This is to confirm that (Redar Omr Kader) is allowed to collect data in Salahaddin University, College of Languages, English Department and distribute questionnaires among students as a part of working on his MA thesis.

Best regards...



Hameed A. Mustafa
Head of English Department
Email: hameedhawler@gmail.com
Mob: +964 750 460 50 82



APPENDIX B

Questionnaire

Dear student, you are kindly asked to participate in this research voluntarily. The information provided by you will only be used for research purposes.

Thank you very much

Vocabulary Learning Strategies

The researcher

Redar Omr Kader, MA students, English Language Teaching

Phone number: 0750 405 35 36

Part: A

Please provide the following information.

- Grade: First grade (freshmen) Second grade (sophomore)
- Third grade (junior) Fourth grade (senior)

Part: B

Please tick ✓ that applies:

How often do you use the following vocabulary learning strategies		Always	Regularly	Sometimes	Occasionally	Never
Statements						
1	I analyze parts of speech to learn new vocabulary.					
2	I analyze affixes and roots to find out the meaning of new words to understand the meaning of the word.					
3	I consider available pictures or gestures to understand the meaning of the word.					
4	I guess from textual context so as to comprehend the new vocabulary.					
5	I use a bilingual dictionary.					
6	I use a monolingual dictionary.					
7	I ask the teacher to translate a word into my language.					
8	I ask the teacher to paraphrase.					
9	I learn new words through the explanation of a word by my teachers.					

10	I discuss with my classmates to find out the meaning of a new word.					
11	I can realize the new meaning through group work activity.					
12	I practise meaning of words in a group of words.					
13	I interact with English native-speakers.					
14	I study the word with a pictorial representation of its meaning.					
15	I visualise the meaning of the word.					
16	I relate the word to a personal experience.					
17	I associate the word with its connotation.					
18	I connect the word to its synonym.					
19	I connect the word to its antonyms.					
20	I search for sentences to find out the meanings of the words.					
21	I choose a group of words in a story.					
22	I practice the spelling of a word.					
23	I study the sound of a word.					

24	I say the new word aloud when studying.					
25	I underline the initial letter of the word.					
26	I memorize vocabulary.					
27	I paraphrase the words' meaning.					
28	I learn the meaning of an idiom together.					
29	I mime the words when learning them.					
30	I say new English words several times.					
31	I write new English words several times.					
32	I take notes about the new words.					
33	I use the vocabulary section in my textbook.					
34	I put English labels on real objects.					
35	I keep a vocabulary notebook.					
36	I use English-language media (songs, movies, newscasts, etc)					
37	I test myself with word tests.					
38	I use spaced word practice.					
39	I skip new words.					
40	I repeat the learnt new words over time.					

APPENDIX C

Descriptive Statistics of Statements

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
S1	221	1	5	3.26	1.356
S2	221	1	5	3.39	1.266
S3	221	1	5	3.30	1.294
S4	221	1	5	3.42	1.293
S5	221	1	5	3.45	1.280
S6	221	1	5	3.20	1.242
S7	221	1	5	2.66	1.163
S8	221	1	5	2.95	1.147
S9	221	1	5	3.82	1.049
S10	221	1	5	3.25	1.182
S11	221	1	5	3.26	1.211
S12	221	1	5	3.29	1.241
S13	221	1	5	2.52	1.158
S14	221	1	5	2.88	1.144
S15	221	1	5	3.28	1.203
S16	221	1	5	3.08	1.240
S17	221	1	5	3.17	1.169
S18	221	1	5	3.30	1.298
S19	221	1	5	3.41	1.299
S20	221	1	5	3.29	1.283
S21	221	1	5	3.40	1.288
S22	221	1	5	3.23	1.192
S23	221	1	5	3.10	1.101
S24	221	1	5	3.21	1.161
S25	221	1	5	2.69	1.008
S26	221	1	5	3.21	1.193
S27	221	1	5	3.30	1.382
S28	221	1	5	3.16	1.201
S29	221	1	5	2.66	1.187
S30	221	1	5	3.14	1.186
S31	221	1	5	3.17	1.061
S32	221	1	5	3.70	1.173

S33	221	1	5	3.32	1.304
S34	221	1	5	3.11	1.111
S35	221	1	5	3.64	1.142
S36	221	1	5	3.30	1.366
S37	221	1	5	2.84	1.112
S38	221	1	5	2.65	0.935
S39	221	1	5	3.31	1.253
S40	221	1	5	3.72	1.137
Valid N (listwise)	221				

APPENDIX D

Frequencies of Memory Strategies

Items	Always	Regularly	Sometimes	Occasionally	Never	M	SD
S.14 I study the word with a pictorial representation of its meaning.	10.4%	17.6%	32.1%	0%29	10.9%	2.88	1.144
S.15 I visualize the meaning of the word.	19.9%	23.1%	29.4%	20.4%	7.2%	3.28	1.203
S.16 I relate the word to a personal experience.	16.7%	19.5%	30.3%	22.2%	11.3%	3.80	1.240
S.17 I associate the word with its connotation	16.3%	21.3%	33%	21.7%	7.7%	3.17	1.169
S.18 I connect the word to its synonym.	24.9%	19.9%	24.9%	21.3%	09%	3.30	1.298
S.19 I connect the word to its antonyms.	28.1%	20.8%	22.6%	20.8%	7.7%	3.41	1.299
S.20 I search for sentences to find out the meaning of the words.	24.9%	18.6%	25.3%	23.5%	7.7%	3.29	1.283
S.21 I choose a group of words in a story.	27.6%	19%	27.6%	17.2%	8.6%	3.40	1.288
S22. I practice the spelling of a word.	20.8%	16.3%	33.5%	23.5%	5.9%	3.23	1.192
S.23 I study the sound of a word.	12.2%	22.6%	35.3%	23.1%	6.8%	3.10	1.101
S.24 I say the new words aloud when studying.	16.7%	22.2%	33.5%	20.4%	7.2%	3.21	1.161

S. 25 I underline initial letter of the word.	6.3%	10%	40.7%	32.1%	10.9%	2.69	1.008
S.26 I memorize vocabulary.	21.7%	14.5%	31.2%	28.5%	4.1%	3.21	1.193
S.27 I paraphrase the words' meaning.	27.6%	18.1%	24.4%	16.3%	13.6%	3.30	1.382
S.28 I learn the words of an idiom together.	14.9%	26.2%	28.5%	20.4%	10%	3.16	1.201
S.29 I mime the words when learning them.	10%	10.9%	32.1%	0,29	18.1%	3.66	1.187

APPENDIX E

Mean Scores for Each Statement According to Grades

Statements	Grades	Number of Students	Mean Score
S1	first grade	51	2.27
	second grade	56	2.59
	third grade	55	3.89
	fourth grade	59	4.15
S2	first grade	51	2.61
	second grade	56	2.82
	third grade	55	3.82
	fourth grade	59	4.20
S3	first grade	51	2.53
	second grade	56	2.82
	third grade	55	3.58
	fourth grade	59	4.15
S4	first grade	51	2.8
	second grade	56	2.68
	third grade	55	4.04
	fourth grade	59	4.07

S5	first grade	51	3.82
	second grade	56	3.75
	third grade	55	3.42
	fourth grade	59	2.86
S6	first grade	51	2.82
	second grade	56	2.88
	third grade	55	3.44
	fourth grade	59	3.61
S7	first grade	51	3.51
	second grade	56	2.77
	third grade	55	2.44
	fourth grade	59	2.03
S8	first grade	51	3.53
	second grade	56	3.09
	third grade	55	2.89
	fourth grade	59	2.39
S9	first grade	51	3.78
	second grade	56	3.80
	third grade	55	3.84

	fourth grade	59	3.86
S10	first grade	51	3.12
	second grade	56	2.61
	third grade	55	3.69
	fourth grade	59	3.56
S11	first grade	51	2.96
	second grade	56	2.77
	third grade	55	3.24
	fourth grade	59	4.02
S12	first grade	51	3.06
	second grade	56	2.96
	third grade	55	3.02
	fourth grade	59	4.03
S13	first grade	51	2.33
	second grade	56	1.96
	third grade	55	2.60
	fourth grade	59	3.15
S14	first grade	51	2.94
	second grade	56	2.77

	third grade	55	2.25
	fourth grade	59	3.51
S15	first grade	51	3.02
	second grade	56	2.80
	third grade	55	3.18
	fourth grade	59	4.05
S16	first grade	51	2.75
	second grade	56	2.39
	third grade	55	2.98
	fourth grade	59	4.12
S17	first grade	51	2.90
	second grade	56	2.38
	third grade	55	3.25
	fourth grade	59	4.07
S18	first grade	51	2.80
	second grade	56	2.66
	third grade	55	3.82
	fourth grade	59	3.86
S19	first grade	51	2.78

	second grade	56	2.80
	third grade	55	3.80
	fourth grade	59	4.15
S20	first grade	51	3.06
	second grade	56	2.46
	third grade	55	3.60
	fourth grade	59	4.00
S21	first grade	51	3.04
	second grade	56	2.63
	third grade	55	3.78
	fourth grade	59	4.08
S22	first grade	51	3.04
	second grade	56	3.38
	third grade	55	2.84
	fourth grade	59	3.61
S23	first grade	51	3.04
	second grade	56	2.61
	third grade	55	3.13
	fourth grade	59	3.61

S24	first grade	51	2.92
	second grade	56	3.11
	third grade	55	3.07
	fourth grade	59	3.68
S25	first grade	51	2.8
	second grade	56	2.66
	third grade	55	2.56
	fourth grade	59	2.73
S26	first grade	51	3.71
	second grade	56	3.7
	third grade	55	2.96
	fourth grade	59	2.56
S27	first grade	51	2.53
	second grade	56	2.54
	third grade	55	3.85
	fourth grade	59	4.17
S28	first grade	51	2.61
	second grade	56	2.55
	third grade	55	3.56

	fourth grade	59	3.83
S29	first grade	51	3.14
	second grade	56	3.18
	third grade	55	2.31
	fourth grade	59	2.07
S30	first grade	51	2.94
	second grade	56	2.71
	third grade	55	2.64
	fourth grade	59	4.2
S31	first grade	51	2.86
	second grade	56	2.7
	third grade	55	3.87
	fourth grade	59	3.24
S32	first grade	51	3.31
	second grade	56	3.39
	third grade	55	3.85
	fourth grade	59	4.17
S33	first grade	51	2.39
	second grade	56	2.88

	third grade	55	4.02
	fourth grade	59	3.88
S34	first grade	51	2.84
	second grade	56	3.14
	third grade	55	3.6
	fourth grade	59	2.85
S35	first grade	51	2.94
	second grade	56	3.32
	third grade	55	4.16
	fourth grade	59	4.05
S36	first grade	51	2.78
	second grade	56	2.09
	third grade	55	4.05
	fourth grade	59	4.19
S37	first grade	51	3.06
	second grade	56	2.95
	third grade	55	2.65
	fourth grade	59	2.71
S38	first grade	51	2.69

	second grade	56	2.95
	third grade	55	2.45
	fourth grade	59	2.53
S39	first grade	51	2.8
	second grade	56	2.59
	third grade	55	3.65
	fourth grade	59	4.12
S40	first grade	51	3.06
	second grade	56	3.73
	third grade	55	3.8
	fourth grade	59	4.2