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**Teaching and Learning Vocabulary
through Reading at Saudi Universities**

Sultan Altalhab

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Abstract

Vocabulary is a vital part of learning a new language. The more learners learn new vocabulary, the more likely they are to be able to use the new language effectively. In an EFL context, where opportunities for practising English in daily life may be more limited, one of the main sources of new vocabulary is reading of English texts. Several studies have reported the challenges that Saudi students encounter in learning English. However, all of these studies looked at schools as the context for investigation and focused on teaching and learning English in general. The present research investigates the teaching and learning of vocabulary through reading at Saudi universities. It examines three main issues. First, it looks at the vocabulary teaching techniques employed by teachers teaching English in Saudi universities. Second, it examines the vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) identified by students as most useful and the ones they felt most competent in using when reading. Third, it explores both teachers' and students' attitudes towards learning vocabulary through reading. While investigating these issues, the thesis identifies specific issues in teaching and learning vocabulary through reading at Saudi universities, in order to conclude with suggestions and recommendations for EFL teaching practices and language policy.

While most vocabulary research is quantitative, this study used a mixed methods approach of quantitative and qualitative data collected from a range of sources. One hundred and fifty students majoring in English from four different universities completed a semi-structured questionnaire and twenty-two of them were interviewed. In addition, nine teachers of vocabulary and reading subjects were interviewed and their classes observed. A systematic analysis for the prescribed textbooks was also conducted in order to explore the relationship between the vocabulary introduced by the textbooks and the techniques and strategies employed in the classroom by teachers and students.

The findings revealed that the teachers were "textbook-centralised" with a high dependence on the prescribed textbooks although they also showed autonomy in their use of vocabulary teaching techniques and ways in which they made use of the textbooks. They employed diverse vocabulary teaching techniques, but the predominant techniques were: using synonyms, defining new words in English and using Arabic. The students used a range of VLSs and employed the strategies that they thought were "fast" and "easy" to use. They tended to avoid complex strategies. The VLSs that the participants thought they commonly

used were also the ones believed to be most useful. Students identified specific benefits of using certain VLSs and they showed autonomy in employing the strategies that they most valued. These benefits were mainly in relation to providing them with accurate and diverse information on new words and helping their retention. The participants felt skilful in using most of the VLSs used in their classes and they made a link between the strategies that they used most often and their level of competence in employing these strategies. All the teachers involved in the study perceived reading as a useful strategy in learning vocabulary and most of the students shared this view. Both teachers and students were negotiating their autonomy on an ongoing basis, which means that the social context of learning has a powerful influence on what students learn. The thesis concludes that vocabulary learning is a social practice influenced by a range of factors, such as teaching techniques, VLSs, the textbook, participants' beliefs and attitudes, learners' interests, cultural values and learners' level of competence in English.

Abbreviations

EFL English as a Foreign Language

ESL English as a Second Language

CLT Communicative Language Teaching

L1 First Language

L2 Second Language

VLSs Vocabulary Learning Strategies

ZPD Zone of Proximal Development

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Overview

This chapter provides the background to the current research. It begins by giving an overview of teaching and learning English as a foreign language at Saudi universities to outline the context of the study. The second section discusses the importance of teaching and learning vocabulary, followed by a section which states the research problem and the purpose of the study. Finally, the structure of the thesis is outlined.

1.2. Language learning context in Saudi Arabia

As this thesis is interested in the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language in Saudi universities, an overview of language learning in Saudi Arabia must be given first. Arabic is the official language in Saudi Arabia and considered an important element in the culture of the country (Meccawy, 2010:21). As official language, it is taught in schools and used by most media. While Arabic is the main language commonly used as L1 in Saudi Arabia, learning a second language is well considered in Saudi Arabia, with an emphasis on English as the only foreign language introduced in schools and universities. Al-Seghayer (2005:157) states that ‘overall, English plays an important role in Saudi Arabia on a large scale, as well on a personal level. The Saudi government views English as a vital facet of the process leading to the development of the country’.

There are specific elements about English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Saudi Arabia and the environment in which this is taught and learned. English is mainly introduced in schools, universities and via media, especially television. A review of the general objectives set by the Saudi Ministry of Education to teach English helps to show these elements and reveals the cultural values that the ministry considers when learning English. The objectives include general ones, which learners should achieve when learning any L2 in any context; for example, ‘enable student to acquire basic language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing)’. However, there are certain objectives that imply the importance of religious and cultural values when learning English in the Saudi context, which makes the Saudi EFL context different from other countries. These objectives include:

- To develop the linguistic competence that enables the student - in the future - to present and explain Islamic concepts and issues, and participate in spreading Islam.
- To enable the student linguistically to present the culture and civilisation of his nation.
- To enable the student linguistically to benefit from English-speaking nations that would enhance the concepts of international cooperation that would develop understanding and respect of the cultural differences between nations (Mahib ur Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013:114).

Teaching English in primary schools was introduced in 2004 and this shows the government’s awareness of the importance of English as a global language and the importance of learning English from an early age (more discussion on the role of age in language learning in section 2.10.1). This rather recent introduction of English in primary schools suggests that L2 learning of English was not a priority of the government in the past while English was introduced in primary schools a while ago in other countries. Another issue that makes the Saudi context different from other contexts is the gender segregation in education, with schools and colleges for boys only and girls only. This shows the role that cultural values play in the forming of language policy. It also reveals that the main context of learning English in Saudi Arabia is classroom-based, as English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) in Saudi Arabia rather than a second language (ESL) as it is in other countries (e.g. India, Nigeria etc.). As English is taught as a foreign language, the opportunities for Saudi EFL learners to practise English in their daily life seem to be limited to mainly classroom-based activities, when compared to learners in other countries. Other languages, such as French, are rarely taught and mainly available through private language learning centres. Both public and private schools employ compulsory textbooks in teaching

language. This shows the position of L2 learning in Saudi Arabia, where the classroom plays the main role as a context of learning and textbooks are a crucial source in L2 learning.

1.3. English language teaching and learning at Saudi universities

The first English department in Saudi Arabia was established in 1957 at King Saud University. Currently, using English as a medium of instruction at Saudi universities depends on the field of study. While medical students, for example, are taught in English, engineering students are taught in Arabic, although their textbooks are written in English (Al-Seghayer, 2011:80). In relation to offering English at a degree level, many universities in Saudi Arabia provide a Bachelor degree in English in different fields, for instance, English literature, translation and English teaching. The degree programme lasts for four years in most universities, and these commonly require applicants joining their English department to have achieved a grade of at least ninety out of one hundred in English at secondary school, which is considered a “distinction” on the assessment scale used. The number of new universities providing such programmes, whether public or private, has increased rapidly in the last decade. Most Saudi universities have a policy requiring students who do not major in English to take an English subject for two or four hours a week in one semester and this is an essential part of most academic programmes. This clearly shows that Saudi universities perceive the learning of English as crucial to their students (Al-Seghayer, 2011:80). Some of these universities also provide Masters and Doctoral degrees in the field of English. All universities are supervised by the Ministry of Higher Education. Most English departments follow the same syllabus for the students in the first year, which focuses solely on the teaching of language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) separately, as well as grammar, with three or four hours a week and two classes for each of the skills. Vocabulary is also taught as a separate subject in some of the colleges. After the first year, students study different subjects, depending on their majors. In the field of English Studies for example, the students of English literature study novels and plays, while students of translation take courses on types of translation, for example, medical and political translation. Students who will be teachers of English take courses on applied linguistics and teaching methods. In terms of staffing, the teachers who deliver these courses can be native speakers of English (e.g. American, British and Australian) or Arab teachers.

Most of the English departments in Saudi Arabia employ the same assessment scale to measure students' achievement. The full mark is considered as one hundred, which is divided into ten marks for participation and attendance, sixty marks for the final exam and thirty marks for the midterm exam each semester, although some teachers divide this into two exams. Students need to achieve sixty marks out of one hundred in order to pass the course. Exams are often based on what has been taught in class. All departments aim to ensure that students are proficient in English, although there is no exit language test at the end of the programme to assess if this aim has been achieved. Another goal is related to the skilling of the students for their potential careers; for instance, Colleges of Translation aim to provide students with the skills needed to be qualified translators, whereas Teachers' Colleges aim to provide schools with good teachers of English.

1.4. EFL teacher education in Saudi Arabia

Teacher education is a key factor which affects the type of learning students experience. Richards (1990), who has coined the term 'second language teacher education', suggests that second language teacher education provides "opportunities for the novice to acquire the skills and competencies of effective teachers and to discover the working rules that effective teachers use" (Richards, 1990:15). This highlights the main goal for teacher education and what type of education it is expected to provide teachers with. Pre-service and in-service programmes are crucial to reconceptualise teacher education within the context of the continuum of teacher careers (Beattie, 1995). Studies on language teacher education showed that pre-service and in-service training assists teachers in transforming their knowledge of language teaching and learning to practice (Freeman, 1996).

Numerous studies have explored this issue in the field of EFL/ESL; however, research on this is still limited in the Saudi context. Having teachers prepare programmes appears to be helpful for their professional development, as this assists in maximising their awareness of the key issues in teaching and learning English. The EFL teachers' preparation programme, administered by the Ministry of Education, started four decades ago in Saudi Arabia. This programme requires the students who finish secondary school to study English for one year and then sit a comprehensive exam. Students who pass this exam are then offered the opportunity to study at British universities, in order to obtain a teaching certificate which

enables them to become EFL teachers in schools (Ibrahim, 1985). Since late 1980s to date, EFL teachers preparation programmes are offered in different Saudi universities, and require studying for four years in order to obtain a Bachelor of Arts or Education degree in English. Different courses are offered such as, Linguistics, English literature and teaching methodology.

The English teaching methods courses at these universities do not exceed 10% of the total courses (Al-Seghayer, 2011:20). This may indicate a limitation in the syllabus, as the teaching methodology is a key aspect to the students' future profession. Saudi universities have set specific requirements for teaching English, which makes it a pre-requisite to have a degree in English language, preferably in the area of teaching EFL, and also to have previous teaching experience. The latter requirement is not required for the Saudi applicants and, therefore, the university students can be taught by teachers who do not have prior experience in teaching.

Several researchers (Zaid, 1993; Safer, 2002; Al-Hazmi, 2003; Khan, 2011) suggest that the training programmes are insufficient to prepare Saudi EFL teachers effectively in terms of disciplinary knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and technological pedagogical knowledge. Each of these includes different areas of competence (Al-Seghayer, 2011:22). Disciplinary knowledge involves areas such as second language acquisition, sociolinguistics, phonology, syntax and applied linguistics. Pedagogical content knowledge includes curriculum planning, assessment, classroom management and teaching the four skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening). Technological pedagogical knowledge is the ability to make use of the available technological facilities in language teaching. Al-Harbi (2006) explored the training needs of in-service Saudi EFL teachers by involving 551 participants, male and female EFL teachers, and supervisors who completed a questionnaire. The results revealed that there is a need of additional training in different areas including: "teaching methods", "teaching the four language skills", "classroom management", "teaching grammar" and "utilising teaching aids and technology". This indicates the need for improving the in-service training and development programmes for EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia.

The importance of in-service training for EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia has also been documented by several researchers (e.g. Al-Tobeigi, 1997; Al-Nafisah, 2001). Al-Motairi (2005) investigated teaching English at Saudi schools and showed that one of the factors that affected teachers' performance is their lack of suitable in-service training. He recommended

that teachers should be provided with more in-service training courses. This finding was supported by Al-Maini (2006), who examined teaching and learning English at a Saudi school, and found that teachers did not receive adequate training courses, which had a negative impact on their competence. The teachers in his study reported the need for in-service training programmes to develop their teaching skills. More recent research, conducted by Al-Johani (2009), revealed that EFL teachers at Saudi schools have limited knowledge on theories and insufficient skills on EFL teaching methods. It is worth noting from reviewing some of the studies on EFL teacher education in the Saudi context that they concentrate mainly on EFL teachers at schools, rather than teachers in universities. Even with the few studies which have been carried out in schools, the role of EFL teacher education was only one of the issues examined. Therefore, further research where the focus is concentrated on EFL teacher education is needed.

Recently, Al-Seghayer (2011) proposed an EFL preparation programme to be implemented in Saudi Arabia. His proposed programme consists of several components such as: increasing language improvement courses, attending professional meetings or conferences and reading professional publications. Although the suggested programme looks to be promoting EFL teachers' skills, it needs to be supported further by evidence from empirical research in order to document its effectiveness. In this regard, Wright (2010) suggested three main points which should be considered before setting out a teacher preparation programme. Firstly, any programme needs to consider its purposes and the goals by, for instance, determining the type of teacher who will complete this programme. Secondly, deciding the formal learning experiences in the programme including, for example, the content and its relevance to the participants. Thirdly, consider the process of evaluation, which involves knowing whether the student teachers have met the programme aims and if they have met the required standard to begin their teaching profession.

To sum up, this section has outlined the educational background of the EFL teachers at Saudi schools and universities. Existing studies indicate the need to develop pre-service and in-service programmes and the importance of adding more courses on teaching methodology for student teachers. The section has concluded with some suggestions by researchers on how to improve such programmes in Saudi Arabia.

1.5. The importance of teaching and learning vocabulary

Vocabulary is an essential component of learning a new language. The significance of vocabulary is backed up by the evidence from many empirical studies carried out in vocabulary research (Schmitt, 2010:4). The nature of vocabulary learning is ‘incremental’ (Schmitt, 2010:19), as ‘words of a language are just like bricks of a high building’ (Zhan-Xiang, 2004:1). This suggests that vocabulary learning is a continuous process, where even advanced learners still learn new words.

Vocabulary impacts significantly on one’s language skills, both the receptive (listening and reading) and the productive (writing and speaking), which makes it crucial for communication. A strong relationship was found between vocabulary and language skills when comparing the scores of learners in a vocabulary test with their scores in other language skills tests (Alderson, 2005). As a result, Alderson (2005:88) concluded that ‘language ability is to quite a large extent a function of vocabulary size’. This is in agreement with Thornbury’s (2002:114) suggestion that one needs to focus on learning words rather than grammar in order to be able to communicate.

Vocabulary learning plays an important role in developing the communication competence. Barani *et al.* (2010) asserted that without vocabulary, communication becomes difficult. Without having a sufficiently developed vocabulary, learners may be unable to express their ideas fully, which may impede their ability to deliver their message. For example, searching for a particular word while speaking could interrupt the fluency of the conversation (Simon & Taverniers, 2011:912). Also, a limited vocabulary may be a barrier for learners to develop their ideas or arguments appropriately in writing (Zhan-Xiang, 2004:1). Similarly, learners are more likely not to understand what they listen to or read when most of the encountered words are unknown. Evidence from several studies (Golkar & Yamini, 2007, Zhang & Annual, 2008, Al-Homoud & Schmitt, 2009, Brown, 2010) shows a mutual relationship between vocabulary and reading. In other words, the more familiar the words in a text, the more likely it is for students to be able to comprehend it. Some authors claim that the learner should know 95% (Laufer, 1989) to 98% (Hu & Nation, 2000; Schmitt *et al.*, 2011) of the words in a text in order to understand it (Schmitt *et al.*, 2011). Hence, using reading texts in the class appears as a useful strategy to provide students with new language input (Harmer, 2007:229).

As vocabulary learning is important in learning a new language, its teaching becomes a key concern for teachers. Nation (2001:2) suggested 'four stands' which should be included in any balanced course. The first is the 'meaning focus input', which consists of learning vocabulary through listening and reading activities. 'Language-focused learning' is the second strand, which involves deliberate teaching and learning vocabulary. The next strand is 'meaning-focused output', which aims to improve learners' language through speaking and writing activities which can consolidate the words that have been encountered before. The last strand is 'fluency development', which includes activities which help learners be more fluent in using the vocabulary that they already know.

A recent study by Simon and Taverniers (2011) compared learners' beliefs on the learning and teaching of English grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. Over one hundred first year students majoring in English at a Belgian university completed a questionnaire. The results revealed that the students perceived vocabulary to be more important in communication than pronunciation and grammar. In addition, the participants thought that errors in vocabulary could significantly lead to a 'communication breakdown', more than errors in pronunciation and grammar. A further discussion about the aspects of knowing a word, as suggested by Nation (2001), can be found in section 2.6. A similar result was revealed in another study by Zheng (2012), as teachers and students in his study shared the belief that vocabulary was an imperative part of learning English.

This section has shown the importance of vocabulary in teaching and learning a new language. Several researchers agree on the key role of vocabulary and the importance of teaching it in class through appropriate methods. The relationship between vocabulary and language skills was discussed, as this influences learners' communicative competence. The next section will provide an overview on the statement of the problem and purpose of the study.

1.6. Statement of the problem and purpose of the study

Since the study in this thesis focuses on Saudi university first year students, a brief overview on the issues regarding the learning English in Saudi schools will be given here. Several researchers (Al-Nafisah, 2001; Al-Motairi, 2005) referred to one of the key problems in teaching English in Saudi Arabia. Students who complete secondary school seem to have a poor level of English, despite having spent on average six years studying it. Al-Nujaidi (2003) found that Saudi students had a limited vocabulary in English (500 - 700 words) after finishing secondary school. Another study, conducted by the Cambridge Examination Centre in 2009, showed that Saudi students ranked 39th of the 40 nations took part in English academic and general training tests (Al-Seghayer, 2011:45). Also, Educational Testing Services reported that Saudi university students obtained the lowest scores in TOEFL among the students from Asian and other Middle Eastern countries (Al-Seghayer, 2011:82).

Saudi students reported challenges they encountered when learning English, evidenced by several studies (Al-Majed, 2000; Al-Nafisah, 2001; Al-Motairi, 2005). One factor identified was the methods of teaching used by teachers in schools, as teachers appeared highly dependent on textbooks and on using particular methods (mainly the grammar-translation method and the audio-lingual method). Moreover, the topics and activities in the textbooks used in teaching English in schools did not seem to meet the students' interests. Al-Akloby (2001) focused on the reasons behind students' failure to learn English vocabulary at Saudi schools and concluded that the students used the VLSs ineffectively, the new words were mainly presented to them in wordlists, the textbook concentrated on mainly two aspects of vocabulary knowledge (pronunciation and meaning) and vocabulary recycling and testing were found to be ineffective.

It also appears that English teachers who graduate from English departments have an unsatisfactory proficiency in English (Al-Seghayer, 2011:80). An unpublished study (2004) carried out by the Ministry of Education revealed that the average TOEFL score of Saudi teachers of English at intermediate and secondary schools was 430 (Al-Seghayer, 2011:95). Having teachers with a low level of English negatively affects students' English learning and, as a result, will most likely produce unsatisfactory outcomes. When the teachers' level of English is limited, their vocabulary knowledge is also limited, which makes their vocabulary learning and the teaching they received at university questionable. It can be concluded that the problems in teaching and learning English exist in both schools and universities. While

the issues surrounding teaching and learning English in Saudi schools have been investigated by others before, the present study aims to find out how university students are taught vocabulary in reading and vocabulary classes and their use of VLSs.

Teaching and learning vocabulary through reading was chosen as the focus of this study for various reasons. Firstly, vocabulary is an important component in learning a new language and enriching vocabulary knowledge helps develop language skills. Secondly, learning vocabulary through reading seems to be a helpful strategy, as it will be discussed in the next chapter, especially for EFL learners like the participants in this study where practising English is likely to be limited, and also for students majoring in English as they are exposed to a large number of English texts in their studies. Reading appears to be an important source to developing their vocabulary.

Therefore, this study aims to explore a range of issues in teaching and learning vocabulary through reading at Saudi universities. First, it will examine the teaching techniques used by teachers in explaining new words and the students' perspectives on the techniques used. Second, it will look at the VLSs deployed by the students, in relation to the VLSs that the students believe they use most frequently, the ones perceived by the students as most helpful and those which they feel themselves to be most skilful in. Furthermore, the study will aim to explore the teachers' and students' attitudes towards learning vocabulary through reading. By investigating these issues, the study also aims to inform teachers and students in English departments at Saudi universities in relation to the teaching and learning of vocabulary via reading.

1.7. Rationale for examining together learners' and teachers' practices and the evidence from textbooks they used in the classroom

This section discusses the rationale for combining the data collected from learners and teachers with the analysis of the textbooks they used in the classroom. This approach of scrutiny by collecting data from different sources was seen as useful to 'cross-validate findings from a number of sources' (Jupp, 2006:180). When combining data from different sources, data given by one is confirmed by another and preferably a third (Newby, 2010:668) and this assists the researcher in comparing results in order to reinforce findings and combine various perspectives (Gorard & Taylor, 2004). This combined perspective, which includes

gathering data from teachers, learners and classroom textbooks had not been used in the field of vocabulary research before, as detailed later in Chapter 2 (section 2.11). Learners are the main focus in most vocabulary studies. However, other parties involved in learning, such as teachers, and the materials they use to mediate learning are also important, as this section argues. Several studies (e.g. Al-Fuhaid, 2004; Al-Qahtani, 2005) explored VLSs; however, they concentrated on learners only by using questionnaires followed by interviews while other studies (e.g. Alamry, 2008; Al-sowat, 2012) focused on evaluating the prescribed textbooks depending on teachers' responses to mainly questionnaires rather than analysing the textbooks. None of these studies had used classroom observations to examine the practices taking place in the classroom. These studies did not therefore examine crucial issues in the classroom, such as teacher and learner autonomy, teachers' and learners' views on what is being learned in the classroom and the constraints that teachers and learners encounter. As a result, existing studies do not provide an evidence-based interpretation for practices adopted by teachers and students in the classroom.

In reporting the data from these three sources, it was also thought that the analysis would provide a better understanding of how teaching and learning vocabulary work together in the social context of the classroom. Considering data from these sources (teachers, learners and the prescribed textbooks) is likely to reveal aspects of teachers' and learners' autonomy, which is often conditioned by the context of the textbooks they use. As textbooks in Saudi Arabia are prescribed, the analysis of these, along with the data collected from teachers and students, can show the extent to which teachers and students are autonomous in teaching and learning vocabulary as they deal with the constraints imposed by the textbooks. Other researchers (e.g. Nunan, 1993; Reinders, 2010) have referred to the interplay between teachers and learners in promoting autonomy (for a more extensive discussion on this issue, see section 2.8). Based on this, neither teachers nor learners can be neglected when exploring vocabulary teaching and learning. The textbook plays a key role in language learning, especially when learning is occurring mainly in the classroom context. A number of researchers (e.g. Hutchinson & Torres, 1994; Tomlinson, 2008) argue that textbooks influence the teaching methods used in the classroom. Textbooks impact not only on teachers, but they also have a role in learners' learning (Richards, 2001; Litz, 2005). This means that teachers, learners and textbooks need to be examined together when researching the vocabulary learning process.

By collecting data from teachers and students, in addition to analysing the content of the prescribed textbooks, this study aims to examine the extent to which the linguistic and pedagogical assumptions made in textbooks are reflected in teachers' and students' behaviours in the classroom. Teachers and students might hold different beliefs and views in relation to certain teaching techniques and VLSs promoted in textbooks. As the focus of the present study is on teaching vocabulary and VLSs, combining data from teachers, students and textbooks will allow the researcher to identify any challenges that teachers and students encounter in the classroom, for a better understanding of the processes of vocabulary learning in Saudi Arabia. Also, the combined perspective will be helpful in the interpretation of certain practices used by teachers and students in the classroom; and for an explanation of their actions, which might not always follow prescribed practice or expected behaviours.

1.8. Structure of the study

This thesis is structured in eight chapters. The first chapter, Chapter One, provides an overview of the background to the study and the state of the problem. It also details the focus of the study. Chapter Two offers a review of existing research, by discussing the existing studies in the vocabulary teaching and learning field, especially those that are related to learning vocabulary through reading. Various issues are discussed in this chapter in more detail, including the teaching vocabulary and reading in English teaching methods, the relationship between vocabulary and reading, intensive and extensive reading, aspects of knowing a word, VLSs and factors that might affect vocabulary learning. Chapter Three discusses the methodology used in this study. It presents the research approach followed, as well as the research tools used in the data collection. The pilot study, the sample and the method of analysis are also described. The next three chapters concentrate on presenting the results which emerged through the data analysis. Chapter Four examines the results of teaching techniques that were employed by teachers in introducing new vocabulary. Also, the students' perspectives on using these techniques are discussed in detail here. Chapter Five deals with the VLSs by showing different aspects regarding using these strategies. It discusses the VLSs that the participants identified as the most used by them, those which were seen by them as most useful and those which they felt themselves to be most competent in. Chapter Six reports on teachers' and students' attitudes towards learning vocabulary through reading by investigating their perspectives on the texts used in the textbook and the

students' preferences when reading English texts. The next chapter, Chapter Seven, offers a discussion of the main findings. Chapter Eight concludes the study by summarises the main findings, while also outlining its limitations and provides suggestions for future research and some recommendations for teachers and students involved in reading and vocabulary classes at Saudi universities.

1.9. Summary

The aim of this first chapter was to provide a general introduction to the study. The chapter began by providing an outline of the context of teaching and learning English at Saudi universities, as an overview for the current study. This was followed by discussing the EFL teacher education in Saudi Arabia. The importance of teaching and learning vocabulary was also discussed by showing its vital role in learning a language. Then, the statement of the problem and purpose of the study were identified. Finally, the structure of the thesis has been described. The next chapter discusses the evidence from existing research which is related to the focus of the proposed study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a theoretical and conceptual background to the study in relation to different areas of teaching and learning vocabulary in an EFL context. It includes seven sections, each discussing a specific issue. The chapter starts with discussing the theoretical framework used in the study by discussing Krashen's Input Hypothesis, Anderson's skills theory, and the sociocultural theory. The chapter then examines the issues that are most relevant to the focus of the current research by focusing on the vocabulary teaching issues, followed by discussing vocabulary learning issues. The next section, which follows the theoretical framework, focuses on vocabulary teaching approaches, methods and techniques, followed by two sections which examine the relationship between vocabulary and reading and types of reading. Then, aspects of knowing a word and VLSs are explored. The following sections discuss learner and teacher autonomy, the role of textbooks in the EFL classroom and factors that might affect vocabulary learning. The chapter concludes by exploring the gaps in the literature and rationale for the current research, as well as identifying the research questions. The studies that are most relevant to the focus of the present research are reviewed in more detail in this chapter. As the context of this research is Saudi universities, studies that were conducted in a Saudi context are discussed whenever available.

2.2. Theoretical background and framework

This section outlines the theoretical underpinnings and framework of the study. The theories in the field of second language acquisition most relevant to the study are discussed. The section starts by explaining Krashen's Input Hypothesis and Anderson's skill acquisition theory, followed by a discussion of the principles of sociocultural theory. It looks at how these two theories conceptualise second language acquisition and the factors that can affect it.

2.2.1. Krashen's Input Hypothesis

Krashen's Input Hypothesis has had a very influential role in the development of contemporary second language theories. Krashen views this hypothesis as "central" in his theory (Mitchell *et al*, 2012:44). It attempts to explain how language acquisition takes place (Krashen, 2003:4). Krashen (1985) claims that the language is developing through receiving "comprehensible input", which he defined as L2 input which is just beyond the learner's current L2 competence. In other words, when the learner's level of competence is i , the comprehensible input is $i+1$. If the input is too simple or too hard for the learner, the acquisition does not happen. This means that considering the learner's level of competence in L2 is crucial before any activity.

In more recent years, Krashen has used the term "Comprehension Hypothesis" instead of the "Input Hypothesis" (Krashen, 2003:4). This new term emphasises the importance of what learners receive as input and highlights the necessity for this to be understandable. In terms of vocabulary acquisition, Krashen (1989) claims that vocabulary in L2 is subconsciously acquired through comprehensible input, especially through reading, when the focus is on messages and not on individual words. Recently, Krashen has also reviewed a number of studies on reading aloud and reading stories and concluded that reading is a "powerful source of vocabulary" and stories could be richer in terms of vocabulary than textbooks (Krashen, 2013:35).

According to Krashen (1985), another way of obtaining comprehensible input is through interaction with others. Since input, is argued, plays a key role in L2 acquisition, interacting with native speakers is an invaluable opportunity for learners' vocabulary development (Schmitt, 1997:211). Input from interaction with others was shown to develop vocabulary acquisition (Ellis *et al.*, 1999). However, Krashen (2003) argues that the comprehensible input becomes ineffective in language acquisition when learners are influenced by factors such as anxiety and low self-esteem. This shows that comprehensible input is not enough when other conditions for learning are not met. Also, the input needs also to be interesting, thus giving consideration to the motivation of the learner. Krashen (2004) discussed several implications of his hypothesis for learners' language development. For example, he suggested reducing the use of vocabulary lists and explaining vocabulary in context through reading, employing different vocabulary by using extensive reading or short paragraphs, reading aloud for learners in the class and using diverse types of texts.

The Input Hypothesis refers to three theoretical points (Wu, 2010:137). Firstly, it is based on natural order hypothesis, since learners develop their language in a natural order. Krashen (1985) claims that learners acquire the language rules in the same way and a predictable order. This means that the grammar rules can be acquired by learners through the input they receive through natural interactions, rather than the teachers having to teach these explicitly. Secondly, the only way to acquire a language is by receiving understandable input. Thirdly, this input should be “a little bit beyond” the current learner’s level of competence. Learners will not achieve any improvement if they deal with, for example, too difficult texts which include many unknown words and similarly, when they read a text that does not include new information. In both cases, language development will not happen. Also, these instances may also result in learners becoming demotivated (Harmer, 2007:272).

When referring to a learner’s level of competence, Krashen’s hypothesis refers to the scaffolding concept, since he suggested that the comprehensible input should be in the current learner’s next level of competence ($i+1$) in order to make progress possible. This will require a certain level of support from a tutor or other third party (Ariza & Hancock, 2003). A more elaborate discussion on the scaffolding concept is provided in section 2.2.3.

Krashen (1994:302) argues that correcting learners while they receive the “comprehensible input” is unhelpful. He suggested that error correction should be limited to the rules that can be learned, because extensive correction discourages learners from using more complex constructions and it also impedes communication (Ellis, 1994:653). He suggested that learners can correct themselves only in three conditions: when they “know the rule”, when they are “thinking about correctness” and when they “have the time” to do the correction, for example, when revising a piece of their writing (Krashen, 2003:3). Nevertheless, he did not provide a theoretical explanation as to how learners could receive the feedback or how they know they have made an error. If their errors have not been highlighted, then learners will, more than likely, keep on making the same errors such as, for example, repeating pronunciation errors while reading aloud. Despite this, however, Krashen claims that pronunciation is an acquired skill which should not be explicitly taught (Jones, 1997:104). Research in the field of teaching pronunciation is still limited (Baker & Murphy, 2011) and Krashen’s claims regarding teaching pronunciation need to be further examined.

Although Krashen (1989) provided evidence to support his hypothesis by reviewing studies on vocabulary and spelling, other studies in vocabulary research have challenged his hypothesis (e.g. Qian's, 1996; Pigada and Schmitt, 2006). One of the criticisms is that Krashen's hypothesis was not tested by empirical research (Lightbown & Spada, 2006:38). Another criticism refers to the vagueness in deciding the learner's level of competence ($i+1$) and the lack of a clear definition of "comprehensible input" (Mitchell *et al.*, 2012:44).

To sum up, the input hypothesis claims that the input that learners receive should be comprehensible for them, in order to achieve language development. Deciding the learners' competence level is key, in order to determine the level of input that they can receive. This should be slightly beyond their current level of competence.

2.2.2. Anderson's skill acquisition theory

This section discusses Anderson's skill acquisition theory and its role in explaining the process of vocabulary learning. Although the vocabulary researchers did not refer explicitly to Anderson's skill theory while explaining the vocabulary learning development process, it seems that this theory is the underlying theory for their explanations as will be discussed in this section.

Anderson (1982) proposed a framework for skill acquisition consists of two stages in the development of a cognitive skill: first, 'a declarative stage in which facts about the skill domain are interpreted'. Second, 'a procedural stage in which the domain knowledge is directly embodied in procedures for performing the skill'. In this framework, Anderson (1983, 1985) differentiates between 'what we know about', which is represented in the declarative knowledge and 'the thing we know how to do' in the procedural knowledge (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990:20). Anderson's skill acquisition theory can be explained in the context of language acquisition as 'a gradual transition from effortful use to more automatic use of the target language, with the ultimate goal of achieving faster and more accurate processing' (Lyster & Sato, 2013:71). Declarative knowledge can be transferred into procedural knowledge through practice (DeKeyser, 2007). According to this theory, the ability of learners' cognition relies on the amount of knowledge 'encoded' and the employment of this encoded knowledge (Anderson, 1996:355). This asserts the role of

practice in learning and suggests that the knowledge received should be effectively practised in order to be able to use it.

Likewise, in vocabulary research, Henriksen (1999) points to the incremental nature of vocabulary development and suggests that after encountering a word, the knowledge that will be gained will range from zero to partial, then precise. This means that learners need to encounter the new words several times, as studies in this area suggest (see also section 2.10.4). Anderson's theory seems to underpin this perspective on the vocabulary learning process as vocabulary learning involves different stages of learning new words, and these words need to be practised in order to be used correctly. Others have found that the receptive knowledge about the new vocabulary is developed before the productive knowledge (Fan, 2000; Laufer, 2005), which might be due to the fact that learners cannot use the new words before encountering them repeatedly, either orally or in a written text. Other researchers (e.g. Schmitt & Carter, 2000) agree with Henriksen's (1999) perspective on the process of vocabulary learning and assert that vocabulary learning is an accumulative process in which encountering new vocabulary repeatedly is crucial for consolidating a new word. These perspectives imply the concepts that Anderson suggests in his theory, which emphasised the role of practise in skill acquisition.

Anderson *et al.* (1997) carried out an experiment in order to examine the proposed framework. They carried out three experiments by asking the participants to memorise eight examples; each example explaining a different rule and then extending these rules to new examples. The participants practised this activity for experiment 1 for over four days and in experiments 2 and 3 for five days. The results revealed that the participants were more adept at using these rules when they had been practised. Also, repeating examples was found to be helpful for learning. They concluded that skill acquisition includes 'a complex set of strategies'. By conducting this experimental study, Anderson provided evidence for the framework he suggested; however, the experiments were carried out in a short period of time, which may not have provided adequate time to check the effectiveness of the treatments used in the experiments. Important issues, which are relevant to vocabulary learning, can be found throughout the findings of this study. The first one is "retention" and the second is "practice" that will both be discussed throughout this section.

Anderson's theory indicates the role of practise in retaining skill, which can also be applied in vocabulary learning. The declarative knowledge is the language items that have already been learned and stored, including word definitions or grammar rules, while the procedural knowledge is how to employ 'cognitive operations'; for instance, the ability to use the language with little or no effort by using items stored in long-term memory (Lyster & Sato, 2013:72). Several studies have emphasised the importance of memory in language learning. Lefrancois (2006) suggests that short-term memory and long-term memory are both crucial for language acquisition, as information first goes into the short-term memory and then some may be stored in the long-term memory. New vocabulary needs to be stored in the long-term memory in order to be acquired (Thornbury, 2002:24). The long-term memory has extensive capacity, however, the information may not always be stored, and in vocabulary learning, this loss is called 'attrition' (Kersten, 2010:58). When learners are able to recall new words successfully, it is likely that these words will be retained (Baddeley, 1997:112). Since vocabulary learning is an accumulative process, encountering new vocabulary repeatedly is crucial for consolidating a new word (Schmitt & Carter, 2000:4). In addition, 'the more one engages with a word (deeper processing), the more likely the word will be remembered for later use' (Schmitt, 2000:120). In other words, when learners spend much effort on learning a word, this word seems to be retained. For example, when learners do not use and practise the new words that they have just learned, these words are likely to be forgotten. Similarly, according to Anderson's theory, 'knowledge in declarative memory degrades with lack of use ... leading to the inability to perform the task' (Kim *et al.*, 2013:26).

Several vocabulary studies, which were based implicitly on this theory, have explored the role of repetition on vocabulary consolidation and the role of repeating the new words in the text in vocabulary retention. These studies (e.g. Al-Qarni, 2003, Zahar *et al.*, 2001; Ellis, 2002; Webb, 2007; Pellicer-Sánchez & Schmitt, 2010; Chen & Truscott, 2010) are discussed throughout this chapter (see sections, 2.7.5 and 2.10.4). A range of repetition strategies were considered as cognitive strategies, including, '*Verbal repetition*', '*Written repetition*', '*Word lists*', '*Put English labels on physical objects*', '*Keep a vocabulary notebook*', which were suggested by researchers (e.g. Schmitt, 1997) can be used to memorise new words.

In conclusion, this section has discussed Anderson's skill acquisition theory. It has shown that the process of skill acquisition goes through two main stages: "declarative stage", which is represented in the information that learners know about the skill and "procedural stage", where learners know how to perform this skill. Although this theory was not discussed

widely in vocabulary research, it refers to some crucial issues, which are applicable in vocabulary learning. For example, the role of practice in learning as vocabulary research asserts the importance of practice in vocabulary retention.

2.2.3. Sociocultural theory

Sociocultural theory considers the role of the social context in learning. This theory, first proposed by Vygotsky, focused initially on child development and has informed several classroom studies (Mitchell *et al.*, 2012:221). The term “sociocultural” points to the human mental performance which emerges from taking part in social activities that are culturally mediated (Wertsch, 1985). Vygotsky (1978:88) argues that “human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into intellectual life of those around them”. His ideas have had considerable implications for classroom activities.

Likewise, in the field of literacy, Heath and Street have highlighted the key role of community in literacy learning (Smith, 2010:61). Researchers in this field have explored further the practice of learning, based on the concept of the sociocultural theory. Literacy learning is described, from a social perspective, as ‘dynamic’, by dealing with both ‘individual’ and ‘social’ purposes (Barton & Hamilton, 2005:21). So, the focus on learning is not only on learners as individuals, but also on the social context. Similarly, Street (2003:77) defines literacy learning as a ‘social practice, not simply a technical and neutral skill; that it is always embedded in socially constructed epistemological principles’. According to him, knowledge about what is being learned and how this learning is socially perceived by learners plays a key role in their learning.

Street (1995:15) argues that different factors, apart from passing technical skills about reading and writing, impact on literacy learning in a social context, such as culture. Street (1984) suggests that literacy is ideological and is derived from the people’s own practices and purposes. This means that learners’ beliefs, for example in relation to the usefulness of learning, and attitudes towards their learning influence substantially their learning. Literacy practices offer a powerful way of conceptualising the link between the activities of reading and writing and the social structures in which they are embedded and which they help shape (Barton & Hamilton, 2000:7). The social context affects thus the learning that is taking place, which is in agreement with Street’s (2001:8) suggestion that the social practices between

teachers and learners in the classroom influences what they learn. It seems that researchers agree that literacy learning is a “social practice”, which takes place through social interactions and is not merely relevant to learners as individuals, but also embedded in the social context.

The sociocultural theory makes use of different concepts such as, “mediated mind”, “zone of proximal development”, “activity theory” and “internalisation and inner speech” (Lantolf, 2000:1). The substantial concept that Vygotsky suggests is that the mental activities are “mediated” by symbolic tools, which enable people to “organise and maintain control over the self and its mental, and even physical activity” (Lantolf, 1994:418). Mediation could be physical or symbolic and Vygotsky suggests that while physical tools are “outwardly directed”, symbolic tools are “inwardly or cognitively directed” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007:205). From Vygotsky’s perspective, people need physical tools to change their environment, whilst they need the symbolic ones to “mediate” and “regulate” their “psychological activity” (Lantolf, 2006:1). According to this concept, the main symbolic tool to mediate the mental activity is language, since people can direct their attention to important parts in the environment or take steps to solve a problem by using language (Mitchell *et al.*, 2012:221). Hence, language is crucial to communicate with others and modify one’s environment and social relationships.

Regulation is one form of mediation (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007:203). This can take the form of “object-regulation”, “other regulation” or “self-regulation” (Thorne & Tasker, 2011:496). Object-regulation refers to learners using the objects in their environment to manage an activity, for instance, when they use a dictionary to find the meaning of new words. Other regulation is when learners appeal for assistance from more skilled learners or from their teachers to help them in managing the activity. Self-regulation refers to the process through which learners manage the activity themselves, because there is no need for object or other regulation as these have been internalised in learners. Learners also become more independent in their learning when they are able to perform this type of regulation.

Self-regulation links to one other concept in the sociocultural theory, that of internalisation. Internalisation then, is the “means of developing the capacity to perform complex cognitive and motor functions with increasingly less reliance on externally provided mediation” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006:266). This means that the internalisation process leads learners to self-regulation. An example of internalisation would see new language learners use a

dictionary with support from teachers or other more proficient learners initially, but they might not need assistance later, when they know the techniques which are required to use the dictionary effectively as these techniques have been internalised. Learners in this example converted the external mediation to an internal activity. Another concept associated with internalisation is that of “inner speech”, which is used by people to “organise” and “regulate” their mental activity (Lantolf & Beckett, 2009:460).

Vygotsky’s theory also introduced the “zone of proximal development” (ZPD) to refer to the stage between what a child can achieve without help from others and what the same child can achieve with help (Moore, 2012:15). It is “the domain of knowledge or skill where the learner is not yet capable of independent functioning, but can achieve a desired outcome given relevant assistance” (Mitchell *et al.*, 2012:223). This suggests that learners could make progress in learning the language and move to a higher level if they receive enough support through scaffolding. Scaffolding is a “situation where a knowledgeable participant can create supportive conditions in which the novice can participate, and extend his or her current skills and knowledge to higher levels of competence” (Donato, 1994:40). The support that learners need can be achieved through interaction with teachers or other peers. Interaction helps teachers create a context where learners can engage actively in learning and helps to decide the type of support that the learners need (Anton, 1999). This interaction shows what learners are able or unable to achieve with help (Ellis, 2009:12).

In the field of second language acquisition research, a number of studies have considered corrective feedback between teachers and learners in the ZPD. Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) examined the interactions of three L2 learners and their teacher who was providing them with corrective feedback on their essays. They proposed a “regulatory scale” which showed the type of feedback and whether this was implicit or explicit. The results revealed that the assistance provided by the teacher for one of the learners decreased by being more implicit. The possible reason for this was that this particular learner became more proficient in using language and, as a result, they required less help. The authors also found that the effectiveness of the feedback depends on the learner’s ZPD. By employing the scale suggested in the previous study, Nassaji and Swain (2000) found that the learner who was provided with oral feedback on the written compositions within the ZPD was able to improve their use of articles. They also needed less explicit help in the later sessions and were also able to use the right form in a post-test.

Another concept relevant to the sociocultural theory is that of activity theory, which argues that “socially-organised and goal-directed actions play a central role in human development” (Lantolf & Beckett, 2009:460). It places great emphasises on having aims and well prepared social activities in order to achieve progress in learning. Activity in this theory is not considered as just practising something. What is practised should be motivated by a “biological need” or “culturally constructed need”, it therefore needs change to be motivated by a specific need in order to achieve a specific goal (Lantolf, 2000:8). A study by Lantolf and Genung (2002) supported the claim that the goal of an activity was changing during the activity itself. The one learner in this study had changed her aim from wanting to learn a new language to that of passing an exam. This change came about as she found that the teaching approach used by her teachers did not meet her expectations of improving her communicative ability in the new language.

Vygotsky claims that private speech does not necessarily have to be syntactically complete, which means that incomplete sentences can be used in private speech (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007:202). L2 learners might then use private speech to regulate their mental activity. Frawley (1997) argues that, in private speech, individuals aim to think about what should be achieved and how and when and then to evaluate what has been achieved. He suggested that individuals have different linguistic choices to employ in this process, which all emerged from their use in social communication. Lantolf (1997) argues that the language used by L2 learners through private speech provides them with the opportunity to compare their L1 linguistic system with the new L2 linguistic system; however, this conflict decreases when learners become more proficient in L2. One of the activities that can occur in private speech is repetition. Repetition has an influential role in the development of the “linguistic” and “sociocultural” competence of learners (Moore, 2011:209). A number of studies have explored the role of repetition in learning a second language from a sociocultural perspective (e.g. Duff, 2000, Moore, 2004).

Lantolf and Thorne (2007) have also highlighted the two misconceptions in the L2 research on ZPD: the first is in respect of the ZPD is the same as scaffolding and the second it is similar to Krashen’s concept of $i+1$. Scaffolding focuses on the amount of assistance that the teacher or a more proficient learner provides to less proficient learners to complete the task, whereas the ZPD concentrates on the quality of this assistance in order to achieve development. The other misconception of the ZPD and Krashen’s concept of $i+1$ is that the

ZPD concentrates on moving learners to self-regulation in L2, whilst Krashen's concept focuses on language. Researchers suggested that the learners' level of $i+1$ in Krashen's hypothesis cannot be accurately measured, while the development in the ZPD can be anticipated, according to learners' responses to mediation. Also, the ZPD is not only for moving from one linguistic level to another, as in Krashen's hypothesis. It is also influenced by the kind of mediation used when the interaction between teachers and learners is taking place.

The exploration of the role of sociocultural theory in second language acquisition has started with the work of Frawley and Lantolf (1985). Later, several studies have considered the sociocultural theory as a framework in their investigation. Anton and DiCamilla (1999) examined the use of L1 by L2 learners, looking at interaction from a social and a cognitive perspective. They provided evidence that L1 is used to regulate mental activity. Another study by Centeno-Cortes and Jimenez-Jimenez (2004) explored to what extent learners can use L2 as a mental tool to regulate their thinking. The results show that when learners employed L1 as a mental tool, they were more successful in completing the tasks than using L2. Similar findings were revealed in Choi and Lantolf's (2008) study, which suggests that L2 learners were likely to retain their L1 while thinking and speaking. Although these studies show interesting findings, more sensitive research instruments seem to be needed. This is due to the nature of the mental activities examined, which appear to be difficult to investigate. It can be concluded that the L1, from Vygotskian's perspective, appears to be more dominant in L2 learners' thinking and often used as a mental tool.

Another significant aspect in vocabulary research is that of context. Using the context is sometimes referred to as one of the approaches to explain the meaning, for example, showing the new word in a text. In this example, context means "the accompanying text, the wording that came before and after whatever was under attention" (Halliday, 1999:3). However, in language learning, the context extends to refer to a wider range of factors which impact language teaching and learning. One of the early studies which have examined the role of social context in teaching and learning language and asserted its importance was conducted by Breen (1985). He identified eight features which show the classroom as a culture. For example, the classroom is "interactive", as class participants are involved through verbal and non-verbal interaction (Breen, 1985:143). Also, the culture of the classroom is "differentiated", as it includes different views of language, preferences for learning and

learning purposes, despite the fact that the class looks as a one social unit. The classroom is “collective” since it involves the continuous interaction of the individual values and attitudes and group values and attitudes. Another feature sees the culture of the classroom as “highly normative”, an environment that depends heavily on evaluating participants’ behaviours and learning. Bax (2003) agreed with Breen’s (1985) view on the importance of context in learning. He argues that teaching methods are not the only influence to learning a language, but the context is an influential factor, too. Teaching methods are only one of the factors that affect language learning. Jang and Jiménez (2011) suggest that the social context in the language classroom plays a key role in L2 learners’ use of learning strategies. This means that learners may change their learning strategies according the social context which they are in.

When examining VLSs, one notices that several strategies are derived from the principles of sociocultural theory, although researchers did not refer to the theory explicitly. For example, several social strategies require learners to appeal for assistance from teachers or classmates in order to find out information about the new word. Also, the guessing strategies which learners use when trying to find the meaning of an unknown word in a text by inferring its meaning from context have a social element of interactivity. The concept of private speech is seen in other strategies such as repeating the word silently in mind. The analysis of the data from the present study will draw on the principles of sociocultural theory as will be shown in section 3.13.2.

In summary, this section has discussed the concepts and principles of sociocultural theory and its role in second language acquisition research. It revealed the importance of interaction in language learning development, as a key social and cultural process which contextualises and conditions the learning. This highlights the importance of the social context as a crucial factor which should be considered in teaching and learning language.

2.3. Vocabulary teaching approaches, methods and techniques

This section highlights the key findings from research on vocabulary teaching and learning issues. Several techniques have been put forward by research as effective in teaching vocabulary and some of these will be outlined in more depth here. This section discusses the following: decontextualised and contextualised vocabulary teaching, using L1 and L2 in teaching vocabulary, teaching vocabulary through reading, and teaching vocabulary online.

2.3.1. Decontextualised and contextualised vocabulary teaching

Many writers believe that vocabulary is not useful when learned without connecting it to a specific text (Nation, 2001:297). This way of learning encompasses ‘decontextualising techniques’, which are defined by Oxford and Crookall (1990) as those techniques that ‘remove the word as completely as possible from any communicative context that might help the learner remember and that might provide some notion as to how the word is actually used as a part of the language’ (Oxford & Crookall, 1990:9). This definition includes two criticisms: the method is not useful for remembering words, and it does not offer help in using words in context (Nation, 2001:297). According to empirical research, the first criticism is not entirely accurate, whereas the second is largely correct (Nation, 2001:301). Despite these criticisms, the method has some advantages (Nation, 2001:302). The main one is that it is efficient in terms of time and effort. Secondly, it allows learners to consciously focus on an aspect of a new word that may not be easily understood from context or dictionary use whilst also allowing learners to regulate repetition.

Nation (2005:1) describes teaching vocabulary deliberately as ‘one of the least efficient ways of developing learners’ vocabulary knowledge, but nonetheless it is an important part of a well-balanced vocabulary programme’. Also, teaching can be effective when focusing on just a small amount of information about a word at a time; if the information is complicated, learners may interpret it wrongly (Nation, 2005:1). He suggests some principles of teaching vocabulary deliberately, for example, avoiding complex explanations, using both oral and written presentations by writing the word on the board and explaining it orally as well as focusing on words already familiar to learners.

On the other hand, Nation (2001) acknowledges that learning vocabulary from context ‘includes learning from extensive reading, learning from taking part in conversation, and learning from listening to stories, films, television or the radio. Learning from context does not include deliberately learning words and their definitions or translations, even if these words are presented in isolated sentence contexts’ (2001:232). Some of these contexts will be discussed later in this chapter. It seems important to refer to teaching vocabulary through reading when dealing with contextualised vocabulary teaching, since several studies have been conducted on this area. The importance of context in learning a new language is a crucial feature of sociocultural theory. The context in vocabulary learning can include texts with new words, as suggested by Halliday (1999:3), which learners use to understand the meaning of the new vocabulary. Reading texts as providing the context for learning L2 were also mentioned in Krashen’s input hypothesis. This implies that contextualised vocabulary teaching is seen as leading to better vocabulary development, unlike teaching of vocabulary deliberately or through other methods.

Several studies have attempted to draw comparisons between decontextualised and contextualised vocabulary teaching. Qian’s (1996) research revealed that decontextualized vocabulary teaching yielded superior retention than contextualised vocabulary teaching. This result seems to contradict Krashen’s (1989) input hypothesis that ‘vocabulary in L2 was acquired subconsciously through comprehensible input, particularly through reading, when learners focused on messages and not on individual words’ (Laufer, 2009:345). Krashen’s (1989) input hypothesis was also challenged by Pigada and Schmitt (2006), since the participant in their case study showed that learning language from comprehensible input (reading) can be achieved consciously. Moreover, Laufer (2003) mentioned three experiments in which word-focused tasks achieved higher learning scores than reading. Moreover, this result has been supported in a recent study by Files and Adams (2010). Their study showed that teaching deliberately before reading led to better vocabulary learning more than teaching vocabulary while reading. It can be concluded that both decontextualised and contextualised vocabulary teaching are effective for learners’ vocabulary development and a balance should be stricken when considering using them in teaching vocabulary.

2.3.2. Using L1 and L2 in teaching vocabulary

Using the learners' native language or the target language in teaching EFL is one of the areas that have been discussed widely in EFL research. This seems to be a controversial issue in the field of language teaching as will be shown. Some of the empirical studies that have explored this area will be discussed here, especially those that concern the teaching of vocabulary.

Employing the native language of the students to convey meaning has received some criticism. One major criticism of the use of native language in the classroom is that it can cause students to think that every word or structure they encounter in English has a viable native language correspondent (Mattioli, 2004:24). Krashen (1981) argued that the process of learning a new language is similar to the process of acquiring the mother tongue. Therefore, using the mother tongue in learning a new language should be minimised. Also, Ellis (1984) reported that excessive use of one's first language could 'deprive the learners of valuable input in the second language' (Ellis, 1984:133). However, a number of studies (e.g. Prince, 1996; Laufer & Shmueli, 1997; Lotto & de Groot, 1998; Ramachandran & Rahim, 2004; Latsanyphone & Bouangeune, 2009) suggest the contrary.

Ellis (1985:37) described L1 as 'a resource which learners use for translation to overcome their limitations'. Translation seems to be beneficial in language learning, but it could impede the learning when it is employed without accompanying L2 (Hunt & Beglar, 2002:260). Schmitt (2008:337) claims that psycholinguistic studies (e.g. Hall, 2002; Jiang, 2002; Sunderman & Kroll, 2006) provide the best evidence for the L1 effect, which suggests that 'L1 is active during L2 lexical processing in both beginning and more advanced learners'. This could suggest that L1 plays a crucial role in learning L2 and should be considered when teaching L2. (See also section 2.10.2.) This suggestion supports the Vygotskian's perspective, whereby L1 is retained mentally by L2 learners, and this might be a potential explanation for some teachers and students relying heavily on L1. Employing only L1 or L2 when teaching and learning the target language is not suggested explicitly in the other theories of second language learning, such as the input hypothesis. However, the input hypothesis emphasises the need for maximising the use of L2 and suggests reading texts in L2 to achieve language development.

Latsanyphone & Bouangeune (2009) suggest reasons for using L1 in teaching language. For example, some learners, especially those who are shy or lack confidence in their proficiency may hesitate in using L2 in class. L1 use, however, might facilitate helpful activities in class, especially for low proficiency learners. The use of L1 also seems to be popular among low level learners. Many researchers (Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Nation, 2001; Tang, 2002; Mattioli, 2004) agree that L1 should be used when teaching lower-level learners in the target language. It has also been suggested that learners of a lower level depend on their L1 to transfer L2 meanings (Atkinson 1987, Ellis 1995, Nation 1990). Nation (2003:3) states that ‘whenever a teacher feels that a meaning-based L2 task might be beyond the capabilities of the learners, a small amount of L1 discussion can help overcome some of the obstacles’. In other words, using L1 when necessary is helpful for both the teacher and the student. Moreover, although the communicative approach asserts the use of the target language in teaching, studies have shown that using English alone might be more appropriate for intermediate and advance learners (Ramachandran & Rahim, 2004:163).

One teaching technique to introduce the new vocabulary by using the target language is using synonyms. Webb (2007) investigated the influence of synonymy on vocabulary learning. Over 80 Japanese learners of English sat 10 tests, both receptive and productive, to examine the impact of synonymy on five aspects of word knowledge. The learners encountered the new words in two conditions: glossed sentences and word pairs. The results revealed that the learners outperformed significantly with words whose synonyms they were familiar with. It was concluded that learning synonyms for known vocabulary is easier than learning vocabulary that does not have known synonyms. The findings of this study are interesting since little research was conducted on the effect of synonymy in vocabulary learning, although Webb (2007) employed nonsense words in the experiment, which has its limitations, as discussed in section 2.10.4.

On the other hand, a study by Heltai (1989) looked at the use of translation when teaching vocabulary. He argues that when oral translation is used to teach vocabulary, the activities should be carried out under specific conditions, which are not incompatible with the communicative approach (Heltai, 1989:288). The first suggested condition is that such translations are not used extensively or when there is no need for them. Secondly, translation exercises should be well prepared. Thirdly, they should be combined with other activities and exercises should be interesting and motivating.

Ramachandran and Rahim (2004) argue that using translation in teaching vocabulary has a positive influence on the meaning recall and retention. They divided sixty Malaysian ESL elementary learners of English into two groups: the experimental group received the translation method as the treatment and the control group received the non-translation method. The treatment lasted four weeks, as the learners were given a post test to measure the effectiveness of the treatment. The participants were taught twenty new words. Based on a multiple choice test with 60 questions, these twenty words had received the highest percentage of inaccurate responses. However, receiving the highest percentage of inaccurate responses may suggest that even a very small number of the participants answered the questions on these twenty words correctly. This could indicate that a few participants might have already known the meaning of these words before starting the treatment. Therefore, a more sensitive test is clearly required to ensure that the words used in the treatment are new for all of the participants. Also, the timing of the treatment chosen in this study appeared to be relatively short to assess the effectiveness of the method, since some of the words were taught only a week prior to the test.

The findings of Ramachandran and Rahim (2004) were later supported by Latsanyphone and Bouangeune (2009), who carried out a similar study with a larger sample (169 students with a low level of proficiency), although the authors did not clearly state the period of the treatment in their study. Also, as suggested earlier, a more sensitive test should be applied to ensure that the words used in the treatment are new for all of the participants as the pre-test and post-test used were different and the words in the post-test were already known by students. Although research displays that L1 plays a small but crucial role in communicating meaning, the use of L2 should be increased in the classroom, by encouraging its use and by employing it in classroom management (Nation, 2003:1). Nation (2003:2) suggests that the use of L2 should be maximised especially when learners do not have enough opportunities to practise L2 outside of the class, and that one of the ways to achieve this is by managing the classroom in L2. For example, ‘telling the class what to do (take out your books, turn to page 7), controlling behaviour (be quiet), explaining activities (get into pairs)’. These suggestions appear to be useful even with the learners of low proficiency. If these instructions are repeated in every class, learners will become familiar with the words that are used.

In the Saudi context, one of the few studies that focused on using Arabic in English classes in Saudi schools was Al-Nofaie's (2010) study. She explored the attitudes of Saudi teachers and students towards using L1 in the class. Questionnaires, interviews and four observations from one classroom were used in the data collection. The results revealed that although more than half of the students believed that using Arabic in class may impede their English learning, 70% of them reported that they preferred their teachers to use Arabic as a teaching technique. They thought that using Arabic provided them with confidence and helped them to understand better. Teachers justified using Arabic to explain difficult items, especially for students whose level of English was low. They employed Arabic in clarifying grammar rules and new words, especially abstract words, whilst concrete words were taught by using pictures and drawing. Nevertheless, their employing of Arabic in the class was limited, as they said they wanted to allow more time for students to practise English. This finding challenges several studies which found that teachers of English at Saudi schools overused Arabic in classes. The potential reason for this contradiction may be the different context of Al-Nofaie's (2010) study, which was conducted in a female school, whereas the studies that explored this area in Saudi Arabia were carried out in male schools.

Alshammari (2011) examined this issue in a different context by asking 95 students and 13 teachers in two Saudi technical colleges to complete questionnaires. The results showed that most students and teachers thought that Arabic should be used in class. More than half of the students reported that employing Arabic was necessary in clarifying new words. A similar number of teachers mentioned that they used Arabic in order to save time, as students seemed to understand things better. Despite the fact that this study was conducted in a different context, which was Saudi colleges, the issue was not explored in depth because the author only employed questionnaires in his investigation. However, using other research tools, such as interviews and observations, could help investigate the issue further.

The impact of the learner's proficiency and task type on the amount of Arabic used by Saudi college students in pair work was investigated by Storch and Aldosari (2010). Fifteen pairs from three different proficiency levels completed three tasks (jigsaw, composition and text-editing) and their speaking was audio-recorded. The researchers found that there was little use of Arabic through the pair work and that using Arabic was influenced more by the task type rather than the learners' proficiency level. Arabic was used in order to manage the task and to discuss the new vocabulary. One of the reasons for the modest use of Arabic in class,

as the authors suggested, might be that the students thought they should not use the L1 in L2 classes, as also reported in a previous study by Storch and Wigglesworth (2003). There were no differences between learners in using Arabic while working on tasks. However, the lower level learners employed Arabic more than other learners when they worked on editing tasks, which might be due to the increased level of difficulty of this task and because it was conducted after doing two tasks previously. This shows that the lower level learners are the more likely to resort to their L1 (and this might be due to the limited vocabulary that they have which impedes them from using L2) than other learners. The issue examined in this study was not considered extensively in literature; however, the method used to determine the participants' level of competence is questionable. The authors relied on the participants' marks in English subject in secondary school, their marks in two grammar quizzes and the teacher's evaluations of students' performance throughout the semester. These criteria seemed to be insensitive, because the learners' competence might have changed from secondary school to college and the grammar quizzes tested only one aspect of language. Also, these instruments may fail to assess learners' competence in the spoken language.

As shown, existing research revealed that using L1 in teaching vocabulary could affect learning vocabulary positively, especially in terms of recall and retention. Also, using L1 may be more suitable for beginners, rather than intermediate and advanced learners. In existing research, learners showed positive attitudes towards using L1 in teaching L2. However, the consensus seems to be that using L2 should be dominant in the class and L1 should only be used in specific circumstances, when there is a special need for it.

2.3.3. Teaching vocabulary through reading

Several studies on vocabulary learning showed that teaching vocabulary implicitly appears to be ineffective and should be supported with explicit teaching (Sokmen, 1997). The arguments against teaching vocabulary implicitly have emerged as a result of a number of problems that can arise from guessing the meaning of a word from context alone (Sokmen, 1997: 237). The use of reading as an approach to teaching vocabulary is largely based on the principles of the input hypothesis, which emphasises the key role of reading in language development. Nevertheless, this hypothesis focuses on the importance of the text in terms of being comprehensible and interesting, a condition which is not always fulfilled in classrooms.

A number of studies (e.g. Paribakht & Wesche, 2000; Sonbul & Schmitt, 2010) found positive evidence to support the use of explicit vocabulary instruction through reading. One of these studies is an empirical study conducted by Paribakht and Wesche (1997), which aimed to find out the role of using vocabulary exercises after reading in learning vocabulary for 38 university learners of English. These learners were asked to read a text, followed by two thematically related texts that presented the target words again. The learners answered then some comprehension questions. This condition was called 'Reading Only'. The second condition was called 'Reading Plus', where learners were asked to read the text only, then answer eight vocabulary exercises related to the target words. Learners achieved good results in learning vocabulary in both conditions over a period of three months. However, vocabulary learning through reading, when coupled with vocabulary exercises, led to better quantitative and qualitative results.

In order to understand the reasons that led to this result, Paribakht and Wesche (2000) carried out an introspective study on both 'Reading Only' and 'Reading Plus'. The same materials and procedures were used with similar learners. First, they investigated the 'Reading Only' condition, by focusing on how learners dealt with the new words when they read for meaning, as well as the sources of knowledge, and cues that learners used when inferring the meanings of these words. It was found that learners ignored about half of the new words, and tried to infer the meanings of many of the others, although a dictionary was available. Also, learners used different sources of knowledge such as sentence level grammar, in guessing the meaning of the new words. The researchers suggested that 'Reading Only' may lead to comprehension, but it does not necessarily lead to recall and production of a word.

Secondly, the authors investigated the 'Reading Plus' condition, by concentrating on how learners carried out vocabulary exercises after reading the text and how these exercises could contribute to learners' lexical knowledge. Learners' responses to these exercises were varied, but most of them reported that the exercises were interesting and helpful for learning some new words and showed how to use them. Some types of new word knowledge appeared in relation to learners' performance when undertaking these exercises. This included 'learning new meanings for known words, learning more about different uses of the word and learning new derivations' (Paribakht & Wesche, 2000:205). The authors concluded their study by suggesting that 'Reading Plus' helps to make target words more salient to learners, and motivates them to continue exploring some target words on their own. Also, it promotes

learners' lexical knowledge and assists them in using the new vocabulary in different contexts. It is worthwhile mentioning, however, that this study has been criticised by Sonbul and Schmitt (2010) for the tests adopted. They argued that the tests used covered the whole range of vocabulary mastery (zero knowledge to complete productive mastery). The first step in learning a new word is to acquire the form-meaning link, mainly in terms of the ability to recognise the written form of the word and retain its meaning. This may suggest that a better approach would be to try to measure this initial stage of learning more accurately.

Sonbul and Schmitt (2010) conducted themselves an experimental study to evaluate the effectiveness of direct teaching of new vocabulary in reading passages. They compared vocabulary learning under a 'Reading Only' condition, with learning that is aided by direct teaching of vocabulary after reading in the 'Reading Plus' condition. The target words, which were the words examined, were divided into two sections in regards to these two conditions. Forty Saudi students of medicine were asked to read a passage silently and then the meaning of the target words, which were under the 'Reading Plus' condition, were explained explicitly. Words under the 'Reading Only' condition were ignored in terms of explicit instruction. Immediately after the teaching session, three vocabulary tests were administered (completion, L1 translation and multiple choice) to assess three levels of vocabulary knowledge (form recall, meaning recall and meaning recognition). A week later, the same three tests were administered, unannounced, in the same order, to assess retention of the target words over time. The results showed that the 'Reading Plus' condition was more effective than the 'Reading Only'. Moreover, the 'Reading Plus' condition facilitates a deeper level of vocabulary knowledge, such as form recall. This finding shows the importance of teaching vocabulary explicitly in conjunction with reading. Nevertheless, the passage used in this study may have been familiar to the participants, as it was taken from their coursebook, and this may have made the learning of new vocabulary easier. Furthermore, the researchers stated that an unexpected circumstance occurred, in which more than half of the participants read the passage again during the week at their own initiative, and this could have affected the results.

To sum up, this section has shown the importance of reading in vocabulary learning. According to the studies discussed, teaching vocabulary explicitly after reading has a positive effect on vocabulary learning. It enriches learners' lexical knowledge since the new words are clearly introduced to learners. The new words can be explained by teachers or can be

presented in the form of vocabulary exercises which students could work on after reading. Other method used to explain unknown vocabulary while reading will be critically reviewed next.

2.3.4. Teaching vocabulary online

A number of studies have been conducted to investigate the usefulness of teaching vocabulary online, but before discussing these, the technical features desirable in a vocabulary website will be outlined first. Some of the required technical features of a vocabulary website include: animations, sound components, video clips of related information, the ability to pause, repeat information, or replay video clips, hints or clues related to word meaning and online definitions, glossaries or thesauruses (Wood, 2001:179). Yip and Kwan's research (2006) used online vocabulary games to teach vocabulary for nine weeks, with 100 engineering students. Students were divided into two groups, in which the first group was taught vocabulary through online vocabulary games, whereas the other group was taught the same vocabulary in activity-based lessons. A pre-test and post-test were adopted during the first and ninth weeks. The results revealed that the first group achieved statistically better performances than did the second group in the post-test. Also, the first group of students preferred online learning to activity-based lessons.

Similarly, Al-Jarf (2007) taught vocabulary online to 53 Saudi freshmen students for 12 weeks. The findings of this research showed significant differences between the mean scores of pre and post-test, indicating that online instruction had an effect on vocabulary development. Moreover, the students showed a positive attitude towards online learning. The author concluded that teaching vocabulary online from home and even as a supplement to traditional classroom techniques could enhance vocabulary learning for EFL students.

Other studies (e.g. Chun & Plass, 1996; Al-Seghayer, 2001; Abuseileek, 2008) have explored the role of hypermedia in learning and teaching vocabulary. Al-Seghayer (2001) examined the effectiveness of using different hypermedia glosses modes in teaching and learning vocabulary by comparing three modes: 'printed text definition alone', 'printed text definition coupled with still pictures', and 'printed text definition coupled with video clips'. Thirty ESL students (nearly half of them Arabic speakers and eight of them Saudi) were involved in the

study and were exposed to these three modes through an English narrative text which included glosses or annotations for the new words. A vocabulary test was used afterwards to check the effectiveness of each mode. The participants also completed questionnaires and were interviewed. The results revealed that using ‘printed text definition coupled with video clips’ was more effective in teaching and learning new vocabulary than using ‘printed text definition coupled with still pictures’. Al-Seghayer (2001:202) justified the results by claiming that ‘video better builds a mental image, better creates curiosity leading to increased concentration, and embodies an advantageous combination of modalities (vivid or dynamic image, sound, and printed text)’. This study provided interesting findings, although the criteria for choosing the new words for the participants are questionable. The researcher focused on how suitable the new words were for pictures or videos, as well as the part of speech they represented (e.g. verb, noun, adjective). Also, the participants might have already been familiar with these words and this was not clarified in the study.

Despite the advantages of teaching vocabulary online, there are a number of impediments to online teaching and learning. These include ‘administrative issues, social interaction, academic skills, technical skills, learner motivation, time and support for studies, cost and access to the internet, and technical problems’ (Mullenburg & Berge, 2005:29). Some of these barriers could impede both teachers and learners from using teaching and learning online, for example, when teachers and students do not have knowledge about using specific software. Also, technical problems may make this method of teaching less preferable for teachers.

This section has reviewed different issues on learning and teaching vocabulary. Findings from studies reviewed here showed that the effectiveness of the specific methods used to teach vocabulary depends mainly on the students’ level. In addition, teachers should try to vary the method of teaching, to increase students’ motivation to learn. Also, the available facilities in the school or the university may play a role in choosing a specific method. For example, in some countries teaching vocabulary online is not always an option due to limited internet facilities.

2.4. The relationship between vocabulary and reading

This section explores the relationship between vocabulary and reading. ‘Reading can be seen as an “interactive” process between a reader and a text which leads to automaticity or (reading fluency)’ (Alyousef, 2005:144). It is ‘a complex cognitive activity, involving simultaneous linguistic processing such as pattern recognition, letter identification, lexical access, concept activation, syntactic analysis, propositional encoding, sentence comprehension, and intersentence integration, as well as the activation of prior knowledge, information storage, and comprehension monitoring’ (Pulido, 2007:155).

According to the orthographic definition, a word is ‘any sequence of letters (and a limited number of other characteristics such as hyphen and apostrophe) bounded on either side by a space or punctuation mark’ and it can be defined according to the semantics, as ‘the smallest meaningful unit of language’ (Carter, 1992:4 cited in Takac, 2008:4). Reading plays a key role in increasing learners’ vocabulary, and that is according to comparisons of large corpora which showed that written texts are richer in lexis than spoken ones (Horst, 2005:356). Also, ‘vocabulary knowledge is fundamental to reading comprehension; one cannot understand text without knowing what most of the words mean’ (Nagy, 1988:1). It has been argued that the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension is strong (Keblawi, 2005:69). The vocabulary learning which emerges through reading only without teaching the new words in the text explicitly is called ‘incidental learning’. ‘Incidental vocabulary learning’ is defined as the ‘learning of vocabulary as the by-product of any activity not explicitly geared to vocabulary learning’ and is contrasted with ‘intentional vocabulary learning’, which is defined as ‘any activity geared at committing lexical information to memory’ (Hulstijn, 2001:271).

Al-Nujaidi (2004) has investigated the role reading in vocabulary development, by involving over one hundred Saudi college students, who were divided into two groups: extensive reading group and control group. The extensive reading group read Oxford Fact Files graded readers at home for ten days during a three month period, whilst the control group was not provided with any additional exposure to English texts outside the classroom. The development in the participants’ vocabulary was measured by giving them a standard vocabulary test before and after the treatment. The results revealed that the extensive reading group gained 233 words in the 2000 word section in the test, 283 words in the 3000 word section, and 40 words in the Academic word section, whereas the control group gained 15

words, 48 words, and 6 words, respectively. The researcher concluded that extensive reading led to significantly better vocabulary growth for the extensive reading group. In this study, the treatment was done within a period of time which allowed students to come in contact with other sources of learning vocabulary rather than reading, such as television, internet, dictionary and chatting with others. Therefore, extensive reading may not have been the only reason for the development in the participants' vocabulary, but it could have been the main one. Overall, extensive reading has been established to have a positive effect on vocabulary learning. However, it is not clear which factor is responsible for this effect, the increased exposure in general or the increased exposure presented in an extensive reading form (Al-Homoud & Schmitt, 2009:386).

In addition, Golkar and Yamini (2007) examined the relationship between the learners' vocabulary knowledge on the one hand, and their proficiency and reading comprehension ability on the other. Seventy six undergraduate Iranian students undertook vocabulary level tests first and later answered TOEFL test. The results showed a high correlation between the students' vocabulary knowledge on the one hand and proficiency and reading comprehension ability on the other. Similarly, Zhang and Annual (2008) explored the relationship between vocabulary and reading comprehension with 37 secondary school students in Singapore who answered vocabulary levels tests, as well as tests that measured their reading comprehension and summary abilities. The findings suggested that the students' vocabulary knowledge at 2000 and 3000 word levels correlated to their reading comprehension. Significant correlation was only found for the short-answer questions, but not for the summary. It is also worth noting that only two sorts of questions were used to find out the students' ability in reading comprehension. Short-answer questions demand that the students use their own words to answer them, and also examine students' comprehension and writing, which makes them seem difficult (Zhang & Annual, 2008:67). This suggests that when investigating reading comprehension, it would be more useful to use various types of questions, for instance, the multiple choice test and matching questions.

A recent study tried to determine whether the relationship between vocabulary and reading comprehension is reciprocal (Brown, 2010:88). Fifty first year Social Sciences students at a university in Southern Africa sat a vocabulary and reading comprehension test. The passage in the reading comprehension test was on "globalisation", a familiar topic in the social sciences. The result suggested that the relationship between vocabulary and reading

comprehension was mutual. However, such a result might be expected, because students' familiarity with the topic of the passage may mean that they comprehend it more easily. Further discussion on the role of the familiarity with the topic in understanding a text is provided in section 2.10.6.

The studies reviewed in this section revealed that the relationship between vocabulary and reading is strong and mutual. This finding shows the key role of reading in vocabulary development. Different types of reading can be used in order to develop learners' vocabulary and these will be discussed next.

2.5. Intensive and extensive reading

Reading can be divided into two types: 'intensive reading' and 'extensive reading' (Alyousef, 2005:145). Intensive reading is 'reading a page to explore the meaning and to be acquainted with writing mechanisms' (Alyousef, 2005:146). Extensive reading is 'based on the assumption that exposing learners to large quantities of meaningful and interesting L2 material will, in the long run, produce a beneficial effect on the learners' command of the L2' (Hafiz & Tudor, 1989:5).

Also, extensive reading 'entails learners reading as much as possible, for the purpose of pleasure or information rather than learning particular language features, and is usually self-selected' (Al-Homoud & Schmitt, 2009:383). The difference between these two types of reading is that intensive reading depends on relatively short texts, while extensive reading involves large quantities of L2 input with few, or possibly no particular tasks to do on the material (Hafiz & Tudor, 1989:5). According to the above definitions, intensive reading is visible through the reading coursebooks, which include reading texts accompanied by various exercises focusing on comprehension, vocabulary, grammar and discourse (Nation, 2001:156), whereas extensive reading can be seen through graded readers in the form of books edited to 'stay within a strictly limited vocabulary and are typically divided into several levels' (Nation, 2001:162). Nation (2001:155) argues that books and reading might be the only option to interact with the language in certain contexts especially in EFL contexts. This suggests that learners in an EFL context may not have the same exposure to English as learners in an ESL context. Nation and Gu (2007:52) suggested that teachers could deal

quickly with the new words in intensive reading by ‘giving their meanings and perhaps pronunciation’. The meanings can be introduced quickly by: translating, drawing, giving synonyms, explaining in the second language or using real objects.

A review of existing studies (e.g. Hafiz & Tudor 1989; Day & Bamford, 2002; Horst, 2005) showed that most of vocabulary studies focus heavily on the use of extensive reading in learning and teaching vocabulary more than on the intensive reading. Day and Bamford (2002) suggest several principles to apply when using extensive reading. For example, the text should be relatively easy and cover various topics, learners should select what they read and reading should be done individually and in silence. However, extensive reading has the disadvantage that vocabulary cannot be acquired automatically when learners read for meaning (Huckin & Coady, 1999). Many researchers differentiate between guessing the meaning of words from context and retaining that meaning (Pigada & Schmitt, 2006). That means if learners inferred correctly the meaning of a word through reading, it might not necessarily lead to retaining the word. Furthermore, the richness of information in a text could make learners ignore some of the new vocabulary which they do not need to understand the text (Pigada & Schmitt, 2006).

The advantages of extensive reading are significant. First, students of different proficiency levels can practise reading depending on their level of proficiency, hence they are not restricted to an ‘inflexible class programme’ (Nation, 2001:151). Secondly, reading could meet students’ interests when they select what they want to read and this in turn affects positively their motivation to learn. Third, extensive reading provides a chance for students to learn outside the classroom. Practising reading as a self-activity is considered to be a ‘comprehensible input’ and useful for learners as it takes place in a ‘low-anxiety situation’ (Krashen, 2003:15). Furthermore, it has been suggested that two activities (vocabulary learning and reading) occurring simultaneously create a “pedagogically efficient” approach (Huckin & Coady, 1999:182), which could help learners achieve autonomy, motivation and pleasure to learn, while also providing them with vocabulary in context (Thornbury, 2002).

In another study, Al-Homoud and Schmitt (2009) compared data from an extensive reading class with a more traditional class which used intensive reading. The main focus of this comparison was the effect of using different types of reading on reading comprehension, reading speed, vocabulary gains and to find out students’ attitudes towards these types of reading. The classes were part of a Saudi college preessional course, which lasted 10 weeks.

Reading classes consisted of four 50 minute classes a week. The classroom setting had many problems in applying extensive reading, such as relatively weak students, an environment where reading for pleasure was atypical and the course being too short in duration. The 70 participants were divided into two groups, one received an intensive reading and the other received an extensive reading. The results indicated that the extensive reading participants reported much more positive attitudes towards reading, their class and their learning, than the participants in the intensive reading group. The researchers concluded that the extensive reading was as good as, or better than, the intensive reading.

The above was one of the few studies which concentrated on extensive reading in classroom environments over a long period of time. Also, various materials and tests were used and different levels of graded readers were used with the students in the extensive reading group, which enabled testers to notice any improvement in the students' level. However, the number of words which were taught to the students in the intensive reading group was large, at 20-30 words taught per reading class, which may make it hard for the teacher to explain fully their meaning in a 50 minutes class.

Another study conducted by Rashidi and Piran (2011) involved 120 learners at two levels of proficiency (intermediate and advanced) to explore the impact of both intensive and extensive reading on their vocabulary knowledge. The results revealed that both types of reading had a significant effect on enhancing learners' vocabulary knowledge. Also, intermediate learners benefited more from intensive reading than extensive reading, while the reverse was the case for the advanced learners. They concluded that extensive reading appears more suitable for advanced learners, whereas intensive reading is more appropriate for beginners.

Reading, whether intensive or extensive, can be practised by reading the text aloud. Gibson (2008) outlined the advantages and disadvantages of reading aloud and how the advantages could be minimised. It can be a tedious activity, especially for students. This activity does not necessarily improve pronunciation, since the texts used are often unnatural; as a result they do not develop pronunciation in spontaneous speech. As reading is usually considered a silent activity, reading aloud is not an essential skill for students. Reading aloud can be a difficult activity, even for native speakers, which negatively impacts the students' motivation. In contrast, reading aloud is beneficial for developing pronunciation because learners may rely on their L1 when they read English (see section 2.10.2 for a discussion on the impact of L1). This might also be the only occasion when shy learners to practise in class. The

disadvantages could be lessened by following procedures such as asking the students to listen for specific information from what the reader reads and by minimising the number of listeners or the length of the reading, in order to mitigate the anxiety of the reader.

Gibson (2008) conducted a study to find out the aims for using reading aloud in English learning by interviewing 12 native speaker teachers, 15 non-native speaker teachers and 7 ESL learners. The non-native speaker teachers and ESL learners were considered autonomous learners. The participants reported that they used reading aloud for several reasons, such as for improving pronunciation and fluency and speaking practice. Most of the autonomous learners (82%) said that they practised this activity by themselves. All of the students said they enjoyed reading aloud in lessons and found it to be a useful activity. The author concluded that the benefits of reading aloud could outweigh the disadvantages if the activity was employed properly. However, more empirical studies are required to explore this area further in order to know whether reading aloud has an effect on vocabulary learning.

Alshumaimeri (2011) examined the effectiveness of this activity on the reading comprehension of 145 Saudi secondary school students by comparing it with silent reading and sub vocalisation reading. The students were asked to read three different passages and each passage was read by following one of the activities mentioned. He found that reading aloud outperformed the other two types of activities in terms of its impact on reading comprehension. Most students mentioned that they preferred reading aloud to other types of activities. One of the most aspects of reading skill is comprehension, which was explored in this research using only one type of test (multiple choice). This posed some limitations, as using various types of questions may have been more helpful.

These studies (Gibson, 2008 & Alshumaimeri, 2011) focused on reading aloud as an activity which can be practised by learners autonomously, in or out of the classroom. Nevertheless, the value of this activity in class was not explored. If reading aloud were investigated in a reading class, different results may have emerged, as the teachers' feedback on their students' reading aloud might have played a crucial role in students' perspectives. Some students may not like to be interrupted while reading and correcting the students directly was found to be demotivating and it distracted the students' attention from the meaning (Moghaddam *et al*, 2012:217). However, teachers' feedback appears to be helpful in improving students' pronunciation whether the student reads or listens to a classmate's reading. Teachers'

feedback on reading aloud is concentrated on accuracy rather than fluency; therefore, teachers may need to balance the type of feedback given to achieve both of these purposes.

Another technique which was found to be beneficial for vocabulary learning is reading the text while listening. Webb and C-S Chang (2012) compared reading texts only with simultaneously reading and listening texts. Over 80 Taiwanese EFL learners involved in the study read 28 short texts several times over two seven-week periods. A pre-test and post-test were used to examine the impact of each activity. The findings yielded that both activities positively affected vocabulary learning, however, reading and listening simultaneously led to significantly greater vocabulary learning.

To summarise, although most of the studies reviewed here have focused on using extensive reading rather than intensive, both types of reading were found to be useful for learners' vocabulary knowledge. It seems that more research is required to establish the effectiveness of using intensive reading in teaching vocabulary, since this type of reading is the most commonly found type in textbooks. Knowing the learners' level of competence is important in order to decide which texts are most appropriate.

2.6. Aspects of knowing a word

Vocabulary knowledge is 'a multidimensional and complex construct' (Read, 2000 cited in Tseng & Schmitt, 2008:357). It includes two dimensions: 'depth' and 'breadth' of vocabulary knowledge (Nassaji, 2006:389). The breadth of one's vocabulary knowledge refers to the number of words that they know, while the depth refers to the extent to which learners know a word (Nassaji, 2006:389).

Most studies in the area of vocabulary have focused on the students' understanding of the meaning aspect of a word as an indicator of learning a word (Pigada & Schmitt, 2006). However, some researchers argue that vocabulary knowledge involves other aspects in addition to meaning. Carter (1998) points out that knowing a word involves features such as the ability to use it productively and to recall it for use, as well as knowing the spoken and written context of a word and how to use it syntactically and pragmatically. He also referred to recognising the different meanings of the word and knowing other words associated with

it. Carter (1998) maintains that learning L2 vocabulary for receptive use requires strategies which could assist learners in understanding words and storing them in memory, whilst learning L2 vocabulary for productive use depends on strategies that activate the lexical store for using words correctly.

This framework has been described as ‘the best specification of word knowledge to date’ (Pellicer-Sánchez & Schmitt, 2010:38). He divided the word’s knowledge into ‘receptive knowledge’ and ‘productive knowledge’. ‘Receptive vocabulary use’ is learning vocabulary through listening or reading and recalling its meaning, while ‘productive vocabulary use’ is producing the meaning through speaking or writing and recalling its meaning (Nation, 2001:24). Both receptive and productive knowledge include various aspects of knowing and understanding a word, as shown in the following figure.

Nation (2001) developed a framework of the aspects of knowing a word, seen below in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Nation’s (2001) framework of what is involved in knowing a word

What is involved in knowing a word

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

Note: In column 3, R = receptive knowledge, P = productive knowledge.

Nation (2001) claims that learning the receptive knowledge of vocabulary is easier than learning the productive one and provides four reasons for this, as follows:

1. 'Amount of knowledge'. Productive knowledge requires learning more of the spoken and written output patterns, while receptive knowledge requires the learner to recognise certain features of the form of a word.
2. 'Practice'. In language learning in general, receptive knowledge is practised more than productive knowledge.
3. 'Accessibility'. Learners translate vocabulary from L1 into L2 using receptive knowledge, whereas the reverse occurs in the productive. As a result, receptive knowledge of vocabulary appears to be easier and learners are more competent in this in L1.
- 4- 'Motivation'. L2 learners may not be motivated to learn the productive knowledge of certain words that have a 'socio-cultural background', such as slang words.

This section has discussed what involved in learning a word. It indicated that learning vocabulary includes different aspects rather than the meaning. Nation's (2001) framework showed that the word's knowledge involves receptive and productive knowledge and each one of these contains different aspects of knowing a word.

2.7. Vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs)

Language learning strategies can be defined as 'those processes which are consciously selected by learners and which may result in action taken to enhance the learning or use of a second or foreign language, through the storage, retention, recall, and application of information about that language' (Cohen, 1998:4). There are two main taxonomies for VLSs developed by Schmitt (1997) (see Appendix 1) and Nation (2001) (see Appendix 2) and these will be reviewed first.

2.7.1. Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy

Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy classifies the VLSs into two groups: 'discovery' and 'consolidation' strategies. 'Discovery' strategies are used to obtain the meaning of a new word, while 'consolidation' strategies are used to retain new words.

Both of these strategies include 58 individual strategies grouped under so-called main categories: 'determination', 'social', 'memory', 'cognitive' and 'metacognitive'. Determination strategies are used by the learner to find out the meaning of a new word without asking for help. Social strategies entail interacting with others in order to learn new words, for example, when a student asks a teacher or classmate for clarification. Memory strategies require the learner to relate the new word to previously learned knowledge, using imagery or grouping. 'Cognitive strategies ... are similar to memory strategies but are not focused so specifically on manipulative mental processing' (Schmitt, 1997:215). Cognitive strategies include, for instance, verbal repetition, written repetition and repeated listening. Finally, metacognitive strategies are employed by learners to 'control and evaluate their own learning, by having an overview of the learning process in general' (Schmitt, 1997:216).

Schmitt (1997) relied on different sources when designing his taxonomy, including: examining a number of reference books and textbooks, asking Japanese intermediate learners of English to write a report about how they learn English vocabulary and asking their teachers to review these strategies and add any others. Although this taxonomy outlines many VLSs in detail, it was not tested with EFL learners of different native languages. This may mean that the cultural differences might play a role in using learning strategies. Schmitt (1997) reported that it was difficult to create a list and allocate particular strategies to the main categories and he used his own judgment. This means that some strategies could belong to more than one category. For example, the social strategy of interacting with others can be used as a discovery strategy, a consolidation strategy and a metacognitive strategy.

2.7.2. Nation's (2001) taxonomy

Nation (2001:218) proposed another taxonomy of VLSs based on three aspects of vocabulary learning, namely: 'aspects of vocabulary knowledge', 'sources of vocabulary knowledge' and 'learning processes'. The taxonomy is divided into three general strategies, each one containing several strategies. These strategies are 'strategies for planning vocabulary learning', 'strategies for finding information about words (sources)' and 'strategies for establishing knowledge (processes)'. The first type of strategies concerns 'deciding on where to focus attention, how to focus the attention, and how often to give attention to the item' (Nation, 2001:218). This type includes choosing words, choosing which aspects of word knowledge to focus on, choosing strategies and planning repetition.

The second type of strategies in this taxonomy involves analysing word parts (affixes and stems), using context, consulting a reference source in L1 or L2 (e.g. using dictionaries) and using parallels with other languages, which means using the similarities between the words in L1 and L2 to facilitate vocabulary learning. The third type of strategies in this taxonomy concentrates on remembering L2 words and making them available for use. It contains the following strategies: noticing, retrieving and generating. Noticing is recognising the word as an item to be learned. Noticing strategies include putting new words in a vocabulary notebook, word lists, word cards and repeating the words orally. Retrieving is recalling previously encountered words. Nation (2001:221) states that there are many kinds of retrieving: receptive/productive, oral/visual, overt/covert, contextualised/decontextualised. The difference between noticing and retrieving strategies, as Nation (2001:221), mentions is that the information that the learner needs about a word is available in the noticing strategies, whereas in the retrieving strategies, the learner has only a cue and the other information has to be recalled. Generating strategies include 'attaching new aspects of knowledge to what is known through instantiation (visualising examples of the word), word analysis, semantic mapping, and using scales and grids' (Nation, 2001:222).

Nation (2001:218) has argued that his taxonomy separates 'aspects of vocabulary knowledge' (what is involved in knowing a word) from 'sources of vocabulary knowledge' and 'learning processes'. It seems that both Schmitt's (1997) and Nation's (2001) taxonomies include similar strategies, but they differ in the way of classifying them. Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy provided more detailed information about the VLSs, while Nation's (2001) taxonomy referred to the type of strategies rather than the strategies themselves. Based on the evaluation

of both taxonomies, Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy has been used to design the questionnaire in the current research, as detailed later in Chapter 3. After explaining the main VLSs taxonomies, the two key strategies that are employed while reading, '*Guessing the meaning from context*' and '*Using dictionaries*', will be discussed in the following sections.

2.7.3. Guessing the meaning from context

'*Guessing the meaning of new words from context*' is a key strategy used in learning vocabulary through reading and one of the most widely examined strategies in vocabulary research. It is an important strategy to improve reading comprehension and enhance vocabulary acquisition (Hunt & Beglar, 2005). However, Huckin and Coady (1999:189) argue that although inferring from context is crucial for vocabulary development, 'it requires a great deal of prior training in basic vocabulary, word recognition, metacognition, and subject matter', making the strategy more appropriate for intermediate and advanced learners (Nation & Gu, 2007:86). This means that learners' proficiency should be taken into account by when deciding to employ this strategy.

It has been shown earlier in section 2.4 that the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension is mutual. Also, it has been suggested that the learner should know about 95% (Laufer, 1989) to 98 % (Hu & Nation, 2000) of all the words in a text in order to understand it (Schmitt *et al*, 2011). That is learners should be familiar with most of words in a text to be able to infer the meaning of unknown words successfully. Nassaji (2003:647) has summarised the factors affecting successful guessing. These include 'the nature of the word and the text that contains the word, the importance of the word to the comprehension of the text and the degree of textual information available in the surrounding context'. Nation (2001:243) added other factors which are more precise and concern the clues which are vital in guessing for instance, the number of occurrences where the more often an unknown word occurs, the greater the chance of guessing and learning it. In addition, proximity of recurrence as the closer the repetitions are, the more likely the clues from each occurrence will be integrated. Another factor is variability of contexts in which the bigger the difference between the contexts in which a word recurs, the greater the range of clues available. Amount of polysemy (having several related meanings) could affect '*Guessing from context*' since if the word is not polysemous, then guessing is easier.

While some of these factors are related to the learners, others concern the text (Schmitt, 1997). It seems thus that in order to be able to grasp the meaning correctly, learners should have prior knowledge of most words in the text they are reading and the text should be suitable for their level. If they have guessed correctly, learners may gain more than just an understanding of the text by retaining the new words, as many researchers would agree (Nassaji, 2003:646). Knight (1994) found that learners who used both guessing from context and a dictionary while reading remembered the words better two weeks after performing the task. This result was supported by Fraser (1999), who reported that more words were retained when the guessing was followed by consulting a dictionary. This would suggest that combining two strategies '*Guessing from context*' and '*Using a dictionary*' can be more effective in terms of consolidating new vocabulary. The influence of guessing from context on retaining new words is one of the issues that has been investigated in several studies (e.g. Hulstijn, 1992; Fraser, 1999; Mondria, 2003; Hu & Nassaji, 2012).

Hulstijn (1992) compared students' success in retaining unknown words through guessing them from context with their retaining of new words when provided with glosses or sample sentences. Inferred words were better retained, but only when cues for guessing were available. Mondria (2003) reported contradicting results, which showed no difference in terms of retaining words between learning them through inferring meaning from context and learning them through memorising from a word list. A recent study by Hu & Nassaji (2012) was more precise by suggesting that the degree of retaining meaning relies on the kind of inferential strategies deployed.

Nassaji (2003:655) identified the inferential strategies and the knowledge sources that learners use when they try to grasp the meaning through context. The inferential strategies were 'repeating, verifying, analysing, monitoring, self-inquiry and analogy', while knowledge sources included 'grammatical knowledge, morphological knowledge, knowledge of L1, world knowledge, and discourse knowledge'. He further examined the relationship between 'ESL learners' depth of vocabulary knowledge', 'their lexical inferring strategy use', and 'their success in deriving word meaning from context' (Nassaji, 2006) and used think-aloud protocols with 21 intermediate students. The results revealed that the relationship between these variables is significant. Also, students with a strong depth of vocabulary knowledge employed specific strategies more frequently than the weaker students. Particular types of guessing strategies were used more effectively by stronger students than by weaker

ones. Nassaji's (2006) findings supported the hypothesis that guessing the meaning from context is heavily affected by the learners' vocabulary knowledge. This study presents interesting findings since it explored the strategies that students employ when they try to grasp the meaning while reading.

This section has discussed '*Guessing the meaning from context*' as an important strategy to get the meaning of new vocabulary while reading. It showed that this includes different strategies which should be considered in learning and teaching vocabulary and is influenced by a number of factors which may impede guessing the meaning successfully. Guessing the meaning correctly can be helpful to consolidate the new word. It has also been suggested that inferring from context can be more effective when it is employed along with using dictionaries and this strategy will be the focus of the next section.

2.7.4. Using dictionaries

'Using dictionaries' is one of the most common strategies implemented by language learners. Dictionary use can be for 'receptive' (listening and reading) or 'productive' purposes (speaking and writing) (Scholfield, 1997). The first purpose, the 'receptive' one, refers to looking up a word while listening, reading or translating, confirming the meanings of partially known words, and confirming guesses. The second purpose, the 'productive' use, includes different aspects for instance, looking up unknown words for speaking, writing or translation, checking the pronunciation, meaning, grammar, collocations, confirming the spelling and looking for a different word to use instead of the known word (Nation, 2001:281). Nation (2001:282) added another aim to using dictionaries, that of 'learning' vocabulary in general. This includes selecting new vocabulary to learn and enriching one's knowledge about words partially known to them. The dictionary can be used by learners to search for information about both known and unknown words (Nation, 2001). Scholfield (1997) agrees with Nation (2001) that learners could learn new vocabulary directly from dictionaries. Nevertheless, the extent to which this strategy is useful in terms of enhancing the student's vocabulary remains questionable.

With bilingual dictionaries, the meaning of the unknown words can be found easily and they can be 'bi-directional' (L2 – L1 or L1 – L2), which makes them helpful when they are used for productive purposes; however, Nation (2001:290) advocates the use of monolingual dictionaries together with the bilingual ones for such purposes as they often have more information on each word than bilingual dictionaries. Scholfield (1997) suggests that monolingual dictionaries can affect the retention of new words better than bilingual ones because they require more effort and, consequently, deeper processing.

On the other hand, like any other strategy, dictionaries have drawbacks. Students may not want to interrupt their reading to look up a word and may ignore the new word in the hope that its meaning might be revealed later through the context (Rhoder & Huerster, 2002). The use of a dictionary might distract students' concentration while they are reading (Summers, 1988). Luppescu and Day (1993) found that students who used dictionaries spent more time reading a text than those who did not, implying that using dictionaries could decrease reading speed. Other researchers (e.g. Scholfield, 1997; Schmitt, 2000 & Nation, 2001) were more explicit in criticising bilingual dictionaries. Students might assume that there must be an L1 equivalent for every L2 word when using bilingual dictionaries and may find it difficult to use certain L2 words productively if they have no equivalent in the L1.

Learners' level is again crucial when '*Using dictionaries*'. Knight (1994) reported that the participants with low proficiency in her study benefited from '*Using a dictionary*' more than '*Inferring from context*', while the participants with high proficiency benefited from the latter more. In a recent study, Alhaysony (2011) suggested that students with high proficiency employed monolingual dictionaries more than students with low proficiency. This result is in line with Nation's (2001:283) suggestion that using monolingual dictionaries requires a high level of proficiency in English; therefore, most of the research on learners' monolingual dictionary use employed advance learners. This could be the reason why monolingual dictionaries are less popular with learners overall, as they need greater proficiency to use them (Scholfield, 1997).

Several studies were carried out to compare the effectiveness of bilingual and monolingual dictionaries. Luppescu and Day (1993) investigated the impact of using bilingual dictionaries whilst reading on students' vocabulary learning by involving 293 Japanese university students. The results showed that students who used a dictionary obtained higher scores on the vocabulary test given immediately after reading than those who did not. However, the

length of time that students could retain the new words for was not investigated. Hayati and Fattahzadeh (2006) explored this area by comparing monolingual dictionaries and bilingual ones in terms of their influence on new vocabulary retention. Sixty intermediate Iranian students were divided into two groups: monolingual and bilingual. A vocabulary recall test was given twice, once immediately after the reading task and then again two weeks later. However, the students were able to practise the new words throughout this time frame, which could suggest that the reason for retaining these words is not using dictionaries alone. The results interestingly showed that the type of dictionary used did not have a significant impact on retaining the new vocabulary. This finding challenges Scholfield's (1997) suggestion and the common belief that monolingual dictionaries are more useful than bilingual ones when consolidating new words and that using them involves a deeper process that positively affects retention.

Another study conducted by Al-Kahtani (2008) explored the effect of using computerised and printed bilingual dictionaries on learning vocabulary through reading and writing tasks and their impact on retaining new words. Sixty-eight Saudi university students were divided into four groups: 'computerised dictionary reading group', 'printed dictionary reading group', 'computerised dictionary writing group' and 'printed dictionary writing group'. The participants were asked to underline or highlight any word that they checked via the dictionary. The results revealed no significant impact of specific kinds of dictionaries on new vocabulary retention. However, there was a significant influence of the skill (reading and writing) on learning vocabulary, since the students in reading groups, especially those who deployed the computerised dictionary, gained more vocabulary than the writing groups. Despite the great effort put in designing a special test for each participant, it was not guaranteed that the students' underlined words were new for them because the students could use the dictionary to look up words which they partially knew. Al-Kahtani's (2008) finding has been supported by a study conducted by Chen (2010), who found no significant difference in terms of the effectiveness of paper dictionaries and the electronic ones.

To sum up, this section has highlighted the importance of '*Using dictionaries*' to get the meaning of the unknown words. The advantages and disadvantages of deploying this strategy were explained. It has been suggested that '*Using dictionaries*' is a useful strategy especially for low level learners. Also, the learners' level is important in using specific types of

dictionaries, since monolingual dictionaries seem to be more suitable for advance learners. In the next section, the current research on VLSs will be reviewed.

2.7.5. Studies on VLSs

Several studies have examined the impact of VLSs on vocabulary learning. Fraser's (1999) study examined the effect of using specific VLSs, ('ignore', 'consult' and 'infer') on vocabulary learning of 8 intermediate ESL learners. Explicit instruction on these strategies was given to the subjects (e.g. what the strategy was, when, where and how to use it), followed by instruction on the types of language knowledge (e.g. word structure (prefixes and suffixes) and grammatical function (noun, verb, adjective, adverb and conjunction). The study was carried out over five months, with eight data collection sessions. The subjects were engaged in a reading activity each session, followed by individual interviews, which were conducted to determine the strategies that the students had adopted. One week after each of these sessions, the subjects completed a cued recall task to examine their learning of the new words in the reading activity. However, between sessions, there were no ways to ensure that the students did not look up the meaning of the new words, which could mean that learning occurred due to these attempts rather than the reading activity. The results indicated that the participants used the strategies that were productive for word learning (consult and infer) more frequently than the unproductive ones (ignore). The author argues that the result supports the notion that reading for comprehension in L2 can be productive for vocabulary incidental learning. Also, word retention was high, especially when the participants used these strategies (infer followed by consult) together. This concurs with Hulstijn's (1993) finding that learners who are good at inferring prefer to confirm their guesses by using a dictionary.

There are few studies which have investigated the VLSs of Saudi learners. Two of these studies, Al-Fuhaid (2004) and Al-Qahtani (2005), will be discussed in more depth, since they explore one of the important aspects of this research, VLSs, and involved the same type of participants to the present research. Al-Fuhaid (2004) carried out research to determine the VLSs used by 50 Saudi students majoring in English who are in the final year and their evaluation of these strategies. This seems to be the only study which explores the evaluation of VLSs by Saudi learners. A questionnaire, a think-aloud protocol experiment and

interviews were used. The questionnaire relied heavily on Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy. The findings showed that these students thought they used VLSs quite infrequently mainly within a frequency range between "rarely" and "sometimes". They used more frequently course-related strategies (e.g. *'Using a bilingual dictionary'*, *'Studying the spelling of new words'* and *'Context-based strategies'*). Also, the participants seemed unaware of many strategies. The strategies which require active mental processing (e.g. keyword method, semantic mapping) were not commonly used and they seemed unknown to a considerable number of the students involved.

Al-Fuhaid (2004:200) argued that the reason that led the participants to use certain VLSs more frequently than others, as established through the students' interviews, was linked to the course demands. Also, encountering a large number of new words in a course makes students confused and unable to employ VLSs effectively. The participants' evaluation of the strategies was more positive than their reported use, as they evaluated some strategies that they said they did not use frequently or did not know. This suggests that learners may recognise the usefulness of a strategy that they do not usually use and might be willing to try new strategies if they are trained to use them (Schmitt, 1997). A think-aloud protocol experiment used in the study above indicated that some participants had deficiencies in both word-solving strategies and L2 vocabulary proficiency levels. It should be noted that think-aloud protocol experiments have several limitations, as Cohen (1994:678) points out. For example, cognitive processing is inaccessible, since certain mental processes that the participants go through when completing tasks are not, or at least not fully, reported. The kind of data obtained through such experiments might vary according to the nature of the task and the type of materials. Also, the participants may spend more time on guessing the meaning of new words from context than they would normally do. Another limitation of the study above is that the researcher relied on his experience in teaching and learning English to choose the text used and on the opinions of two staff members. The difficulty of the text was assessed by asking two students who graduated from the department to underline the new words. This means that the students' actual level of proficiency was not considered effectively.

Al-Qahtani (2005) conducted a similar study, but with different purposes. His research aimed to identify the VLSs used by students at different levels of education (intermediate, secondary and university), to see if there was a distinction and to determine if the strategies varied

depending on gender. In total, 402 Saudi students (170-intermediate, 152-secondary, 80-university English major, second year) were involved and various research tools were employed, including questionnaires, interviews and a student diary. The results revealed that *'Writing down the new words and their Arabic meaning only'*, *'Asking the Arabic meaning from others'*, *'Guessing the meaning from the context'* and *'Using a bilingual dictionary'* were the VLSs most frequently used by the subjects. It should be noted that VLSs requiring mental processing (e.g. *'Keyword method'*) were not commonly used, which corresponds to Al-Fuhaid's (2004) findings. In addition, the subjects reported in the interviews that they had not been taught or trained to use VLSs. The differences in results in these studies might be due to the different student samples used.

The results of Al-Fuhaid's (2004) and Al-Qahtani's (2005) study indicated the importance of teaching VLSs. Teachers may not have time in the class to explain many new words; therefore, training students on using different VLSs will help them to rely on themselves in learning more new vocabulary (Ghazal, 2007:87). Nation (2001) asserted that teachers should provide sufficient time for strategy training. Ghazal (2007:88) suggested some issues which should be considered before teaching VLSs. For example, teachers have to know which strategies are known and preferred by students. The strategies are affected by different factors, such as the proficiency level, task and context of learning (Chamot & Rubin, 1994). Students should be aware of the purpose of each strategy and when it can be useful. Also, students need to practise these strategies to use them effectively.

Although the complex VLSs were not perceived to be commonly used by Saudi students in the studies discussed above, the keyword method strategy was found to be useful for Saudi students in Alzahrani's research (2011). Over 90 Saudi students from two intermediate schools participated in her study and were divided into two groups: experimental and control. The first group was taught the words through the *'Keyword method'*, while the other group was taught the same words without using this method. The results revealed that using this strategy in teaching vocabulary had a positive effect on learners' vocabulary development and retention. Also, Sagarra & Alba (2006) found that the keyword method led to the best retention of words for 778 beginning learners of Spanish when compared with two other VLSs: memorising the L1 translation of L2 words, semantic mapping which is a diagram including L1 words conceptually relevant to the L2 word. The reason for this result, as the researchers of this study stated, was due to the fact that the keyword method requires deeper

processing of learning. The findings in these studies (Sagarra & Alba, 2006; Alzahrani, 2011) suggest that although the *'Keyword method'* is a complicated strategy, it can be used by beginning learners.

Another strategy which seems to be important to consolidate the new vocabulary is repetition. Al-Qarni (2003) examined the effect of four repetition strategies on the vocabulary retention of over 130 Saudi freshmen majoring in English. The students were divided into four groups and each group was introduced to one of the repetition strategies. The strategies consisted of: silent repetition by repeating the new vocabulary with their L1 translation, verbal repetition by repeating the new words with their L1 translation aloud, silent written repetition in which learners repeated the words silently whilst writing them down and verbal written repetition where learners repeated the vocabulary aloud while writing them down. Immediate recall and delayed recall tests were used to examine the vocabulary retention. The findings revealed that all of these strategies were effective in retaining vocabulary; however, the silent written repetition and verbal written repetition strategies were more effective than the others. Different repetition strategies were explored in this study, but the period between the immediate recall and delayed recall tests appeared to be short where more time was needed to measure the vocabulary retention more effectively.

Studies on VLSs were discussed in this section, especially those that were carried out in a Saudi context. These studies established that the complex VLSs were infrequently deployed by Saudi students involved in their studies. However, there was a discrepancy in students' reported awareness of using VLSs, which shows the necessity of teaching VLSs. These findings led to a conclusion that training students on using VLSs is crucial and should be considered. Finally, the *'Keyword method'* strategy and the repetition strategies were found to be helpful for vocabulary retention.

2.8. Learner and teacher autonomy

After reviewing the methods and techniques that teachers employ to explain unknown vocabulary and the VLSs which learners use, it seems crucial to consider both teachers' and learners' autonomy. The role of individuals' autonomy for teachers in teaching and learning vocabulary is a key factor in learners' vocabulary development.

In recent years, learner autonomy has received a great deal of attention in the field of EFL/ESL. Different terms are used to refer to learner autonomy such as 'individualisation' and 'learner independence' (Smith, 2008:395). Holec (1981:3), one of the first researchers to consider the concept, defined it as 'the ability to take charge of one's own learning'. Autonomy can be manifest in different ways, for example, in situations where learners study completely on their own, through skills which can be learned through self-directed learning, or by learners deciding their own way of learning (Benson & Voller, 1997:2). All of these have in common learners' ability to direct their own learning. Lee (1998:283) suggested several factors that are helpful to promote learners autonomy. These include 'voluntariness', where learners have the desire to be independent in learning, 'learner choice', where students decide how they manage this type of learning, and 'flexibility', which refers to students' ability to manage their learning relying on their individual needs and interests. Another key factor is that of 'teacher support', which guides students towards self-directed learning by, for instance, providing students with feedback and encouragement. 'Peer support' is also important for learner autonomy; this can be a social activity since a student can 'act independently and in cooperation with others, as a socially responsible person' (Dam, 1995:1). All of these factors appear to be relevant when learners deploy VLSs, although studies on vocabulary learning have paid little attention to learner autonomy. For example, students may need teacher support in explaining how different VLSs can be used effectively, as enabling students to use these strategies develops vocabulary learning autonomy. Similarly, some VLSs need assistance from peers in order to obtain information on new words.

Several researchers (Oxford, 1990; Wenden, 1991; Nunan, 1993) emphasise the role of teachers in promoting learning autonomy by teaching learning strategies. Yang (1998:128) argues that teaching learning strategies should be an essential part of language teaching rather than an additional activity. Cotterall (2000:109) states that learner autonomy is not the only purpose for students looking to complete a course, but it should be 'an essential goal of all

learning'. This suggests that learner autonomy is a process, which should be continually promoted in order to achieve language development. James (2006:151) argues that the main aim in teaching English is to help students transfer what they have learned in the classroom to the outside world. Teachers play an important role in helping students achieve this goal, for instance, by teaching them the strategies that are useful for their learning, strategies which they can deploy in and outside the classroom.

In the case of vocabulary learning, the key VLSs that are important when students read a text, for example guessing strategies and using dictionaries, can be explained to students in the classroom, in order to help them deploy these effectively whenever they read an English text. Teachers can also assist students in reading in English outside the classroom by guiding them to the types of texts that are suitable for their level of competence and meet their interests.

Reinders (2010) suggests a framework for a self-directed learning process, which involves both the teacher and the learner. The framework involves eight stages: first, at the 'identifying needs' stage, teachers decide learners' strengths and weaknesses using tests, and ask learners explicitly about their experience of learning and any foreseen challenges. Next, 'setting goals' and 'planning learning' help to determine the outcomes that learners expect from their learning and how they can achieve them. Then, 'selecting resources' and, and 'selecting learning strategies' can be done by training learners to deploy resources and learning strategies effectively. The following stage is 'practice', where learners need to practice self-directed learning, while the teacher's role is to provide assistance when needed. Finally, the last two stages involve 'monitoring progress' and 'assessment and revision', which involve examining learners' autonomy development by, for example, revising their learning plans and also helping them to assess their own learning.

Autonomy is not only relevant to learners, although the existing research focuses predominantly on learner autonomy, but is also relevant to teachers. Teachers' autonomy is a self-directed action or development, and free from the control of others (McGrath, 2000). Teachers experience autonomy in and outside the classroom. Teachers' autonomy in the classroom involves self-directed teaching, while outside the classroom it involves self-directed teacher-learning. It also involves 'teacher's ability to make decisions about teaching and their own professional development; and a set of teaching skills relevant for developing autonomy' (Shen, 2011:29). Educational institutions play a role in establishing teachers' autonomy (Benson, 2008:20). Leithwood *et al.* (2004) suggest that when teachers think that a

policy will impact negatively on their job or their creativity, they are more likely to resist efforts to accept that policy. This suggests that institutional policy substantially impacts on teachers' autonomy and could even minimise it. Teachers prefer to be unrestricted when making decisions about their teaching, since this impacts on their readiness to employ techniques which they believe are effective and useful for their students.

To sum up, this section has revealed that autonomy is important for both learners and teachers, despite the predominant focus on learners' autonomy in the literature. Also, it has showed that there is an interplay between teachers and learners in promoting autonomy. Teachers play a key role in fostering learners' autonomy by, for example, helping learners to select the materials that are most suitable for them, and teaching them how they can use learning strategies effectively. Although existing vocabulary research does not concentrate widely on autonomy, what has been suggested in this area in the field of language learning is clearly applicable to vocabulary learning.

2.9. The important role of textbooks in the EFL classroom

The textbook is an essential component when language is learned in the classroom context. Textbook use with regard to teaching and learning EFL is one of the issues that has been discussed widely in literature. Different perspectives have been considered on the role of textbooks in EFL. These perspectives will be discussed in this section.

A number of researchers argue that textbooks play a key role in the teaching methods employed by teachers. The structure and design of textbooks imply how the lessons can be conducted so they provide a framework for teachers to deliver the lessons (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994). Tomlinson (2008) agrees with this perspective and suggests that textbooks direct teachers on how they can teach lessons and, as a result, teachers mainly relied on the textbook's materials in their teaching. According to these perspectives, the teacher's autonomy seems to be minimised due to the strict structure of textbooks, which do not allow teachers to employ their own teaching methods. Other researchers refer to different issues surrounding the textbook; most notably those regarding culture, and argue that textbooks present different cultures from over the world (Hinkel, 1999; Modiano, 2001; Modiano, 2005; Taki, 2008). This suggests that textbooks do not only teach a language, but also introduce a new culture. Gray (2002:151) described the textbooks used in teaching English as

a 'global coursebook' and defined it as 'that genre of English language textbook which is produced in English-speaking countries and is designed for use as the core text in language classrooms around the world'. This means that the textbooks might not correspond to the culture of the learners who are using it.

Textbooks have advantages and disadvantages with regard to teaching and learning EFL. One of their advantages is that they provide available source of materials for teachers (Edge & Wharton, 1998). They are useful for inexperienced teachers as they assist them in conducting lessons in a communicative way (Mares, 2003). Textbooks can also be helpful for learners when the teaching they receive is ineffective (Litz, 2005). Also, they provide learners with a range of materials for self-accessed learning (Cunningsworth, 1995). This is beneficial for learners' autonomy due to the fact that when there is no prescribed textbook used in the classroom, learners will rely solely on their teachers (Ur, 1996). Richards (2001) states that textbooks are a key component in most language courses as they provide learners with the required input.

Other authors found that textbooks lead to some challenges in teaching EFL. These textbooks make teachers completely reliant on them in their teaching (Ur, 1996; Tomlinson, 2008). As a result, teachers teach the book rather than the language itself, and they may also not use their own materials as they think the textbook's materials are superior to theirs (McGrath, 2002). The structure of textbooks could prevent teachers and learners from being creative in their teaching and learning processes (Ur, 1996). Another problem with textbooks is that learners may not be interested in the topics used in them (Lee 1997). The key issue of these perspectives is that most of them did not refer to specific textbooks in their arguments. It seems that what is applicable in a certain textbook may not be applicable in another.

A number of studies have been carried out to evaluate certain textbooks in teaching and learning EFL. Few studies were conducted to evaluate the English textbooks used in Saudi schools. One of these studies is Al-sowat (2012), who evaluated the English textbook used in the first intermediate year by asking forty-eight male and female teachers to complete a questionnaire. The results revealed that although the textbook had some good points like covering most language skills, there were shortcomings provided by the teachers. For example, the textbook was not suitable for the students' proficiency level, there was no emphasis on the language used, as the textbook did not include interactive activities that helped learners to use the language, and the vocabulary load was not appropriate for learners.

This supports a study by Alamry (2008), who found that the English textbook used for the sixth primary school pupils considered all the language skills, according to the responses of 113 teachers and fourteen supervisors after completing a questionnaire. However, the textbook did not contain communicative activities, which helps learners to use English in real life. One of the main limitations of these studies is that they utilised one research instrument in their investigation and they did not allow them to explore the issue in more depth. Data was collected from teachers and supervisors only; however, learners, who play a central role in learning, were not considered. Also, analysis for the textbook examined was not carried out to determine whether the emerging data matched the teachers' perspectives or not.

In summary, this section has discussed the role of textbooks in EFL teaching and learning. It revealed that the textbooks present different cultures to learners. Also, the textbooks have advantages and disadvantages. The textbooks can help learners in their language learning by providing them with sources of materials that they can access without teachers and that promote their autonomy. They are also helpful for teachers to conduct their lessons as different activities are available. However, the structure of the textbooks could negatively affect teacher and learner autonomy as it impedes teachers from being creative in their teaching.

2.10. Factors that might affect vocabulary learning

This section discusses the key factors impacting on vocabulary learning. These factors include: age, L1 impact, motivation, exposure, attitudes, the role of the text type and intralexical factors. Some of these factors have been associated with teaching and learning vocabulary through reading, which is the focus of the current research. Each one of these factors may influence vocabulary learning in different ways for instance, the age of learners and their L1 could affect negatively their vocabulary pronunciation. Similarly, the exposure to the new words would help to learn them.

2.10.1. Age

Several studies have highlighted the benefits of starting to learn a new language as early as possible. Children normally have a slower rate of development in the target language and do not perform as well as older learners in the short-term, but over a longer period of time, they quite often surpass older learners (Miralpeix, 2007:62). Most of the studies concerned with age and learning EFL have focused on phonology and syntax, yet very few have concentrated on vocabulary (Miralpeix, 2007:63). One of these studies is Oxford and Scarcella's (1994) study, which argued that some aspects of the second language are rather difficult for adults to learn, while vocabulary is very learnable because maturational constraints do not prevent adults from learning it. Throughout their lives, new words are constantly added to people's knowledge of vocabulary.

In terms of meaning, unlike children who are conceptually unable to acquire certain words, adults are not constrained by cognitive development (Rosansky, 1975, cited in Oxford & Scarcella, 1994:234). For instance, adults easily understand words that have abstract concepts while children may have difficulty in comprehending the meaning of such words (Oxford & Scarcella, 1994:234). According to results from some previous studies (Swain, 1981; Cummins & Swain, 1986), older learners acquired more vocabulary than younger learners over the same period of time. Bearing this in mind, it seems plausible that the rate of second language vocabulary learning increases with age (Miralpeix, 2007:62). McLaughlin *et al.* (2004) studied the rate of second language vocabulary learning of adult learners during their first classes in a second language and they reached the conclusion that they learned the different aspects of the words quite fast (initially about form, and then about meaning). However, it seems that these studies focus on the meaning aspect to measure word knowledge while vocabulary knowledge involves other aspects, as shown before in section 2.6.

Miralpeix (2007) conducted research to investigate the possible effects of three independent variables: age of onset, cognitive maturity (age at testing) and amount of exposure to English, on the productive vocabulary of Spanish learners of EFL. The 93 participants were divided into groups with respect to the independent variables of the research. Fifty two of them began learning English at eight, whereas the others started at eleven. They performed four different tasks: three oral (an interview, a storytelling and a role play), and one written (a composition). The results yielded that the age one starts learning a language is not necessarily

advantageous for early starters, as late starters' productive vocabularies are very similar to those of their younger peers. However, it seems that the difference in the age between the participants when they started learning English was small, as all of them were children. A different result might have emerged by comparing this group of learners with an adult one.

On the other hand, in terms of pronunciation, most of the evidence indicates that people beyond the age of puberty, which is the critical period, do not acquire what has come to be called authentic (native-speaker) pronunciation of the second language (Brown, 2007:62). The 'Critical Period Hypothesis' claims that language can be acquired more easily during this period, however, exceeding this critical stage makes language increasingly difficult to acquire (Brown, 2007:57). Hence, the age of second language learning appears to be the most important predictor in terms of acquiring a foreign accent (Piske *et al.*, 2001:191). This makes it harder for adult learners to pronounce certain words like native speakers. However, this does not seem to be the ultimate goal for learners in learning pronunciation, as long as the words are pronounced clearly and are understandable for others. The notion of the critical period was once only connected to first language acquisition but in recent years, a plethora of research has appeared on the possible applications of the 'Critical Period Hypothesis' to second language contexts (Brown, 2007:57). The results of a recent study (Ojima *et al.*, 2010) supported the hypothesis that foreign language learning in childhood follows the same developmental stages of the first language acquisition.

Another study by Piske *et al.* (2001) has examined the influence of Italian-English bilinguals' age of second language learning, length of residence in a second language-speaking environment (Canada), gender, amount of continued first language (Italian) use, and self-estimated first language ability in relation to the degree of foreign accent in their second language. The results showed that both the age of second language learning and amount of continued first language use affect the degree of foreign accent. Gender, length of residence in a second language speaking country, and self-estimated first language ability, on the other hand, were not found to have a significant, independent effect on overall second language pronunciation accuracy. In fact, while many studies focused on the role of age in native like pronunciation, another factor rather than age emerged from this result, which is the amount of continued first language use.

Over the last few years, a number of studies have been conducted to explore whether native proficiency is possible for learners who begin learning a language after the critical period (Nikolov & Djigunovic, 2006:236). Evidence has emerged from these studies showing that adult learners may attain high foreign language competence, even reaching native or near-native levels (Lecumberri & Gallardo, 2003:117). Nevertheless, these studies have certain limitations. For instance, they often deal with multilingual societies where the foreign language is nearly a national second language, such as the case for English in Holland (Lecumberri & Gallardo, 2003:117). Moreover, some of them employed native judges whose accents were very different to the learners' model ones and who may have little experience in accents even in their own native language, so their judgements may not be accurate since they may interpret foreign pronunciations as native language variants. To conclude this discussion, the defendants of early age advantages often use arguments concerning pronunciation acquisition, whilst detractors often make the exception of pronunciation as the only linguistic component which may be affected by the starting age since it involves neuro-muscular skills (Lecumberri & Gallardo, 2003:117).

Finally, after discussing some issues on the role of age in learning vocabulary, it is worth noting that few of these studies have focused on vocabulary. Existing studies have concentrated heavily on the pronunciation aspect and ignore most of the other aspects regarding vocabulary knowledge. According to the studies reviewed, it seems that young learners may be more able to learn certain aspects of the word more effectively than adult learners and vice versa. For example, adult learners are more efficient than younger learners in comprehending the meaning of words, whilst young learners are more effective than adult learners in relation to pronunciation. However, it has been argued that starting to learn a language at an earlier age does not necessarily have an advantage over learning a language at a later stage in life, except in relation to pronunciation.

2.10.2. L1 impact

Odlin (2003:436) defines L1 impact as ‘the influence resulting from the similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired’. This impact can be positive or negative depending on the similarities and dissimilarities between L1 and L2 (Schmitt, 2010).

Ellis and Beaton (1993) found that the match of L1 and L2 phonological features had a positive influence on the learners’ ability to learn vocabulary. Similarly, de Groot (2006:466) argues that words with ‘cognate’ translation in L2 were learned far better than those with noncognate translation. ‘Cognate’ refers to ‘words with orthographical and phonological similarity between L1 and L2’ (Schmitt, 2010:73). However, the number of cognates between two languages might be low or there may be none between some languages. The examples that were given in de Groot’s (2006) study were for English and French words, which are Indo-European languages that may have cognates more than other languages such as English and Arabic, which are from different language groups. Although research has shown that cognates could be helpful in learning vocabulary, learners might encounter “false friends” which look as cognates but are actually not for instance, the English “actual” = real or true; the French “actuel” = current (Schmitt, 2010:73).

Altaha (1995) found that most of the pronunciation errors produced by Saudi learners of English were heavily affected by their L1. He collected these errors over a period of four years, by recording and analysing the students’ spoken English in different situations. These errors included, for example, ‘replacing an English phoneme by a phoneme from Arabic’ for instance, /ba:rti/ instead of /pa:ti/ “party”. The reason for these errors was due to some English phonemes not having an equivalent in Arabic. Altaha (1995) suggests certain ways to solve these errors. For example, teachers should explain to students the differences in pronunciation in their L1 and L2. Also, using the repetition of sentences to help the students distinguish between the phonemes could help, for instance, by asking students to repeat a sentence like “Could you put that book back, please?” in order to help them to distinguish between /p/ and /b/ phonemes. However, it seems that these suggestions need to be examined to measure their effectiveness, because learners might be able to repeat these sentences, but when they engage in an English conversation, they might pronounce these phonemes wrongly. More serious problems in learning L2 vocabulary emerge when their equivalents in L1 do not belong to the same part of speech category (Swan, 1997:169). For example, the

equivalent of the English preposition “under” in Arabic is /tahta/, which is considered as an adverb.

Ryan and Meara (1991) compared between ten Arabic, ten non Arabic English learners and ten native speakers of English in terms of their abilities to detect missing vowels. The subjects were asked to determine whether the two presentations of two English words were identical by pressing “yes” key or “no” key on the keyboard. Each word appeared on a computer screen for one second, then was blanked out for two seconds and the word reappeared either spelled correctly or in altered form with one vowel removed. The results showed that Arabic speakers made more errors than other groups and they were much slower in performing the task. The researchers argued that the reason that led to this result seemed to be the influence of L1 of Arabic learners, as the Arabic lexical system is very different to the English lexical system. English words consist of stable root and affixes added to this root while most Arabic words have a root that consists of three consonants and these three consonants can be combined with different patterns of vowels to produce a whole family of words that have a common meaning. For example, the root d-r-s combines with other vowel patterns to produce /mudarris/ “teacher”, /madrasa/ “school”, /darrasa/ “to learn”. Two points were not referred to by these researchers: the justification for engaging native speakers of English in this study and the role of individual differences in noticing abilities, which might play a role in their experiment.

Mahmoud (2002) carried out an empirical study to explore the L1 impact on using the English idioms by Arab learners. Data was paragraphs and essays written by 230 university students majoring in English, collected through the academic year. The total number of idioms was 129 found in 3220 pieces of writing, where 80% of these idioms were affected negatively by the students’ L1 and led to the wrong use of these idioms. Students translated the Arabic idioms into English literally for instance, “from time to another” (time). It appears that if students were taught these idioms and the difference between them and those in their native language, the L1 influence would decrease. In conclusion, L1 seems to be a difficult barrier to overcome for certain learners of English.

2.10.3. Motivation

Ellis (1997:75) defines motivation as ‘the attitudes and affective states that influence the degree of effort that learners make to learn a second language’. According to him, there are four types: ‘instrumental’, ‘integrative’, ‘resultative’ and ‘intrinsic’. ‘Instrumental motivation’ involves learners make the effort to learn a second language for functional reasons, such as to pass an examination, or to obtain a better job. ‘Integrative motivation’ refers to choosing to learn a specific second language because of an interest in the people and culture represented by the target language group. ‘Resultative motivation’ is derived from the result of learning, which means that learners who experience success in learning may become more motivated to learn. It means that successful learners might be more motivated to learn the language than challenging learners. ‘Intrinsic motivation’ is the arousal and maintenance of curiosity and can increase and decrease as a result of certain factors, for example, learners’ particular interests, and the extent to which they feel personally involved in the learning activities. Learners may have more than one type of motivation. For example, Saudi university students majoring in English may have ‘instrumental’ and ‘intrinsic’ motivation since speaking English fluently is a distinction when applying for a job.

Gardner (2007) divided motivation into two kinds rather than the four, including ‘language learning motivation’ and ‘classroom learning motivation’. ‘Language learning motivation’ is the overall motivation for learning a second language, while ‘classroom learning motivation’ refers to the motivation in the classroom situation. This division highlights the role of context in creating the motivation. It seems that these two types can be included amongst the motivation types suggested by Ellis (1997). The sources of motivation in relation to school emerge from an ‘educational context’, which refers to school subjects, and ‘cultural context’, which is not generally relevant to most school subjects (Gardner, 2007:13). This means that, the content of the subjects that students are taught might affect their language learning.

Qashoa (2006) conducted a study in order to find out the type of motivation, whether instrumental or integrative, that students have when learning English in an EFL context. 100 students learning English in secondary schools in the United Arab Emirates took part in his study, by completing a questionnaire. The results revealed that students had a higher degree of instrumental motivation rather than integrative motivation. It can be noted however that the focus on this study was only on two types of motivation. If all kinds of motivation were examined, different results may have emerged.

A number of factors can affect motivation in language learning, including *internal factors* and *external factors* (Williams & Burden, 1997:138). *Internal factors* include ‘intrinsic interest of activity, perceived value of activity, sense of agency (e.g. ability to set appropriate goals), mastery, self-concept, attitudes towards language learning in general, other affective states (e.g. confidence, developmental age and stage), and gender’ (Williams & Burden, 1997:138). *External factors* consist of ‘significant others like parents, teachers and peers, the nature of interaction with significant others, the learning environment and the broader context (e.g. the local education system)’ (Williams & Burden, 1997:139).

A number of authors have cited that teacher motivation is a crucial element in motivating learners (Macaro, 2003:112). Dörnyei and Csizer (1998) surveyed 200 teachers in order to find out what they thought the most important teaching strategies in motivating learners. Teachers identified certain ‘commandments’ to motivate learners. For example, creating a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom, developing a good relationship with the learners, increasing the learners’ linguistic self-confidence and making the language classes interesting were all mentioned.

While teachers can affect learning English positively, they can also demotivate learners. Keblawi (2005) conducted a study to explore the factors that demotivated learners to learn English in high schools in Israel. In total, 294 Arab students were asked to write about the factors that demotivated them. Also, interviews with 25 students as well as 10 teachers were conducted to investigate the topic further. The results yielded that teachers were referred to as demotivators (directly or indirectly) by almost half of the students. Also, over half of the students surveyed pointed to the difficulties in learning aspects of the English language such as grammar and vocabulary as a demotivating factor. The same finding was reported in Qashoa’s (2006) study.

With regard to vocabulary learning, several researchers who focus on vocabulary refer to motivation as an important factor that might affect productive vocabulary (Nation, 2001:183). Most of the studies in the field of vocabulary appear to focus on the role of the techniques used in the classroom to increase motivation as reported in the studies discussed in section 2.3. For example, Al-Jarf’s (2007) study showed that using technology in teaching vocabulary for Saudi students enhanced their motivation to learn English vocabulary. Yip and Kwan (2006) also noticed a positive effect on students when using online vocabulary games. The

view appears to be that ‘students can acquire more vocabulary when they are motivated and enjoy learning’ (Kojima, 2008:17).

Moreover, Alqahtani (2009) carried out a study to investigate the impact of using reading stories as a method for teaching English vocabulary to twenty pupils at a primary school in Saudi Arabia, to examine if this method could enhance students’ motivation in learning vocabulary. Vocabulary was taught to the experimental group by using stories, while explicit vocabulary instruction was used to teach vocabulary for the control group. A pretest, posttest, quizzes, classroom observations and a questionnaire were used to collect the data. The experimental group showed a greater vocabulary gain than the control group. Also, the results revealed that using stories in teaching vocabulary had a positive effect on students’ motivation to learn English vocabulary. The study had some limitations, for instance, the number of the subjects who took part was low, therefore, the findings cannot be generalised to EFL Saudi students in public schools. Although this study described the importance of teaching methods in terms of motivating students to learn vocabulary, the sample used may not be suitable for such study because the ability of the participants to read stories at this stage, which is the first year for them in learning English, is limited as they may not have sufficient lexical knowledge to assist them when reading stories in English.

To sum up, the studies discussed in this section showed that motivation has a crucial role in language learning. Certain factors could affect this, for instance, the teacher and the context. When learning vocabulary, the techniques used by the teacher are important.

2.10.4. Exposure

Exposure to the target vocabulary has been considered by several authors (e.g. Zahar *et al*, 2001; Ellis, 2002; Webb, 2007; Pellicer-Sánchez & Schmitt, 2010; Chen & Truscott, 2010) as an important factor in learning vocabulary. Webb (2007) conducted research to find out the effects of repetition of the same word in a text (1, 3, 7, and 10 encounters) on word knowledge. One hundred and twenty one Japanese students, all of them having studied English for a minimum of seven years, were divided into five groups: a control group and four experimental groups. Each experimental group completed a vocabulary comprehension task, which included reading a set number of pages. Each page presented ten contexts, each

context containing a different target word. The context was one or two sentences long. Ten target words were replaced by nonsense words. In short, after reading one page, the participants had seen each target word once. The number of occurrences of each target word was different for each group. Ten tests measuring students' knowledge of orthography, association, grammatical functions, syntax, meaning and form were administered after the treatments. Overall, greater gains were found in at least one aspect of knowledge each time the repetitions increased. The researcher concluded that if the new words are encountered in a context for ten times, reasonable vocabulary development might occur; however, to have full knowledge of a word, more than ten repetitions may be required.

An important point in the above study is the replacement of target words by nonsense words. The researcher argued that replacing target words by nonsense words ensures that participants have no prior knowledge of the target word and whatever gains are made can be attributed entirely to the treatment. Another reason to use them is that contexts where the learners are likely to know all of the running words can be used while if real target words are used, it makes it difficult to find a context where all the running words are known.

Webb (2007) concluded that using nonsense words is not always necessary, but it might be a beneficial tool that could help researchers to explain the inconsistencies between studies. Hence it seems that using this technique in vocabulary research depends on the aims of the study. However, nonsense words have been used only in few studies such as, those by Waring and Takaki (2003), Pulido (2007) and Webb (2007). In addition, the number of target words and sentences used in the tests were limited, which might have helped the participants to achieve a better performance in tests

Webb's (2007) findings were supported by Chen and Truscott's (2010) study, which revealed similar results. Chen and Truscott's (2010) study described Webb's research as a tightly controlled experiment, and as a result, they emphasised the ecological validity by using real English words in their experiment. Also, reading passages were used rather than isolated sentences. Likewise, Pellicer-Sánchez and Schmitt's (2010) utilised a novel in their study and concentrated on specific words knowledge (spelling, word class and meaning). Furthermore, they conducted interviews with the participants to check their suitability for this task, but it is not clear if these interviews were sensitive enough to determine that much more than the standard language proficiency tests.

To sum up, this part has shown the importance of exposure to vocabulary in learning. It focused on the exposure to the new words in a text and showed the role of encountering the unknown vocabulary repeatedly in vocabulary development. Evidence suggests that the more one encounters a new word in a text, the more likely its learning.

2.10.5. Attitudes

Gardner (1980:267) defined attitude as “the sum total of a man’s instincts and feelings, prejudice or bias, preconceived notions, fears, threats, and convictions about any specified topic”. Attitudes have three components: ‘cognitive’, ‘affective’ and ‘behavioural’. A cognitive component deals with one’s beliefs and ideas or opinions. The affective one considers the feelings and emotions, likes or dislikes, with or against. Finally, the behavioural component points to ‘one’s consisting actions or behavioural intentions towards the object’ (Wenden, 1991).

Ellis (1994) argues that several factors could affect students’ abilities to learn a second language and these are: ‘their attitudes towards the target language’, ‘the target language speakers and their culture’, ‘the social value of learning the second language’, and also ‘the students’ attitudes towards themselves as members of their own culture’. According to Brown (2000:181), positive attitudes are helpful for second language learners by motivating them to learn while negative attitudes might lead to the reverse. This identifies two types of attitudes: ‘positive’ and ‘negative’. It seems that these types are associated with motivation and could affect it positively or negatively.

Most of the EFL studies that deal with students’ attitudes tend to focus on their attitudes towards learning English in general rather than concentrating on a particular language aspect for example, learning vocabulary. Also, other studies, as already shown in section 2.3, have examined students’ attitudes towards implementing a specific teaching method (e.g Al-Jarf, 2007; Al-Homoud & Schmitt, 2009; Al-Nofaie, 2010 & Alshammari, 2011).

Other studies have considered the attitudes of learners towards reading. However, most of these studies concern the attitudes towards extensive reading rather than intensive reading. This may be due to the fact that most language textbooks include intensive reading in their

content while extensive reading should be employed by the teacher or the learner. Therefore, extensive reading might not be as familiar to students as the intensive reading which is practised through textbook lessons. Al-Homoud & Schmitt (2009) reported, as discussed in section 2.5, that students had more positive attitudes towards extensive reading rather than intensive reading. Similarly, several studies (e.g. Tse, 1996; Camiciottoli, 2001; Morgado, 2008) conducted on extensive reading showed similar attitudes from learners. For example, Camiciottoli's (2001) research examined the frequency of reading and the attitudes towards extensive reading in English of 182 Italian EFL students. The findings revealed that the respondents showed positive attitudes towards reading, although the rate of their reading was quite low. There was also a significant correlation between reading in Italian and experience in English-speaking culture with both reading frequency and attitudes. The same result was established between the past access to English books and attitudes towards reading. However, the correlation between the numbers of years spent studying English and reading attitudes was negative. Despite this research has demonstrated an interesting point regarding the frequency of reading in English for EFL learners and the factors that could affect it, the research instrument appeared to be insufficient to explore this area further.

Likewise, the subjects in Morgado's (2008) study also revealed students' positive attitudes towards extensive reading. They expressed their enjoyment and felt that extensive reading was beneficial for their vocabulary development, reading comprehension, reading skills and confidence. Overall, most students who took part in studies on attitudes towards reading showed positive attitudes.

In summary, the role of the learners' attitudes in learning English with focusing on their attitudes towards reading as a strategy of learning was discussed in this part. It has been shown that having positive attitudes is important in learning English and plays a role in motivating learners.

2.10.6. The role of the text type in learning vocabulary

The type of text that learners read has a key role in learning vocabulary. When learners read a text which is familiar to them, this may positively affect their vocabulary learning, as will be shown in this section. According to schema theory, the memory system contains ‘an enormous number of schemata and each schema contains many components, parts, or slots, which are hierarchically linked, representing the relationships among the components relative to the schema in question’ (Rumelhart & Ortony, 1977:128, Anderson and Pearson, 1984; Carrell, 1988 cited in Al-Shumaimeri, 2006:5). Nunan (1993:124) defined the schema theory as ‘a theory of language processing which suggests that discourse is interpreted with reference to the background knowledge of the reader or listener’.

Studies on the relationship between schemata and reading comprehension were first conducted on English as a first language and suggested that such knowledge has a significant role in comprehension (Johnston, 1984; Lipson, 1983; Steffensen *et al*, 1979; Recht and Leslie, 1988) which was supported by findings on L2 studies (Al-Shumaimeri, 2006:5). Research showed that having prior knowledge about a reading text has a positive role in inferring the meaning from context and in retaining the new words (Pulido, 2007:67).

Al-Shumaimeri (2006) explored the role of text familiarity in reading comprehension by asking 132 Saudi university students majoring in English to read two types of texts: familiar and unfamiliar. The familiar text was about “The Titanic” and was 182 words, whilst the unfamiliar text was entitled “The Jet Stream” and was 191 words. The results indicated that the familiarity of the text facilitates reading comprehension. The topic of texts used appeared to be suitable for investigating the aim of the study; however, the difficulty of the texts was not appropriate because the participants’ level of proficiency varied. The texts used seemed more appropriate for students of lower proficiency rather than the advance ones. In addition, only a multiple choice test was used to examine students’ comprehension, which might have been insufficient.

Pulido (2007) investigated this area further by exploring the effect of topic familiarity and passage sight vocabulary (vocabulary knowledge associated with a text) on guessing from context and retention. Thirty five learners of Spanish participated in this study by reading two narrative passages; one that was familiar to them and one that was not. The new words used were nonsense words to confirm that the learners did not have prior knowledge of them. The

findings showed that there is a significant impact of topic familiarity and passage sight vocabulary on guessing and retention. The use of nonsense words has some drawbacks as pointed out earlier in section 2.10.4.

Al-Shumaimeri (2006:6) summarised the reasons that might lead certain learners to not use their background knowledge about what they read. Learners use their background knowledge insufficiently due to being 'linguistically bound'. When a text includes vague words, this will make it more difficult for students to establish the link between new information and what they already know. Learners may lack concentration when reading difficult texts which might contain many new words and as a result, they become unable to activate the suitable schema. It can be noted that all of these causes are linked to the level of difficulty of the text, hence it could be suggested that students may focus on obtaining the meaning rather than understanding the context. However, L2 knowledge is not the only factor that prevents learners from using their background knowledge (Grabe & Stoller, 2002).

One of the texts that can be used in the classroom is the literary text. Employing literature in teaching EFL/ESL has been considered by many authors (e.g. Robson, 1989; Langer, 1997; Stern, 2001; Ghosn, 2002; Erkaya, 2005; Khatib *et al.*, 2011; Aghagolzadeh & Tajabadi, 2012). Aghagolzadeh and Tajabadi (2012:205) reviewed the reasons provided by researchers who suggest using literature in teaching EFL, and summarised these reasons by stating that using literature in teaching promotes 'students' cultural understanding, facilitates critical thinking and improves language skills and all of these advantages are caused by the authentic nature of literature'. Literary texts can be used for both intensive and extensive reading. However, novels are more suitable for extensive reading, while poetry is more appropriate for intensive reading (Khatib *et al.*, 2011). Such a claim needs to be examined through empirical research to find out which literary texts are suitable for each type of reading. Vocabulary knowledge can be enhanced through using literary texts (Khatib *et al.*, 2011). Much research on learning vocabulary through reading has used literary texts and supported this suggestion, as shown earlier in section 2.3.

However, other researchers are against using these texts in the classroom. Due to the lexical difficulty of literature, this provides 'little or nothing to help students to become competent users of the target language' (Robson, 1989:25). Others argue that the words used in literature may be old and outdated (Khatib *et al.*, 2011). Nevertheless, teachers are not bound to deploy old literary texts as they can use texts from modern literature (Khatib *et al.*, 2011). Teachers

should use different types of texts and not concentrate solely on one particular type to meet the interests of most students.

Most research tends to focus on using literary texts rather than other types of texts such as newspapers. One of the few studies on using newspapers in the classroom is Kyongho and Nation's (1989) research, which established that the type of newspaper articles used in the class has a significant effect on the repetitions of the unknown words for students who have limited vocabulary knowledge. They suggested that newspaper articles employed in teaching should be thematically related (e.g. a story and its follow ups) in order to reduce the vocabulary load for the students and to provide them with the opportunity to learn new words.

Cruz (2010) describes literature as 'a rich source of authentic material' (Aghagolzadeh & Tajabadi, 2012:206). According to Wallace (1992:145), authentic texts are 'real- life texts, not written for pedagogic purposes'. The aim of using this material is 'to fulfil some social purpose in the language community' (Little *et al*, 1989:25 cited in Peacock, 1997:146). Berardo (2006) justified using authentic materials in the classroom by stating that 'the learner will not encounter the artificial language of classroom but the real world and language how it is really used'. Aghagolzadeh and Tajabadi (2012:206) agreed with this suggestion that the language used in textbooks is 'artificial' since it does not reflect the use of the language in life.

The main advantages of using authentic materials in the classroom include: having a positive effect on student motivation; giving authentic cultural information; exposing students to real language; relating more closely to students' needs and supporting a more creative approach to teaching (Philips and Shettlesworth 1978; Clarke 1989; Peacock 1997, cited in Richards, 2001). One of the disadvantages of using these texts is that they can be 'too culturally biased', which means that the reader must have sufficient knowledge about the culture featured in the text (Martinez 2002 cited in Berardo, 2006:65). Also, they include 'difficult language', 'unneeded vocabulary items' and 'complex language structures', which can lead to difficulties, not only for the learner, but for the teacher as well (Richards, 2001 cited in Berardo, 2006:65).

When it comes to the length of the text to be used in the classroom, Thornbury (2006:322) argues that short texts are more suitable for implementation in the classroom because 'they

can be subjected to intensive grammatical and lexical study, without overtaxing learners' attention or memory'. Short texts can be an initial step in preparing learners for independent reading with longer texts. This suggestion seems to be applicable to all learners, including advanced learners who are able to deal with long texts as a short text does not necessarily mean that it is an easy text. Thus, short texts can be employed in the classroom of advanced learners as well.

Lastly, this part has revealed that having background knowledge about the text and being familiar with its topic appears to be useful for reading comprehension as well as vocabulary development. Different reasons could influence learners for not employing their background knowledge such as, the difficulty of the text by including many unknown words. Various types of texts such as literary texts and newspaper articles were found to be beneficial when used in the reading activities.

2.10.7. Intralexical factors

Intralexical factors are related to the word's features itself. They are 'the intrinsic properties of the word which may affect its learnability, properties which are related to the word's form and meaning' (Laufer, 1997:141). Different intralexical factors could influence vocabulary learning for example, 'orthography', 'length' and 'similarity of lexical forms' (Laufer, 1997:142).

The degree of sound-script correspondence in a word plays a role in making this word easy or difficult to learn (Laufer, 1997:144). When the pronunciation of the word does not reflect the sound of its letters, it could make this word difficult to learn which could then lead to errors in both spelling and pronunciation. For example, the difference in pronunciation of the letter 'i' in the words "divide" and "diverse". Drucker (2003:23) claims that 'differences between languages with deep orthographic structures (having many irregular sound-letter correspondences) versus shallow ones (having mainly regular sound-letter correspondences) might cause difficulty for some non-native readers of English'. Knowing the orthography of English appears to be helpful for EFL/ESL learners to improve their reading for the text. 'Efficient readers use a variety of orthographic data to recognise word units, such as individual letters, letter clusters, morphemes, word stems, and word patterns' (Spencer and

Hay, 1998:222). Teachers may play a role in developing the orthographic knowledge of learners by explicitly explaining the phoneme-grapheme irregularities in English when they are encountered in a lesson.

Longer words also might be more difficult to learn because there is more to learn and remember (Laufer, 1997:144). All of these factors seem to be associated because if a word is long or if its orthography does not represent the sound of a letter, it could affect the learners' ability to pronounce it correctly. Another difficulty occurs when multiple words can represent one meaning, which means that 'meaning and form do not always have a one-to-one correspondence' (Schmitt, 2010:49). Similarly, many English words could have different meanings. Therefore, when learners read a text and guess the meaning of an unknown word, they obtain only one meaning if this word has several meanings. Other words could have similar forms which may also lead to a difficulty in vocabulary learning (Laufer, 1997:146). Laufer and Sim (1985) found that this type of words could affect reading comprehension for advanced learners. The learners reported that they did not recognise that these words were new because they were similar to words that were already known to them; for instance, (cancel/conceal; assume/consume).

Saigh and Schmitt (2012) found that Arab learners have more difficulties with words that include short vowels than the words that have long ones. Twenty four Arab ESL learners took part in this study by answering a spelling test including 80 sentences, half of these sentences contained target words with short vowels and the other half containing target words with long vowels. Some of the target words had a spelling error whilst the others did not. The participants were asked to check each sentence to find if there was a spelling error. The result of this study, which showed that Arab learners have some difficulties in learning certain vocabulary more than others, supports Laufer's (1997) suggestion that some words can be harder to learn than others due to the intralexical features they have.

To sum up, this section has shown to what extent the features of a word could impact vocabulary learning. Different features were discussed: "orthography", "length" and "similarity of lexical forms". It has revealed that when a word has irregular sound-letter correspondences or is considered to be a long word in terms of the number of letters, it may make it harder to learn than words that do not have these features. Also, words that have similar forms could lead learners to become confused.

2.11. Gaps in the literature and rationale for the current research

After discussing current research on vocabulary, a clear justification for undertaking this research is required, based on the gaps that were identified through reviewing the literature. Firstly, most vocabulary teaching and learning research aims to identify the effectiveness of a particular teaching technique based on pre-tests and immediate post-tests, as seen in this chapter. This approach makes it difficult to confirm that the target words are new to the participants, although some authors (Meara, 1989; Webb, 2007) have tried to adopt innovative ways. Moreover, the setting of these studies is mainly artificial, since the researchers try to control factors that could influence the experiment to ensure that learning occurs due to the treatment provided. Schmitt (2010) describes the limitations of this type of research. For example, only a few exposures to the target vocabulary may not lead to long-term acquisition and thus the immediate post-tests may be unable to determine the degree of learning. In addition, learning is not linear, so the rate of learning is not constant. Schmitt (2010) suggests that longitudinal studies and delayed post-tests are needed to examine the effectiveness of vocabulary teaching techniques. Therefore, the present research will be non-experimental, in order to avoid such limitations, and will be conducted in a natural environment as will be explained in the next chapter.

In addition, the vocabulary studies which have examined learning vocabulary through reading were mainly experimental. Some of these studies explored the relationship between vocabulary and reading (Zhang and Annual, 2008; Brown, 2010), while others have investigated the effectiveness of learning vocabulary in conjunction with reading (e.g. Al-Homoud and Schmitt, 2009; Sonbul and Schmitt, 2010). Questionnaires were provided to the participants in some of these studies at the end of the experiment, to explore their attitudes toward learning vocabulary through reading. However, it appears that the attitudes indicated by the participants were towards the experiment rather than learning vocabulary via reading, as these attitudes may change when different texts are used or when another teacher adopts this technique. Hence, the subjects in the current research will not be exposed to experimental conditions and their attitudes will be considered in light of their experiences of learning vocabulary through reading overall their education.

Secondly, there are very few vocabulary studies carried out in the Saudi context, so further research is needed. Although existing studies (Al-Fuhaid, 2004 & Al-Qahtani, 2005) examined VLSs of Saudi university students majoring in English, they all looked at students

in one university only. Also, their samples were between 47 and 80 students, so a larger sample might help to investigate this area further. Therefore, this research will aim to involve over 100 participants from different universities and cities and the results will be compared with those yielded by previous studies. Furthermore, existing studies relied heavily on the frequency of using VLSs (Schmitt, 2010:93), while the present research will explore the VLSs identified by students as the most useful and the strategies students felt competent in using while reading.

Thirdly, while there are some studies which investigate English teaching methods and teaching vocabulary in Saudi schools (Al-Nafisah, 2001; Al-Akloby, 2001), none have explored vocabulary teaching techniques in Saudi universities or the procedures used to teach vocabulary through reading. Therefore, both the environment and the participants are different in the present research. Finally, most of the vocabulary research concentrates on learning vocabulary knowledge aspects rather than exploring the aspects that teachers focus on. Also, most existing research in vocabulary studies involved the learners as participants, whereas in the current research teachers will be considered as well. Thus the research topic will be explored through different data sources and different research instruments.

Based on these gaps, the current research aims to investigate three issues: firstly, it aims to examine how teachers of English in Saudi universities introduce new vocabulary in the classroom, by looking at the teaching techniques they use. Secondly, it aims to identify the VLSs that are most frequently deployed and seen as useful by Saudi students. It is thought that by exploring these two issues together, the study will provide an insight into the teaching and learning of vocabulary since students in a university context. Thirdly, the teachers' and students' attitudes toward vocabulary learning through reading will be explored as part of the proposed study.

The findings from the literature review suggested that teaching and learning vocabulary are closely linked, as teachers' input and the teaching strategies they use play a key role in students' vocabulary learning. By aiming to investigate both vocabulary teaching techniques employed by teachers and the VLSs employed by students, the proposed study will aim to report on the effectiveness of teachers' techniques by evaluating these in relation to the VLSs used by the students. It is thought that the examination of vocabulary teaching techniques will be a useful process for understanding whether teachers are promoting learners' autonomy, for example, by explaining to them how they can deploy VLSs effectively or by guiding them in

using a wide range of English texts. When investigating these two issues (teaching and learning vocabulary) through the same study, the views of both teachers and students will be considered, allowing thus to examine these issues from two different perspectives. It is hoped that by including both teachers' and learners' perspectives in the research, the study will offer a more complete picture of teachers' approaches to teaching vocabulary and how effective these are, from both teachers' and learners' views. Furthermore, as this study relied on subjective reports from teachers and students, it is thought that combining both their views with observations of practice would enhance the reliability of the findings reported.

2.12. Identifying the research questions for the current study

The review presented above on the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching and learning vocabulary was helpful to underpin the research questions. The three research questions discussed below were identified based on the gaps in the knowledge discussed in section 2.10. above. More specifically, the research questions for the present study are as follows:

- 1- What are the teaching techniques used to teach vocabulary in reading and vocabulary classes in Saudi universities?

I considered the investigation of teachers' vocabulary teaching techniques as the main focus of the study, as previous studies have mainly focussed on the effectiveness of employing a specific teaching technique. Several vocabulary teaching techniques were discussed in the literature review chapter and each study suggested a particular technique as effective for vocabulary learning. This study looked at which of these techniques were employed by teachers at Saudi universities and how those teachers and their students perceived these teaching techniques. At the same time, most authors have explored vocabulary learning rather than vocabulary teaching. Therefore, the focus of the present study will be on investigating the general approach that teachers in Saudi universities employ in teaching vocabulary through reading and explain these in the context of current theories of second language learning. The study will also examine the role of teachers' autonomy in teaching vocabulary as an important dimension of classroom interaction.

- 2- Which vocabulary learning strategies are perceived as useful by Saudi students and which do they feel most competent in when learning vocabulary through reading?

The review has indicated a clear gap in current research on adult students' views on the vocabulary learning strategies they use when learning English through reading. By investigating students' views, in addition to teachers' views, it is hoped that the study will offer a better understanding on how the processes of teaching and learning vocabulary used in Saudi universities are effective, or not, as seen by the participants to the teaching and learning process. Many studies have explored how often learners use VLSs, therefore, the present study deals with a different aspect of students' VLSs and aims to frame this by using current theories of second language learning. A number of VLSs can be used in vocabulary learning as researchers suggested and several studies were conducted to explore the effectiveness of using specific strategies. The current study explores which of these strategies were used by Saudi students while reading. Since the role of the teacher in using these strategies was not highly examined in the literature, the study will explore the role of the teacher with regard to the students' competence while using VLSs. The importance of learner autonomy was shown in the literature chapter; therefore, it was thought that exploring VLSs in the present study would reveal the students' autonomy in vocabulary learning.

- 3- What are the attitudes of teachers and students at Saudi universities towards learning vocabulary through reading?

This question will focus on attitudes to vocabulary learning through reading, since it is thought that attitudes influence teachers' and students' behaviours. By examining their attitudes, what teachers and students think about the role of reading in developing vocabulary knowledge, and the reasons for holding these attitudes, the study will aim to explore the challenges the teachers and students encounter when reading is used as a strategy to develop vocabulary learning. Some of these challenges were presented in the literature review chapter as factors, which could affect vocabulary learning; for example, motivation, attitudes, the role of the text type in learning vocabulary and intralexical factors.

2.13. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the most important aspects related to teaching and learning vocabulary from both theoretical and practical perspectives, especially in relation to those that concern learning and teaching vocabulary through reading. It showed that the teaching of vocabulary and reading is presented differently in each English language teaching method. In addition, vocabulary can be taught by using various methods and techniques, such as using L1 and L2, teaching it through reading, and using pictures and videos. The relationship between vocabulary and reading was discussed and considered as a mutual relationship. It was revealed that knowing a word involves knowledge of different aspects, such as its spelling, pronunciation and usage rather than the meaning alone. Various VLSs have been discussed throughout this chapter and the strategies that were heavily investigated in vocabulary research, for instance, guessing the meaning of a word from the context and using dictionaries have been discussed. The review then concluded by discussing the most important factors that influence vocabulary learning i.e. age, L1 impact, motivation, exposure, attitudes, the role of the type of text used and intralexical factors. By identifying specific gaps in current knowledge, the final part of the chapter outlined the rationale for the study and the emerging research questions.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the research questions and provides an overview of the research approaches, which comprise qualitative and quantitative. The chapter overviews their features, advantages and disadvantages. The research instruments which were utilised are considered, followed by a discussion of the concepts of reliability and validity. When these research approaches and instruments are discussed, their status in terms of vocabulary research will also be shown. Finally, the research design of the study conducted is explained, by giving a description of each of the research instruments used, followed by an outline of the sample, the procedure used, as well as the ethical issues involved.

3.2. Epistemological stance

Despite the fact that philosophical concepts are not always stated explicitly in research (Slife & Williams, 1995), they influence the research process and should be stated (Creswell, 2009:5). The epistemological stance in the current research will be discussed in this section. Epistemology is ‘a field of philosophy concerned with the possibility, nature, sources and limits of human knowledge ... it is concerned with whether or how we can have knowledge of reality’ (Jupp, 2006:92). Different epistemological stances can be adopted when conducting a research, for example, positivism, interpretivism, critical theory and postmodernism (Scott, 2000:42). The focus in this section is on discussing in more depth positivism and interpretivism, which have influenced the present research.

Positivism can be defined as ‘an approach to social research that seeks to apply the natural science model of research to investigating social phenomena’ (Nudzor, 2009:116). It is based on the belief that the real world exists ‘out there’ and it can be investigated and described (Scott, 2000:49). In other words, the positivism approach aims to explore facts and deals with what can be seen. The knowledge in this approach depends on ‘observation’ and

‘measurement of the objective reality’ (Creswell, 2009:7). Positivists tend to study causes that lead to specific effects, such as experimental studies (Creswell, 2009:7). Positivists state that it is important for the researcher to be objective (Philips & Burbules, 2000). This suggests that the researchers’ views on the topic under investigation do not appear to influence the research process. However, several authors (MacDonald, 1993; Carr, 1995; Boyd, 2000) argue that research cannot be ‘value-free’ and researchers have ‘often unconscious’ values which are reflected in their research (Greenbank, 2003:792).

One other research approach is interpretivism, which explores ‘the way individual human beings create meaning in their lives’ (Scott, 2000:52). One of the features of interpretivism is that the ‘subjectivity’ of the researcher plays a key role in research (Greenbank, 2003:793). While the quantitative approach is always adopted from a positivist stance and the qualitative approach is utilised from the interpretivist stance, the quantitative approach can also be used from an interpretivist stance (Greenbank, 2003:793). Most studies in vocabulary research seem to derive from a positivist stance, since they are mainly experimental studies exploring the impact of using a particular teaching technique or VLS on learners’ vocabulary learning. These studies offer rely on numeric data that are gathered through pre-tests and post-tests.

One of the limitations of positivism mentioned by the literature is that it relies on a scientific position, which made it suitable for specific research areas (Denscombe, 2002:16). Positivism is limited in investigating social issues; for instance, religion and the family system which have ‘different areas of discourse’ (Nudzor, 2009:117). This indicates that positivism seems to be more suitable for investigating scientific topics rather than social ones. In this sense, Williams and May (1996:70) stated that ‘the search for the authentic, or the real in the social world, is a misguided venture’. The findings emerged from positivism described as superficial as researchers put more effort on controlling the variables that affect their experimental research rather than focusing on the sample that is investigated such as, teachers and students (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). This implies that it is not always certain that this approach provides accurate results.

Interpretivism has also limitations (Nudzor, 2009:118). Its first limitation is that it lacks reliability, as subjectivity plays a key role in interpreting the data. What the researchers believe about the research issue and their understanding of it affects their data interpretation. It can be difficult for interpretivists to avoid their beliefs and understanding about the issue they investigate. This limitation could lead interpretivists to provide inaccurate and

unbalanced views on what they are exploring. Interpretivism deals with ‘common belief’, which could provide a ‘deeper’ and more ‘meaningful’ understanding of social issues, which cannot be achieved when scientific issues are investigated. This suggests that interpretivism is more suitable to investigate areas of a social nature rather than a scientific one.

Although positivism and interpretivism apply different approaches for ‘knowledge construction’, they can be combined in order to avoid the weaknesses in each (Nudzor, 2009:119). The current research was conducted from both a positivist and an interpretivist stances, since it used a mixed method approach in investigation by exploring teachers’ and students’ behaviours while teaching and learning vocabulary is practised. It employed quantitative techniques, (a questionnaire which provided numerical data) and also qualitative techniques (the interviews and the classroom observations). This mixed method approach that was used in the study will be discussed in the next section.

3.3. Research approaches

Three different research approaches are considered in this section: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. Their features and the differences between them are clarified. Also, examples of some of the vocabulary studies in EFL/ESL that have adopted these approaches are provided.

3.3.1. Qualitative research

Qualitative research is a ‘powerful’ research approach and useful information can emerge if the researcher manages the research appropriately (Newby, 2010:123). Denzin & Lincoln defined qualitative research as follows:

It is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. They turn the world into a series of representations. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to their lives (2000:3).

Likewise, Newby (2010:115) states that ‘qualitative research is concerned with understanding how people choose to live their lives, the meanings they give to their experiences and their feelings about their condition’. Its main purpose is ‘to understand better some aspect(s) of the lived world’ (Richards, 2003:10). The qualitative approach has been adopted in ESL/EFL vocabulary studies as a means to explore in depth the results yielded from the studies which have adopted quantitative approach, as discussed in the literature review chapter (e.g. Al-Qahtani, 2009 and Al-Homoud & Schmitt, 2009). More about combining these two approaches appears in section 3.4.3. Flick (2006) identified four key issues relevant to qualitative research:

1. ‘Appropriateness of methods and theories’: methods used in empirical studies can determine the suitability of the ideas and results of these studies.
2. ‘Perspectives of the participants and their diversity’: qualitative research deals with the participants’ knowledge, practices and interactions. For example, vocabulary studies can identify the participants’ attitudes towards specific teaching techniques.
3. ‘Reflexivity of the researcher and the research’: this is one of the distinctive features of qualitative research since the researcher relies on the participants’ feelings and impressions, which are data that can be interpreted.
4. ‘Variety of approaches and methods in qualitative research’: qualitative research does not depend exclusively on a particular theoretical and methodological concept, but on a number of different approaches and methods.

Newby (2010) describes qualitative research as ‘a naturalistic form of enquiry’, which means that qualitative research is carried out in natural situations. Since most vocabulary studies are experimental (Schmitt, 2010:155), this approach is not commonly used in vocabulary research, where the research environment tends to be artificial. Some of existing studies have attempted to use natural settings, in which the participants were however unaware that they were observed (Al-Homoud & Schmitt, 2009). Also, qualitative research is ‘emergent’ rather than ‘tightly prefigured’ (Creswell, 2009:175). That means other issues about the research topic can emerge during the research process, which may affect the research questions by changing or modifying them.

Flick (2006) claimed that the reason for the development of qualitative research in recent years is its 'relevance' to social relations, a topic which needs a sensitive method of investigation. Richards (2003) suggested specific reasons in the language teaching context; researchers have been drawn to the idea of 'getting close to practice', which means going to classrooms and schools to investigate what is happening there rather than carrying out experiments which are appropriate for some, but not all research. For example, Al-Akloby (2001) observed English classes in three Saudi secondary schools to identify the strengths and weaknesses of learning and teaching vocabulary. Finally, qualitative research is 'a person-centred enterprise', which makes it suitable for research in the field of language teaching.

Creswell (2009:13) identifies five key strategies of inquiry which are associated with qualitative research. One of these strategies is ethnography, in which a group of people from a certain culture are investigated in a natural environment by means of data collected mainly through observation and interview. This type of study can provide detailed descriptions on the experiences of people from different cultures and settings. Only a few vocabulary studies have utilised this strategy (Wojcik, 2009). A second strategy, grounded theory involves researchers in trying to develop a theory on the basis of data collected on the participants' actions and interactions. The researcher adopts various research tools to gather data, as well as involving different groups of participants in order to compare the results emerging from these tools. Third, in case studies, the research aims to identify a programme, an activity, a process or individuals by using various types of research tools. Case study is exploring a specific case in order to generalise on a bigger sample (Gerring, 2004:341). This strategy is obvious in vocabulary studies, many of which explore the effectiveness of vocabulary teaching techniques with specific participants, as shown in the previous chapter (e.g. Yip & Kwan, 2006; Al-Homoud & Schmitt, 2009). Fourth, phenomenological research involves the researcher exploring human experiences in terms of a specific phenomenon. This strategy is distinctive, since it helps us to understand lived experiences. The researcher puts his/her own experiences aside in order to recognise the participants' experiences in the study. Finally, narrative research involves the researcher studying a person or group of people by asking them to provide stories about their lives. Then the researcher retells these stories in a narrative form. This joins the participant's life experiences and those of the researcher in a collaborative narrative.

Qualitative research has advantages and disadvantages. It is ‘more involved’ with the research topic than other research strategies that deal with big quantities and is ‘strictly standardised’ (Flick *et al*, 2004:5). The data found through qualitative research however, is mainly ‘subjective’ and that makes it difficult to duplicate, as such ‘soft’ data lack the rigidity of quantitative research (Jupp, 2006:249). Bryman (2008) also describes these disadvantages and adds others: qualitative research suffers from problems of generalisation since the results of, for instance, interviews with a small number of people in a specific place cannot be generalised to other people. The last criticism for qualitative research is its lack of transparency. Bryman (2008) claims that it is sometimes hard to know in qualitative research what the researcher actually did and how, for example, the criteria for selecting particular people to observe or interview are sometimes vague. This problem can be resolved if the researcher provides clear details on the research methodology used in the study.

In conclusion, although qualitative research has certain disadvantages, it still seems a good approach to explore research topics in depth. The differences between qualitative and quantitative research will be discussed in the next section.

3.3.2. Quantitative research

The word ‘quantitative’ suggests statistics and numbers (Muijs, 2011:1). Quantitative research is ‘research involving the collection of data in numerical form for quantitative analysis, the numerical data can be duration, scores, counts of incidents, rating or scales’ (Jupp, 2006:250). It involves ‘explaining phenomena’ by collecting numerical data that are analysed by mathematically-based methods (in particular, statistics) (Aliaga & Gunderson, 2002). Its purpose is to determine relationships, effects and causes (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009:14). In EFL/ESL, a number of the vocabulary studies mentioned in the literature review chapter have adopted this approach, such as Golkar and Yamini (2007), Al-Kahtani (2008) and Sonbul and Schmitt (2009).

Bryman (2008) states that quantitative research follows a deductive approach in the relationship between theory and research, which means that it tests theories. In addition, it is associated with the realist ‘epistemology’, which has been discussed in section 3.3. This means that people’s behaviours and opinions are measured through quantitative research and

useful numerical results can be obtained. For example, in this study, the attitudes of participants towards learning vocabulary through reading have been investigated.

Quantitative research can be divided into experimental and non-experimental research (Muijs, 2011:11). Experimental research is ‘systematic empirical inquiry in which the researcher introduces changes, notes effects and has full control over the design of the study’ (Hoy, 2010:16). Researchers try to control the factors that might influence the experiment. Most of the vocabulary studies can be classified under this type, since they are experimental and conducted in controlled settings (Schmitt, 2010:155). This kind of research can be harder to manage, especially if the factors to be controlled are too many. For instance, in Sonbul and Schmitt’s (2009) experimental study, the text used in the pre-test and the post-test was read by some of the participants on their own initiative during the week between these tests; this might have affected their study results, as they pointed out. Non-experimental research is systematic empirical inquiry ‘in which the situation cannot be manipulated because the change in the independent variable has already occurred’ (Hoy, 2010:16). In non-experimental research, the researcher has to use the variable ‘as it appears in practice’ (Muijs, 2011:11). Therefore, the researcher has no direct effect on what has been chosen to be studied, either because it has already happened or because it cannot be affected (McMillan, 2008). Thus the main difference between experimental and non-experimental research can be summarised in terms of, ‘control’. Hoy (2010:16) claims that most quantitative research in education is non-experimental. Most of the vocabulary research is, however, experimental, as Schmitt (2010) indicates. The current research can be considered as non-experimental research, since it will be carried out in a natural environment.

Muijs (2011:6) believes that quantitative research is beneficial when the aim of the research is to answer several types of questions: (1) to collect quantitative answers, e.g. how many students choose to study education? (2) to check the accuracy of numerical change, e.g. is the number of students in education departments rising or falling? (3) to know the state of something or describe phenomena, e.g., as in this research, what are the VLSs identified by students as useful in learning vocabulary through reading? (4) to test a hypothesis, e.g. whether there is a relationship between the learners' vocabulary knowledge on the one hand and their proficiency and reading comprehension ability on the other.

The differences between qualitative and quantitative research have been examined by many authors (McMillan, 2003, Muijs, 2011, Bryman, 2008 and Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). Qualitative research concentrates on understanding and meaning based on verbal narratives and observations rather than numbers, as in quantitative research. Qualitative research is usually conducted in natural settings, whereas behaviours and settings are controlled and manipulated in quantitative research. Moreover, qualitative research is an inductive process (reasoning from the specific situation to a general conclusion). Conversely, quantitative research is a deductive process (reasoning from general principles to specific situations). Quantitative research 'objectively' reports reality, whereas qualitative research is 'subjective', since it is influenced by the researcher's personal values. The subjectivity in the qualitative research may be minimised when more than one person collects and analyses data, although this could increase the bias for the participants. Quantitative research fails when the goal of the study is to explore the problem in depth, but it is beneficial in providing information on a large number of units, whereas qualitative research is useful for exploring concepts in more depth.

The flexibility in qualitative research encourages the researcher to be innovative, as it is mostly concerned with words. In contrast, the quantitative approach gives structure to the research, but without flexibility. However, many vocabulary studies, which apply the quantitative approach, have been innovative. For example, Webb (2007) used nonsense words very similar to English words in his experiment in order to make sure that the subjects did not have any prior knowledge on them. Another difference is that presenting data in qualitative research depends largely on narrative description, whereas quantitative research relies on statistical results. Finally, the role of the researcher in quantitative research is detached, while in qualitative research the researcher can be a participant; for instance, when the researcher chooses observation as a research instrument and acts as observer and participant simultaneously. These distinctions between the approaches show some of their strengths and weaknesses and recognising these differences allows the researchers to choose the approach most suitable for their research. Despite the differences discussed so far, qualitative and quantitative research can be effective when they are combined, as it will be explained in the next section.

3.3.3. Mixed methods

Mixed methods research can be defined as ‘research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or a programme of inquiry’ (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007:4). It provides strengths that compensate for the weaknesses of both qualitative and quantitative research by integrating their strengths in one approach (Creswell & Clark, 2011:12). The result reflects positively on the research itself by reducing any deficiency that it might suffer from. In addition, it provides more evidence than either qualitative or quantitative research alone and the researcher can use any instrument to gather data rather than being restricted to a particular kind of data collection. Mixed methods approach helps also to answer questions that cannot be answered by qualitative or quantitative research alone. It provides a more complete understanding of a research question by integrating both qualitative and quantitative research and produces understanding with deep insight for a large population (Jupp, 2006:180; Newby, 2010:134). It is time-consuming, however, since it provides a large amount of data which takes time to analyse (Jupp, 2006:180).

Newby (2010:128) points out that there are two things that can be achieved when mixed methods are applied: ‘exploration of the research issue’ and ‘triangulation’. ‘Exploration of the research issue’ refers to working out and unfolding the research issue. ‘Triangulation’ is ‘a research strategy that involves approaching a research question from two or more angles in order to converge and cross-validate findings from a number of sources for example, different data sources’ (Jupp, 2006:180). The sources can be people, documentation, statistics, reports and so on and data given by one source is confirmed by another and preferably a third (Newby, 2010:668). Therefore, using mixed methods could assist the researcher to compare results in a complementary way, so as to reinforce each other (Gorard & Taylor, 2004). Although it seems that mixed methods is a good approach that could investigate the research topic more in depth by using different data sources, it requires much effort and time to conduct and demands a skilled person who can deal with these various sources appropriately.

Moreover, the researcher has to be sure this approach is necessary for their research since some of the research topics might need only one approach, whether qualitative or quantitative. For instance, some of the vocabulary studies referred to in the previous two sections followed only one approach, while other vocabulary studies adopted a mixed

methods approach (e.g. Al-Akloby, 2001; Al-Qahtani, 2005). For example, Al-Akloby (2001) used three different research instruments: questionnaires, observation and document analysis. Because of its advantages, this approach has been applied in the present research and various data collection tools have been used including observation, questionnaires and interviews (see section 3.5).

Several vocabulary studies have used different teaching techniques to examine their effectiveness by using pre-tests and post-tests, followed by questionnaires (Al-Jarf, 2007; Al-Qahtani, 2009). Mixed method can be also used in studies which evaluate projects and outcomes, for example, Al-Nafisah's (2001) research, which evaluates teaching English in Saudi Arabia by exploring difficulties encountered by students. When behaviour, performance or attitudes need to be examined over a long period of time as in longitudinal studies, mixed method approach seems to be helpful. However, longitudinal studies are rarely used in vocabulary studies (Schmitt, 2010:155) and this point has been discussed in detail in section 2.11. Another type of research where mixed method approach can be adopted is experimental research which involves pre-tests and post-tests, where more qualitative assessments can provide valuable data. This type of research seems to be associated with the first type above, especially in vocabulary research, which depends on pre-tests and post-tests to find the effectiveness of a particular teaching technique, followed by a questionnaire to determine the subjects' attitudes towards this technique.

Creswell (2009:211) suggests different strategies which can be followed in a mixed methods approach. For example, 'sequential explanatory strategy' requires the researcher to explain the results of one method by using another method. Quantitative data is gathered and analysed first and then qualitative data is gathered and analysed. The purpose of this strategy is to explain and interpret quantitative results by using qualitative data. This could be beneficial when surprising results emerge from quantitative research, which can use qualitative data to explain them in detail. Although it is time-consuming, this strategy has been adopted in several vocabulary studies which were experimental first and then followed by a semi-structured questionnaire to assess the subject's attitudes towards these experiments (e.g. Al-Jarf, 2007; Al-Qahtani, 2009). A similar strategy to the previous one is the 'sequential exploratory strategy', where the stages for collecting and analysing data are reversed. The researcher collects data through the qualitative method first for exploratory purposes, then uses the quantitative method in order to interpret the qualitative results. While

the ‘sequential explanatory strategy’ concentrates on explaining and interpreting relationships, this strategy focuses mainly on exploring a phenomenon. The ‘concurrent triangulation strategy’ seems the most popular strategy. When adopting this strategy, the researcher collects both qualitative and quantitative data simultaneously and then compares them to find differences or similarities. This comparison leads to ‘confirmation’, ‘disconfirmation’ or ‘corroboration’. Hence, the findings yielded from this strategy are well-validated and substantiated. Although it saves time in data collection, this strategy demands great effort and skill. This strategy has been used in some vocabulary studies, such as Al-Qahtani (2005)’s research, which used data gathered through questionnaires and interviews. This strategy has also been applied in the present research, in which classroom observations have been conducted, followed promptly by a questionnaire for the students and interviews with teachers and some of the students.

Finally, the last strategy mentioned by Creswell is the so-called ‘concurrent embedded strategy’, which is similar to the concurrent triangulation strategy, but using qualitative and quantitative methods as primary and secondary methods, or vice versa, to gather data. The secondary method is embedded and given less priority. It can be adopted by making each method deals with different research questions or by seeking information at different levels of analysis and is appropriate when the researcher plans to study different groups or levels. One of the limitations of this strategy is that the data have to be converted in some way in order to be integrated in the analytical stage of the research. This strategy is hard to manage in terms of giving more priority to one approach and the researcher may not be able to control it.

To sum up, most vocabulary studies have tended to use a quantitative approach, but some of them adopt a mixed methods approach, following the ‘Sequential explanatory strategy’ and ‘Concurrent triangulation strategy’. Given the research questions of this study, the mixed methods approach seems to be the most suitable approach to investigate the research topic in depth. The research instruments used in the study are explained in the next section in more detail.

3.4. Research instruments

A research instrument is ‘a tool used to collect data’ (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009:122). Various types of research instruments can be used to collect data in research, including observation, interviews, questionnaire, documents, audiovisual materials and tests (Creswell, 2009). The main instruments used in the present research were observation, interviews and questionnaire. Each will be discussed in terms of advantages and disadvantages, in relation also to previous vocabulary research.

3.4.1. Observation

Observation deals with people’s behaviours rather than what they say (Gillham, 2008) and involves taking ‘fieldnotes on the behaviour and activities of individuals at the research site’ (Creswell, 2003:185). Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003:116) state that ‘it is necessary to see people in action, to experience what it is they do’. They claim that observation is more than just looking, as it involves many skills such as ‘listening, participation, contributing, interacting, sharing, timing, describing, and recording’. Burns (2010) agrees with this claim and asserts that observation is not merely looking, because it is ‘focused’ by looking for specific information about a certain topic. It is also ‘objective’, as there are aims set and ‘reflective’, as behaviours are observed from a perspective of inquiry and analysis. Finally, it is ‘documented’, as information is recorded, and ‘evaluated’, since the researcher checks the interpretations of the observation. Observation has been utilised in only a few studies in the vocabulary field. One of these is Al-Akloby’s (2001) study, which explored the causes behind students’ failure to learn vocabulary.

Observation can be divided into four types in terms of the role of the researcher who can be ‘complete participant’ in which the role as researcher is hidden, ‘observer as participant’, where the role of the researcher is known, ‘participant as observer’, in which the role of the researcher is primarily participation and secondarily observation and ‘complete observer’, where the researcher observes without participation (Creswell, 2003:186). The last type of observation is the one that was adopted in this study, since the main aim for conducting observations was to investigate the vocabulary teaching techniques used by teachers and

being a ‘complete observer’ seemed to be the most suitable type of observation for this purpose.

Observation has certain advantages and disadvantages (Flick, 2006:219). One of its advantages is that the researcher contacts the participants directly. The researcher can also record information when it is shown, noticing new aspects about the research which are taking place during the observation. It is also a useful method to investigate issues that participants may be unable to discuss. This means that observation occurs in natural settings, which makes it a distinctive research tool. However, the researcher might be seen as ‘intrusive’, may lack the observing skills and might find it difficult to build a relationship with specific groups of participants. Another limitation is that the act of observing might affect the participants’ behaviour, as they know that they are being observed. These drawbacks could be overcome if the researcher builds up a relationship with the participants before starting the observation. Also, a pilot study can help the researcher practise and improve the skills required to conduct it.

In terms of structure, observation can be unstructured, semi-structured and structured (Gillham, 2008). In the unstructured observation, the researcher does not determine the behaviours which will be observed in advance, unlike in the structured observation. Unstructured observation may explore the research issue in depth, but the data gathered will be substantial, which require more time to analyse. In contrast, the data collected through structured observation is simple to analyse, but it could be superficial data. Furthermore, the structured observation resembles a questionnaire, so it has similar limitations. The researcher using the semi-structured observation does not follow particular questions and cannot predict the behaviours which will be observed. This latter method was adopted in the present study, because there were general items prepared in advance in relation to the issues on vocabulary teaching techniques which are outlined in section 3.6.1.

There are different ways of recording observations (Kumar, 2005:121) depending on the aim of the research. The first way is ‘narrative’, in which the researchers write a description of the interaction in their own words. Brief notes usually are written through the observation and after the observation is completed, the researcher can write detailed notes in a narrative form. This provides in depth information, but the researchers may forget to record crucial pieces of interaction if their attention is focused on observing. Narrative notes have been used in studies that have adopted observations (e.g. Al-Nafisah, 2001 and Al-Akloby, 2001) and it

has been applied in this research as well, since it allows to capture in detail what actually happens in the classroom. Secondly, the observer can use scales to rate different aspects of the interaction. This however does not provide a deeper insight into the interaction. A third way of recording observations is ‘categorical recording’, in which the observer records the observation by using categories. For example, the observer might choose to use two categories (e.g. passive/negative) or three categories (e.g. always/sometimes/never) depending on the sort of the interaction being observed. This has the same drawbacks mainly in terms of not exploring interaction further. Finally, ‘recording on mechanical devices’ involves the observer filming the interaction and then analyse it. This allows the observer to watch what has been observed several times and ask others to watch it and co-code observations in order to reach a more objective conclusion. Nevertheless, participants might behave differently because of the camera and this may affect the results.

This section has looked at types of observation and ways of recording data in the field, including their advantages and disadvantages. Observation seems to be a useful instrument in the current research, as it can identify the vocabulary teaching techniques used in Saudi universities and the procedures adopted by teachers to teach vocabulary through reading. Vocabulary studies have used other research instruments alongside observation, for instance interviews and questionnaires, which will be reviewed next.

3.4.2. Interviews

The interview is ‘a method of data collection, information or opinion gathering that specifically involves asking a series of questions’ (Jupp, 2006:157). It is also a ‘person-to-person interaction between two or more individuals with a specific purpose in mind’ (Kumar, 2005:123). There are various reasons for carrying out an interview, for instance to find out information related directly to the research questions, to test hypotheses or suggest new ones. Also, researchers can use it as an explanatory device to identify variables and relationships and to use along with other research methods, in order to follow up unexpected results or probe them further (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). Interviews have been utilised in vocabulary research to explore VLSs (e.g. Al-Fuhaid, 2004; Al-Qahtani, 2005) and were mainly used after the completion of the questionnaires. Depending on the number of participants, interviews can be ‘face-to-face’ or in-person, by ‘telephone’ and ‘group interviews’, when the researcher

interviews several participants at the same time (Creswell, 2003:186). Face-to-face interviews were most commonly used in vocabulary research, as in the studies aforementioned. The present study held face-to-face interviews with students and teachers, to ensure that individual students were not influenced by others' responses.

Although the interview is seen by people as a conversation between two people, the researcher is 'orchestrating, directing and controlling' the interview (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). Richards (2003) believes that researchers should develop interviewing skills such as being able to elicit information from the interviewees rather than merely posing questions. It has been argued that whereas other research instruments concentrate on the surface of the topic, the interview goes in depth into the meaning and significance of the topic (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). It can, therefore, provide rich research data, if done well.

Like any research instrument, interviews have advantages and disadvantages (Creswell, 2003). Interviews are beneficial when it is hard to observe the participants directly. Also, historical information can be obtained from participants, and interviews are easy to plan and control, if the researcher is skilled. The disadvantages are that some interviewees may provide irrelevant information, which requires the researcher to prompt further to elicit the information needed, the setting of interviews is not always natural and the researcher may influence the participants' responses. Another disadvantage is that the interview may lose the focus on the topic if the researcher is not skilled in controlling the conversation (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). Also, the interview is time-consuming (Newby, 2010). These drawbacks were lessened in the current research, as interviews were not the only instrument and were employed as a supportive tool after the classroom observations.

Many researchers (Newby, 2010, Flick, 2006, Gillham, 2005 and Corbin & Morse, 2003) have discussed in detail the different types of interview structures, including: unstructured, semi-structured and structured interviews. The unstructured interview is mainly used to explore the interviewees' feelings and beliefs and allow them to speak freely. The questions are not set in advance, but they emerge while the researcher interacts with the interviewee. Although this type of interview provides the participants with the opportunity to speak freely, it is time-consuming in terms of its execution and data analysis. The semi-structured interview depends on specific questions, prepared in advance. This structure has been used in several vocabulary studies and was adopted in the current research (the questions which were asked of the participants are detailed in section 3.6.3). Gillham (2005) argues that this sort of

interview might be the most useful, as it is flexible, balanced in terms of structure and provides good data. The interviewee, however, may not provide crucial information if the right questions are not asked (Corbin & Morse, 2003). In this study, a pilot was set up as explained in section 3.8 in order to avoid this drawback. Lastly, the structured interview relies on questions with multiple answers from which to select. It is like a questionnaire ‘completed face to face’ (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). Analysing data in this type of interview is easier and the length of the interview can be estimated better, although the fairly structured setup limits the interviewees’ opportunities to express freely their thoughts on the topic explored.

To summarise, the interview is a good instrument for research as it can allow the in-depth investigation of the research topic. However, the researcher needs to be able to manage the interview competently in order to obtain the required information. Interviews have been used in this study in order to explore further the issues identified through observations and questionnaires.

3.4.3. The questionnaire

Questionnaires have been defined as ‘written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers’ (Brown, 2001:6). They involve a group of questions that are asked of a sample of individuals in order to answer the research questions (Gillham, 2007:2). They have been utilised in several vocabulary studies which aimed to determine the strategies used by learners to learn vocabulary (e.g. Schmitt, 1997, Al-Fuhaid, 2004 & Al-Qahtani, 2005). Brown and Rogers (2002) argue that using questionnaires could help to understand better how things are operating in someone’s personal environment or to describe the abilities, the performance and other characteristics of the individuals involved.

Questionnaires are useful for obtaining survey information, providing structured, numerical data and can be conducted without the required presence of the researcher (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). Also, a large amount of quantitative data can be obtained (Jupp, 2006:252) and data are highly structured, as questionnaires ask for specific pieces of information (Dörnyei, 2010:9). Qualitative data can be obtained through questionnaires when open questions are

used. Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003) note that a well-organised questionnaire provides rich data and helps the researcher obtain accurate information from the respondent. Because of these advantages, questionnaires are one of the most popular research instruments used (Newby, 2010:297).

However, designing questionnaires is crucial, as the data generated can be vague (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). This affirms the importance of ensuring the reliability and validity of the questionnaires before they are used. Dörnyei (2010) claims that questionnaires can provide three kinds of information: ‘factual or demographic’ (the background/experiences of the interviewee), ‘behavioural’ (what they do or did in the past) and ‘attitudinal’ (their attitudes, opinions, beliefs, interests and values). The last type of information is what the current study aimed to obtain, since the participants’ attitudes toward learning vocabulary through reading were explored.

Questionnaires can be administered in various ways, including by mail, one-to-one, in group or online (Dörnyei, 2010:64). The main feature of a questionnaire sent by mail is that there is no direct contact between the researcher and the respondent. One of the drawbacks of this way is the low response rate, although sending a prepaid, self-addressed envelope may elevate the response rate (Kumar, 2005:129). In contrast, in one-to-one administration, the response rate is high, as the researcher delivers the questionnaire by hand to specific respondents and collects it when completed (Dörnyei, 2010:67). This is much more personal than the mailed questionnaire and may motivate the respondents to get involved. The answers of the respondents might, however, be affected by the presence of the researcher. Group administration also has a high response rate; the researcher deals with a particular group of people in one place, for instance, students in a class. This is the most commonly utilised in vocabulary research and was also used in the present research.

There are two main reasons for the popularity of the questionnaire as a research instrument in L2 research (Dörnyei, 2010:68). First, it is easy to conduct as the respondents are language learners who are studying in a specific place and the questionnaire can be given to them in lessons. Second, this type of questionnaire does not have the problems that the mailed and one-to-one questionnaires have. Moreover, the researcher has the opportunity to contact the participants directly and can explain the aim and significance of the study and clarify any questions that participants might have (Kumar, 2005:129). Finally, the online questionnaire, which is sent to the potential respondents via the internet, enables researchers to make contact

with people who are difficult to reach and saves time as well, although it is not popular in L2 research. Group administration is still the most common way to using questionnaires in L2 research (Dörnyei, 2010:67).

Most researchers (e.g. Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003, Kumar, 2005, Burns, 2010 and Dörnyei, 2010) state that two types of questions can be used in a questionnaire: open-ended and closed-ended. In open-ended questions, the possible responses are not given and the respondents write the answers in their own words. Such questions can provide in-depth information and allow the participants freely to express their opinions and ideas. It can be hard to analyse the answers, however, when the participants do not understand the questions very well or their handwriting is unclear, as shown in Al-Qahtani's (2005) study when the responses from five participants were excluded for these reasons. In closed-ended questions, the possible responses are set out in the questionnaire and the participants select the appropriate one. Closed-ended questions may contain dichotomous questions ('yes' or 'no' questions), multiple-choice questions, ranking questions and rating scales. Although the answers to such questions are simple to analyse since they are already categorised, the information emerging from them may lack depth. Rating scales are one of the most popular items used in research, which ask the participant to make an evaluative judgment by ticking one of the options on a scale (Dörnyei, 2010:26). These scales use different degrees, ranging from various attributes (e.g. frequent...rare) to intensity (e.g. very much...not at all) and opinion (e.g. strongly agree...strongly disagree). Most vocabulary studies tend to use these scales (e.g. Al-Akloby, 2001 and Al-Qahtani, 2005) more than the open-ended questions.

In summary, using questionnaires as a research instrument has its advantages and disadvantages (Kumar, 2005:130). It is a cheap method of data collection, which saves time and provides greater anonymity, helping thus to obtain accurate information especially when there are sensitive questions. Nevertheless, it cannot be used with specific groups of people, such as illiterate individuals, very young children, or certain disabled groups. Moreover, the response rate is low when the questionnaire is administered via mail or online, since people might not be interested enough to get involved. The questionnaire also lacks the opportunity for clarification if the respondents misunderstand some questions. Detailed information about the questionnaire used in the current research will be given in section 3.6.2.

3.4.4. Reliability and validity in research

Reliability and validity are important factors in any research. Reliability is ‘the extent to which a measuring instrument, for example a test to measure intelligence, gives consistent results’ (Jupp, 2006:262). It is ‘a measure of consistency over time and over similar samples’ (Cohen *et al.*, 2011:200). Validity refers to ‘the extent to which an indicator or variable adequately measures the theoretical concept it purports to measure’ (Jupp, 2006:314). As a mixed methods approach was used in the present research, the reliability and validity of the instruments used needed to be assessed.

Ary *et al.* (2010:219) argue that the reliability of observation as a research instrument can be enhanced by having at least two observers observe the same behaviours, in order to compare their records afterwards. This can reflect positively on the research results, which rely on two different perspectives, but could also elevate the level of bias, because there are different people observing. Furthermore, reliability is enhanced by training observers to make them recognise the type of behaviours that should be observed and how they are recorded. Ary *et al.* (2010) believe that the best way to achieve validity in the observation is to describe behaviours clearly and train the observer to do this appropriately. They also suggest two factors which could influence validity in observation: observer bias and observer effect. Observer bias happens when the beliefs and perceptions of the observer affect the method of describing and interpreting the behaviours observed. This factor seems to be important, although most authors gave it less attention and concentrate on the observer effect only. The observer effect happens when the participants behave differently because they are being observed.

Silverman (1998) suggested that the reliability of interviews can be enhanced by careful piloting of the interview schedules, training of interviewers, inter-rater reliability in the coding of responses and the extended use of closed questions. Piloting for the interviews in this research has been done with five Saudi learners of English. This piloting provided the researcher with the opportunity to practise interviewing to develop the skills required (see section 3.8). Also, reducing the amount of bias as much as possible seems to be helpful in achieving validity in interviews (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). The sources of bias are the characteristics of the interviewer and the respondent and the content of the questions (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). The effect of the latter source can be minimised by piloting to check if the questions are clear and understandable.

Cohen *et al.* (2011) argue that questionnaires are more reliable than interviews because they are anonymous, although dishonesty may not be discovered. They believe that questionnaires require piloting in order to refine their contents, words, length and so on. Also, their reliability can be elevated by conducting interviews, following them up and showing their importance and benefits for the participants. In the current study, I explained to the participants the importance and benefits of the questionnaire and asked participants through a question at the end of the questionnaire to volunteer for an interview. Oppenheim (1992:47) states that every item in the questionnaire should be tested before the questionnaire is administered, to ensure that it works as planned. In this study, I checked the validity of the questionnaire by ensuring that all of the items were associated with the research topic and by piloting the questionnaire to check for clarity. Two Saudi postgraduate students checked the clarity of the questions and the accuracy of translation into Arabic. Piloting the questionnaire should show any weaknesses that the questionnaire has and may provide some suggestions for development (Gay *et al.*, 2009:169). Most of the vocabulary research conducted in the Saudi context (e.g. Al-Akloby, 2001 and Al-Qahtani, 2005) used piloting for the questionnaires that were used. In the current research, five Saudi learners of English completed the questionnaire in order to check its validity.

As earlier mentioned, qualitative research does not provide hard data (Jupp, 2006:249). Therefore, rigour and trustworthiness are important factors in qualitative research (Morse, 2002). Lincoln and Guba (1985) used the term “trustworthiness” instead of validity and reliability, which includes credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Several researchers have discussed the specific criteria which can ensure rigour in qualitative research (e.g. Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Leininger, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Tonkiss (2004) asserted the significance of validity in order to achieve rigour in research by presenting a coherent argument. This suggests that any claims that are made in the research should be well supported by the data. Whittemore *et al.* (2001:533) suggested different techniques to achieve validity and therefore ensuring rigour in qualitative research. For example, ‘employing triangulation’, ‘member checking’, ‘using a computer program’, ‘providing an audit trail’ and ‘providing thick descriptions’. These suggestions were applied in the current study by citing extensively from the original data, as well as by illustrating clearly the data analysis steps (see section 3.12.2) which led to the findings.

In conclusion, reliability and validity are crucial features in research and they should be carefully considered before the research instruments are applied. One of the important ways to achieve them is by piloting the research instruments to anticipate any potential problems and faults in design. In the next section, the research design of the current research will be explained in more detail.

3.5. Research design

The research design has been defined as ‘a strategy that justifies the logic, structure and the principles of the research methodology and methods and how these relate to the research questions, hypothesis or proposition’ (Jupp, 2006:265). It needs to provide detailed information about the research tools employed to investigate the research questions. In order to produce an effective research design, the researcher needs to decide on precise research questions in order to determine why and how the research will be conducted (Jupp, 2006:266). This section gives an overview of the research instruments used in this research, discussing their structure and which aspects of the research they explore. The design included classroom observations, questionnaires and follow-up interviews with teachers and students.

3.5.1. Designing the observation

The purpose of using observation as a research tool in this study was to find out the techniques that teachers used in teaching vocabulary in Saudi universities. A semi-structured observation schedule was used (see Appendix 3). The observation schedule consisted of five general items, which helped organise and categorise the data (Gay *et al.*, 2006:415). Denscombe (2007:210) states that the researcher should ensure that the items on the observation schedule fulfil particular conditions, namely: the items should be clear and precise and relevant to the research topic, they should investigate behaviours that are observable, obvious and easy to record and the context of the situation should not have a significant influence on the way in which the behaviour is recorded. The field notes should describe, as extensively, clearly and in as much detail as possible all of the relevant aspects of the situation being observed (Gay *et al.*, 2006:414). The types of behaviours to be observed

should be considered in developing the observation schedule (Newby, 2010:371). Simpson and Tuson (2003) suggested several aspects, which should be considered when observation is used as a research tool: deciding the focus of the research, how the data will be recorded, anticipating potential challenges that might be encountered while observing and considering what and why observation is employed. All of these points were followed in the present study.

Merriam (1998) suggests that the incidents to be observed are dependent on the research aims. He states ‘where to begin looking depends on the research question, but where to focus or stop action cannot be determined ahead of time’ (Merriam, 1998:97). Wolcott (2001) agrees with this suggestion and states that researchers should know before starting their observation what they want to know. Therefore, in the current study, the observation schedule was developed based on the issues identified in the research questions and highlighted by the gaps in knowledge identified through the literature review.

The observation schedule includes four items: teaching techniques, type of information, teaching VLSs and texts out of the textbook. The first item, “teaching techniques”, was included as the first research question concerns vocabulary teaching techniques used by teachers. The vocabulary research suggested that a range of teaching techniques can be used to introduce the new words as shown in section 2.3. Since the second research question focuses on vocabulary learning, the second item in the observation schedule was “type of information”, which refers to the type of information that the teachers gave students in relation to new words. Nation (2001) suggested that learning vocabulary involved more than just knowing the meaning of a new word; however, there are different aspects of knowing a word as discussed in section 2.6. The third item in the observation schedule was “teaching VLSs”, aimed to know what VLSs teachers taught students, if any, as the second research question focuses on different aspects about VLSs. This item, “teaching VLSs”, is helpful to explore the role of teachers in students’ use of VLSs, and as a result, whether they enhance students’ autonomy or not. Several VLSs suggested by researchers (e.g. Schmitt, 1997 & Nation, 2001) can be employed by students in their vocabulary learning as discussed in section 2.7, and the role of teachers in using these strategies, which could help students to be autonomous was highlighted in section 2.8. The last item was “texts out of the textbook”, which refers to the type of texts that teachers use outside of the textbook, if any. This helps to

determine the teaching approach used by teachers, which is the focus of the first research question.

3.5.2. Designing the questionnaire

The questionnaire items were generated on the basis of the research questions, especially the second and third research questions. The questions used in questionnaires can be divided into three main categories (Gillham, 2007:26): ‘Questions of fact’, which usually come first and concern general information on the individual, such as age, gender or their level of education; ‘questions about opinions, beliefs or judgments’ (e.g. ‘Do you think reading English newspapers could develop your English vocabulary?’) and ‘questions about behaviour’ (what people do), such as ‘What do you do when you meet a new word in a text?’.

Leung (2001:187) suggests a numbers of issues that should be considered when designing a questionnaire, including ‘using short and simple sentences’ and ‘asking for only one piece of information at a time’. Also, he recommends ‘asking precise questions’ by selecting the words that describe the question accurately rather than using general words, avoiding unnecessary details, and ‘minimising bias’. The items should be also clear and the instructions used in the questionnaire should be helpful for the respondents (Cohen *et al.*, 2011:399). All of these suggestions were considered when designing the questionnaire for the current research.

The questionnaire for this research was 10 pages long (see Appendix 4) and consisted of four sections. The first two sections (‘Discovery strategies’ and ‘Consolidation strategies’) were focused on the VLSs students believed they used and were based on Schmitt’s (1997) taxonomy, discussed in section 2.7.1. The third section aimed to find the aspects of word’s knowledge that students thought they looked for when they encounter a new word. The final section explored students’ attitudes towards learning vocabulary through reading.

The questionnaire was semi-structured, as it included both closed-ended questions and open-ended questions. Although most questionnaires rely heavily on closed questions, using open questions is important in exploring the research issues further (Krosnick & Presser, 2010:266). However, open-ended questions are time-consuming and should be used

judiciously (Cohen *et al.*, 2011:397). Open-ended questions are important to explore the research topic in more depth and provide the participants with the opportunity to express themselves in more detail (Newby, 2010:298). Both closed and open questions were used in the questionnaire for the present study, as explained below. It has been suggested that, when using scales, having more points on the scales can be helpful in increasing reliability and validity (Krosnick & Presser, 2010:268) and this element has also been considered in the design.

In the questionnaire used, there were three types of closed-ended questions: the first type referred to the frequency with which students thought they used a certain strategy, and asked the participants to choose from 'always', 'often', 'sometimes', 'rarely' and 'never'. This question was found in every section of the questionnaire. The second type of questions, only included in the first two sections of the questionnaire, referred to the perceived usefulness of each strategy and required the participants to select their answers from the following range: 'very useful'; 'useful'; 'quite useful' and 'not useful'. The third type, also used exclusively in the first two sections, referred to the participants' mastery of these strategies and asked them to choose their answers from the following range: 'very competent'; 'competent'; 'quite competent' and 'not competent'. The strategies which could not be rated in terms of perceived competence were excluded, for example, the repetition strategies. Some items in the fourth section of the questionnaire use a different rating range, as follows: 'strongly agree'; 'agree'; 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree', which seemed to be more suitable for the questions posed, as they explored subjects' attitudes towards learning vocabulary through reading. Rating scales were used with the close-ended questions, as these questions aimed to assess various degrees of response in relation to students' use of VLSs and their attitudes towards learning vocabulary through reading. Using the rating scales is helpful as they measure the degree of sensitivity in responses and provide numbers as well (Cohen *et al.*, 2011:386).

The open-ended questions were designed to elicit more information on participants' answers to some of the closed questions. Most of these questions ask the subjects to discuss the reasons for using a specific VLS. The questionnaire was initially written in English and then translated into Arabic by the researcher and revised by two Saudi PhD students in Linguistics (see Appendix 5).

3.5.3. Designing the interviews

As the questionnaire was not designed to elicit in-depth information on the research topic, interviews were used in order to investigate the issues in more depth. Two semi-structured interviews were designed, one for teachers, which consists of 13 questions (see Appendix 6), and another for students, which includes 14 questions (see Appendix 7). An audio recorder was used to record these interviews. The main questions for both groups were ‘open’, and ordered logically. A simple interview schedule is often recommended, as an elaborate schedule with too many questions might lead to a loss of focus (Gillham, 2005:40). Also, different types of questions were used, such as the ‘introducing questions’ (e.g. ‘Tell me a bit about your experience in learning vocabulary?’), ‘follow-up questions’, which involve asking the interviewee to elaborate on an answer, and ‘specifying questions’ (e.g. ‘What are the techniques that you use in teaching vocabulary?’) (Bryman, 2008:445).

Kvale (1996:133) suggests different types of questions that can be used in interviews, each being used to achieve a specific purpose. For example, ‘introducing questions’ is important in establishing a good rapport. Also, ‘probing questions’ will help the interviewee to get more information on a specific issue. Probes are important as they help to ask the interviewees to elaborate and provide more detail on their answers, which may lead to depth and comprehensive responses (Cohen *et al.*, 2011:420). In the interview schedule employed in the current research, probes were used with some of the questions where it was thought the participants may provide succinct answers. Finally, other types of questions suggested include ‘specifying questions’, ‘structuring questions’ and ‘interpreting questions’, all of which ask the interviewee to clarify their answers. McNamara (2009) has further recommendations for preparing effective questions for interviews: wording should be open-ended to help participants select their own words when answering questions, questions should be as neutral as possible by avoiding words that may affect participants’ answers, and questions should be worded clearly. McNamara’s (2009) recommendations and Kvale’s (1996) question types were taken into account when the questions of the interviews used in this study were prepared.

Several factors play a role in designing the interviews including: the purpose of the interview, the interviewees’ level of education, type of information that can emerge from the interview and types of information that the interview deals with, for example, facts, opinions or attitudes (Cohen *et al.*, 2011:414). All of these elements were considered when designing the

interviews for this study; for example, each question deals with a specific purpose, as discussed later in this section.

The teachers' interviews aimed to provide more information on the issues identified through the classroom observations. The initial questions (Q1-3) dealt with teachers' experiences and beliefs about teaching vocabulary, prompting them to talk about their experience of teaching vocabulary and their beliefs about the techniques that they commonly used in teaching vocabulary. The next few questions asked them to discuss in more depth the techniques used to teach vocabulary and how they supported new students to learn new words. The final questions looked at teachers' attitudes towards teaching and learning vocabulary through reading.

The students' interviews were designed to explore their attitudes towards learning vocabulary through reading and the most common VLS they thought they used. The initial questions explored students' experiences of using VLS and beliefs about learning vocabulary. The next set of questions asks about students' perspectives on vocabulary teaching techniques used in class and their attitudes towards learning vocabulary through reading. Finally, they were asked questions on the VLSs which they found most useful and the types of information that they sought when looking for the meaning of a new word.

3.6. Ethical issues in the research

The importance of ethical issues when conducting research cannot be understated. The present study was conducted in accordance with the Ethical Guidelines of the British Education Research Association (BERA), the Scottish Education Research Association (SERA), and The University of Strathclyde Code of Practice for Research with Humans, which stipulates the ethical guidelines that all researchers should follow.

The guidance suggests that all participants in research should understand fully the purpose of the study, what is required of them and how their rights to confidentiality, anonymity and protection from harm will be observed throughout. In the current research, Information Sheets and Consent Forms (see Appendices 5, 6 & 7) were given to the subjects in order to provide them with information on the research and to seek their consent. It is important that consent should be sought without any pressure being put on the participants (Kumar,

2005:212). The information that was provided to the participants through the information sheets concerned the purpose of the research, what participants were required to do, why they were invited to take part, issues of confidentiality and their right to withdraw at any time. The aim of this was to ensure that the participants understood the purpose of the research and what was expected of them in terms of participation. This was also meant to help the subjects decide whether or not to get involved in the study.

The consent form asked participants to confirm that they have read and understood the Information Sheet. They were informed that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and they could request that any data which had been provided be destroyed. In addition, I reassured them that the information they provided would be dealt with confidentially and every effort would be made to protect their anonymity at all times. Furthermore, they were informed that the data would be kept safe, not be shared with anyone else and the files would be destroyed after finishing the research. The participants' names were not requested, in order to maintain their anonymity. For the participants who provided their names so that they may be interviewed, their personal details were only be used to arrange the interviews. Finally, I explained that the data would be used for a PhD thesis and for future academic publications, but the participants and institutions would remain anonymous at all times.

One ethical issue that the author was faced with emerged from fact that the ethical guidelines which governed this research were produced in a Western country, while the research was carried out in an Arab country. This means that some of the ethical issues which might be familiar to Western subjects were not always known or expected in the country where the research took place. For example, students are not usually asked if they want to volunteer for a project taking place in their school and are just expected to take part. Also, they are not provided with any information sheets to know the nature of the research and how they can participate. Therefore, I explained to the participants the use of the information sheets and consent forms, which they would sign if they agreed to be involved in the study. Participants were told that these arrangements were in place to give them a general view on the study and ensure that they are fully informed of what is required of them before agreeing to take part.

The ethical rules that have been considered in the research have been explained in detail before the research started to ensure the respondents' rights to confidentiality, anonymity and right to withdraw. The following sections will discuss the pilot study, the sample and the procedure of the study.

3.7. The pilot study

Piloting a study is an important part of any research and has a key role in achieving the reliability and validity of the research instruments, as indicated in section 3.5.4. A pilot is 'a small-scale trial of a study conducted before the full-scale study in order to identify problems with the research plan' (Gay *et al.*, 2006:600). In the present study, I attended two English language classes at the English Language Teaching Centre at the University of Strathclyde, which helped me to practise using the observation schedule developed. In addition, five Saudi intermediate learners of English, who were learning English at language institutions in Scotland completed the questionnaire as a pilot. This helped to identify any vague items in the questionnaire, which need to be clarified and also to estimate the time it will take to complete it. These learners were also similar to the final sample in their level of competence.

The subjects in the pilot study were asked to take their time in completing the questionnaire, in order to estimate the length of time that the final sample will need to complete it. They were asked to write comments under any items in the questionnaire which they found ambiguous. Furthermore, they were asked to provide feedback on the questionnaire in general. This pilot involved then interviews with two Saudi PhD students in Scotland, who had experience of teaching English at Saudi Universities. The goal of this pilot study was to check the clarity of the questions in the interview. In addition, it gave the author the opportunity to practise his interviewing skills. At the end of the interview, the respondents were asked to provide feedback on the questions asked, in order to make use of their experience as teachers and researchers working in the EFL field.

3.8. Outcomes of the pilot study

As mentioned before, the main purpose of the pilot study was to validate the research instruments to be used in the main study. The pilot study helped to improve the observation schedule, since the schedule structure used in the pilot was found to be slightly distracting (see Appendix 8). While attending the two classes observed for the pilot, I was looking at five main categories: the teaching approach and the vocabulary teaching techniques used by teachers, the type of information that teachers provide students for the new words, introducing VLSs and employing texts outside the prescribed textbook. Since each of these categories was put in the observation sheet in a separate section, it was difficult to record notes as more than one incident were often taking place at the same time. After the pilot, the structure of the schedule was changed to make it more suitable for rigorous data collection. The observation schedule was changed so as to be more open, including only some categories at the top of the schedule, in order to maintain the focus on the research aims, while doing the observation.

The participants in the pilot study approved all the interview and questionnaire questions and agreed that they were clear and easy to understand. As a result, these were used unchanged in the main study. Although the interviews were not changed, the pilot study was helpful in knowing what questions the participants in the main study were likely to need prompting on. For example, in the questions on deploying the VLSs, some of the answers provided by the students in the pilot study were very brief. Therefore, using probes was important to make students provide more information; they were asked, for instance, to give examples when they used specific strategies. Similarly, when it came to questions on employing vocabulary teaching techniques, the teachers were asked to provide examples of how they employed these techniques in the classroom, which was found to be helpful in obtaining further data.

The interviews in the pilot study provided a good amount of data, suggesting that the questions used in the interviews worked well in terms of eliciting the data needed to address the research questions. After the pilot study finished, the plans for the data collection for the main study became clearer, as all the research tools piloted were employed to gather data.

3.9. Sampling

Sampling can be defined as ‘the process of selecting a few (a sample) from a bigger group (the sampling population) to become the basis for estimating or predicting the prevalence of an unknown piece of information, situation or outcome regarding the bigger group’ (Kumar, 2005:164). A sample can be divided into two main types: probability or random sample and non-probability sample (Cohen *et al.*, 2011:153). Random sampling is ‘any method of sampling that uses some form of random selection, that is, one that will ensure that all units in the population have an equal probability or chance of being selected’ (Jupp, 2006:238). Conversely, ‘non-random sampling’ is ‘sampling that do not adhere to probability methods’ (Jupp, 2006:196).

The sample of this study can be considered as a ‘non-random’ sample, since specific students were identified to take part in the study. In total, 150 male Saudi undergraduate first-year students, whose first language is Arabic, participated in the current research. The participants belonged to roughly the same age category (18-20 years old). They were majoring in English in four universities. The distribution of the sample is shown in the following table:

Table 3.1: The distribution of the sample

	Number of teachers recruited	Classes observed	Number of students	Students interviewed
College A	3	4	12	2
College B	1	2	18	3
College C	2	3	29	3
College D	1	2	42	5
College E	1	2	36	5
College F	1	1	13	4
Total	9	14	150	22

At the time of the study, all student participants were in their first year at university, and all had studied English as a subject for six years before at their intermediate and secondary schools, usually in four 45-minute classes each week. In addition, all had studied English skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening), as well as grammar, in their first year at university. It should be mentioned here that two colleges from the involved universities provide a vocabulary course in addition to a reading course, which is unique from other universities. Therefore, the vocabulary course at these colleges was targeted for the research.

3.10. The profile of the target universities

At the time of the study, there were 32 universities in Saudi Arabia, of which approximately 15 were providing a Bachelor's degree in English language. The university setting was chosen as the context for this research as most previous studies which had investigated the English teaching methods and vocabulary teaching in Saudi Arabia were carried out in schools (e.g. Al-Nafisah, 2001 & Al-Akloby, 2001). In addition, undergraduate students at universities majoring in English were considered suitable subjects for the study, as they are exposed to English more often than students in schools.

Subjects were recruited from six colleges across four universities, to ensure a more diverse sample, as most vocabulary research in Saudi universities has dealt with only one college (e.g. Al-Fuhaid, 2004; Al-Qahtani, 2005). The four universities were in three cities set within close proximity of each other, which made access easier, given the limited time for data collection. The colleges were very similar in their approach to teaching English and vocabulary in general. The first year syllabi in the English Departments across all the colleges taking part in the study were similar, in that they concentrated on teaching English language skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening), as well as grammar.

3.11. Textbooks analysis

In this section, a systematic analysis of the textbooks used in the colleges involved in the current research will be provided. The aim of this analysis is to explain the relationship between the vocabulary presented in the textbooks used in EFL classes in Saudi Arabian universities and the VLSs deployed by students, and the strategies that the teachers introduce in the classroom, as well as the vocabulary teaching techniques employed by teachers to teach the vocabulary introduced by textbooks. The analysis also aims to determine the purposes of the textbooks, what they aim to achieve, and what they expect from teachers and students to do when they use the textbooks. The data emerged from the analysis will be discussed and compared with the data found from classroom observations, teachers and students interviews, and the questionnaire. It is thought that this sort of discussion will provide better understanding of the role of the textbooks used in Saudi universities in teaching and learning vocabulary. For example, whether or not the textbooks promote teacher and learner autonomy as well as whether or not the anticipated expectations in the textbooks match the students' expectations.

Two textbooks were used for the purposes of this analysis, as these are the textbooks currently used in Saudi universities with the students from the target group. 'Interactions Reading 2' is used in all colleges in the reading classes for the first year students, and is generally aimed at intermediate learners (see Appendix 9). The second textbook, 'English Vocabulary in Use' by Michael McCarthy and Felicity O'Dell, is aimed at upper-intermediate learners and is used in vocabulary classes (see Appendix 10). This is a vocabulary manual used only in two of the colleges involved in the study, as these were offering an English vocabulary course.

The content analysis method was employed to conduct this analysis. Krippendorp (2004:18) defines content analysis as 'a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use'. It can be used with any written texts such as documents and interviews and often employed with large numbers of texts (Cohen *et al.*, 2011:563). Content analysis was originally considered as a quantitative type of analysis, mainly focussed of words account, however, it adopted later several qualitative analysis principles, which involve texts being categorised into themes (Newby, 2010:652). Three approaches can be followed when content analysis is used, including

‘conventional’, ‘directed’ and ‘summative’ (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:127). Coding categories can be obtained from the text data when ‘conventional content analysis’ is used, while ‘directed content analysis’ involves using existing coding categories. In the ‘directed content analysis’, key concepts are determined as initial coding categories (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999). ‘Summative content analysis’ involves deciding upon, and counting particular words or content in order to identify the contextual use of these words or content. Since the purpose of conducting the textbooks analysis in the current research was identified, a ‘directed content analysis’ was used to analyse the prescribed textbooks.

The analysis of the textbooks in the current research went through two stages: the first was “descriptive” and the second was “analytical”. The first stage, the “descriptive”, provides general information about the textbooks, such as the structural elements of the textbooks, the organisation on pages and the type of tasks used. The second stage, the “analytical”, aims to analyse the textbooks more in depth by generating the categories that will help to provide evidence on how these textbooks work. These two stages are discussed in the following sections.

3.11.1. The descriptive stage

First of all, the reading textbook was examined to provide information about its structure and then the vocabulary textbook. The reading textbook, ‘Interactions Reading 2’ is currently used with a view to develop learners’ reading and vocabulary. This textbook is structured in a five level reading series which includes ten chapters, each one focusing on a particular topic such as: ‘business and money’, ‘jobs and professions’ and ‘lifestyles around the world’. All chapters start with general questions about the topic, followed by an outline of the new vocabulary that is to be used in a reading passage. The new vocabulary is introduced in word list form and divided into categories according to their part of speech. Students are asked to read this list and listen to the teacher’s pronunciation, while putting a check mark (√) next to the words they know. The reading passages are approximately 3-4 pages long, and some passages include sub-headings above each paragraph, to break it down into a more manageable structure. Some passages contain photographs, illustrative of the content of the text. The reading passage is followed by several comprehension questions and a vocabulary exercise. A range of exercises are used in each chapter to deal with the new vocabulary, for example, by asking students to match words with their equivalent meaning or fill in the blanks with words chosen from a word list provided on the side. These exercises aim to give

students an opportunity to understand the new words and use them in a new context. The new words are also presented in other places in the chapter, giving students further opportunities to encounter the new words several times and in slightly different contexts, creating further opportunities for learning (e.g. Webb, 2007; Chen and Truscott, 2010). However, a major issue seems to be the limited use of the new words introduced in one chapter in the following chapters.

The second textbook, 'English Vocabulary in Use', which is only used in colleges that have vocabulary courses (including two colleges involved in this study), focuses exclusively on vocabulary learning. It includes eleven chapters, and each chapter is between 10 and 20 lessons, which are each presented on two pages. The first page presents the new words by explaining their meaning through the use of two main techniques: providing their definition in English and using it in a sentence. Pictures are employed in some lessons to illustrate the meaning of the new vocabulary. The second page includes exercises for practising the new vocabulary introduced on the first page. A range of exercises are used, for instance, matching the new words with their definitions, filling in the blanks with the correct word, and rewriting sentences by using the new words. One of the features of this textbook in relation to vocabulary learning is that the first chapter, which includes seven lessons, concentrates on how learners can learn vocabulary more effectively. These lessons contain general advice on learning vocabulary and suggest certain VLSs, mainly guessing the meaning from context and using a dictionary, clearly aiming to promote learner autonomy.

3.11.2. The analytical stage

After carrying out the descriptive analysis for the textbooks, a thematic approach was adopted to analyse these textbooks more in depth. The analysis started with carefully examining each chapter in the textbooks in order to identify main categories. This lead 'to generate initial categories (with their proprieties and dimensions) and to discover the relationships among concepts' (Strauss & Corbin, 1998:57).

Richards (1998) suggested that three points should be considered in materials analysis:

- Cultural content (the treatment; e.g., gender, ethnic minorities, the elderly).
- Linguistic content (comparison of how a particular linguistic form is presented in a course book with, say, the description of the same form in a grammar reference, or instances of its use in corpus data).
- Pedagogical content (how particular objectives are realised through tasks).

Moreover, Wala (2003:62) offers key questions for editors and materials developers in the process of planning course books:

- How do learners (and teachers) use course books?
- How is the course book structured for use?
- What is the context in which the course book will be used?
- What dimensions of context have an impact on course book use?
- Which aspects of the course book and its use will be affected by particular dimensions of the context?
- What view of the world, of English, of learning English, of the teacher and of the learner is presented explicitly and implicitly by the course book?

All points suggested by Richards (1998) and Wala (2003), as well as the research questions, were considered when the textbooks' contents were coded. Based on these points, a set of questions, which were more relevant to the focus of the current research were set in order to help generate the categories. These questions were set as follows:

- What is the aim of the reading passages used?
- What assumptions do they make about what the teachers and students will do?
- What type of vocabulary does the textbook introduce as a new vocabulary?
- What techniques are used when introducing the new words?
- What cultural context is used in the textbook?

Table 3.2: An example of the first process of analysing the “Interactions 2” reading textbook

Category	Example
The purpose of the reading passages	 Reading an Article. As you read the following selection,
	think about the answer to this question “What are some ways in which work is changing?”
	Read the selection. Do not use a dictionary. Then do the exercises that follow the reading.
The underlying assumptions the textbook makes	Exercise 3: Getting Meaning from Context. Use both specific clues in these sentences and your own logic to determine the meanings of the underlined words and expressions.
	Then write your guess about the meaning. Compare your answers with those of a partner.
New vocabulary introduced	Chapter 4: Previewing Vocabulary: pleasure, identity, posts, job security, vary, stress, work force, secure, manufacturing jobs, self-confidence, keep up with, worldwide, on the move
	career counselors, cell phones, construction, globalization, job hopping, manufacturing, passionate, rigid, temporary, distract, upgrade, leisure
	drawback, workaholism, outsourcing, telecommuting, overwork, livelihood
Techniques used in introducing the new vocabulary	Exercise 1: Recognizing Word Meanings: Match the words with their meanings. Write the letters on the lines.
	Exercise 9: Checking Vocabulary. Find a word or expression in the reading for each definition below. P. 62
	Exercise 2: Understanding Adjective and Noun Phrases. In each sentence below, add a word to complete the adjective or noun phrase. Choose from the following words:
The cultural context	The reading passage in Chapter 10: Rites of Passage A wedding in any culture is an important rite of passage. In Islam, the specific stages of a wedding ceremony may vary from country to country, but most share certain characteristics.
	The reading passage in Chapter 4: Changing Career Trend Also, the call center industry is on the move mostly to India. Increasingly, when customers in Canada, the United States, England, and Australia call a company to order a product or ask for help

According to the purposes of the analysis and the questions mentioned earlier, every reading passage in the textbook was examined by looking at what the task asks students to do, which shows what students and teachers should do and the anticipated expectations from them. The tasks were also examined in order to find out the underlying assumptions that the textbook makes and the kind of knowledge that it provides students with. The focus while examining these tasks was not only on what the textbook explicitly required the students and teachers to do, but also on what was implied in these tasks in order to have a better understanding about the underlying assumptions that the textbook makes. All of the new vocabulary in each chapter in the textbook was recorded to know the type and the number of the new words that the textbook assumes the students should learn and the teachers should teach. The techniques utilised in the textbook to practise the new words were considered by looking at each task in the chapter and by looking at the technique used to deal with the new vocabulary. The cultural context of the textbook was also checked by examining the content of the reading passages and the context of the sentences used in the exercises, as well as the pictures used in the textbook.

The next stage of the analysis involved examining the reading textbook in order to generate subcategories for the existing categories, as illustrated in Table 3.4. Different subcategories emerged while coding progressed and each subcategory was checked to ensure that it was fitted under the suitable category. The frequency of the new words was used in generating the subcategories for the category “new words introduced”. Knowing the frequency of the new words helps to know the difficulty of the new vocabulary for the students in the present study. The website, (www.lex tutor.ca) established by Professor Tom Cobb, was employed to determine the frequency of the new vocabulary used in the textbook. The tool used in the website to know the frequency of the new words is based on the British National Corpus and the Corpus of Contemporary American English, which were integrated by Nation and Davies. This website is recommended by several key vocabulary researchers (e.g. Paul Nation, Norbert Schmitt, Paul Meara).

Table 3.3: An example of the second process of analysing the “Interactions 2” reading textbook

Category	Example	Subcategory
The purpose of the reading passages	 Reading an Article. As you read the following selection,	Developing the ability to read
	think about the answer to this question “What are some ways in which work is changing?”	Improving the reading comprehension
	Read the selection. Do not use a dictionary. Then do the exercises that follow the reading.	Improving the ability to guess the meaning from context
The underlying assumptions the textbook makes	Exercise 3: Getting Meaning from Context. Use both specific clues in these sentences and your own logic to determine the meanings of the underlined words and expressions.	Linguistic
	Then write your guess about the meaning. Compare your answers with those of a partner.	Pedagogical
New vocabulary introduced	Chapter 4: Previewing Vocabulary: pleasure, identity, posts, job security, vary, stress, work force, secure, manufacturing jobs, self-confidence, keep up with, worldwide, on the move	Among the 2000 most frequent
	career counselors, cell phones, construction, globalization, job hopping, manufacturing, passionate, rigid, temporary, distract, upgrade, leisure	Among the 3000 – 5000 most frequent
	drawback, workaholism, outsourcing, telecommuting, overwork, livelihood	Among over the 5000 most frequent
Techniques used in introducing the new vocabulary	Exercise 1: Recognizing Word Meanings: Match the words with their meanings. Write the letters on the lines.	Using synonyms
	Exercise 9: Checking Vocabulary. Find a word or expression in the reading for each definition below. P. 62	Defining new words in English
	Exercise 2: Understanding Adjective and Noun Phrases. In each sentence below, add a word to complete the adjective or noun phrase. Choose from the following words:	Using the new word in a sentence

	<p>The reading passage in Chapter 10: Rites of Passage A wedding in any culture is an important rite of passage. In Islam, the specific stages of a wedding ceremony may vary from country to country, but most share certain characteristics.</p>	<p>Similar to the students' culture</p>
<p>The cultural context</p>	<p>The reading passage in Chapter 4: Changing Career Trend Also, the call center industry is on the move mostly to India. Increasingly, when customers in Canada, the United States, England, and Australia call a company to order a product or ask for help</p>	<p>Different to the students' culture</p>

The same process was utilised in analysing the vocabulary textbook; however, the first category, “the purpose of the reading passages”, was excluded as the vocabulary textbook does not include reading passages. A subcategory was added for the category “techniques used in introducing the new vocabulary”, which is “using pictures” since pictures were used in the vocabulary textbook in explaining the new words (see Appendix 11).

3.12. The procedure

The procedure in a research study ‘describes all the steps that will be followed in conducting the study, from beginning to end, in the order in which they will occur’ (Gay *et al.*, 2006:82). These steps will be clarified in this section.

First of all, I visited the four universities to meet the Heads of their English Departments. I explained to them the purpose of the research and Heads were given an Information Sheet (see Appendix 12), which detailed the research. After they agreed for their department to take part in the study and signed the consent form, the teachers of the reading and vocabulary courses were asked for their consent to have their classes observed. The teachers were also provided with Information Sheets, detailing the study and what was expected in terms of their involvement (see Appendix 13). When they agreed to be observed and signed the consent form, a time was arranged to attend two of their classes which lasted two hours each. Five teachers had two classes observed, while the other four teachers had only one class observed, due to clashes in timetables between the classes observed. At the beginning of the class, I introduced myself and provided the students with a general idea about the research, so that

they knew the reason for my presence. During the sessions, I sat at the back of the classroom and used the observation schedule (see Appendix 3) to record data. I focused mainly on the teachers and how they taught vocabulary.

At the end of the first class, I explained to the students how they could contribute to the study, and then the Information Sheets and Consent Forms for students (see Appendix 14) were distributed to all those attending. The questionnaire, which took 20 minutes to complete, was distributed to the students. Those who decided to fill in the questionnaire, could stay behind after class to do this, when I was available to answer any questions on the questionnaire. At the end of the questionnaire, students could volunteer to take part in a follow-up interview, by giving their name and contact details. It was emphasised at all times that both completion of the questionnaire and the interviews were voluntary.

Following the observations and the questionnaire, a time was arranged for interviews with the volunteering teachers and students, which lasted about 15-25 minutes each. The interviews with the students were conducted in one of the empty classrooms, whereas the interviews with the teachers were carried out in their offices. The researcher started the interviews by explaining the purpose of the interview and by informing the respondents that their information was confidential and was going to be anonymised in the thesis and that they could take as much time as they needed, and also that they could stop at any time and discontinue the interview.

3.13. Method of analysis

Data analysis ‘involves the search for things that lie behind the surface content of the data’ (Denscombe, 2007:247). While quantitative data tend to be associated with numbers as the units of analysis, qualitative data tend to be associated with words or images as the units of analysis (Denscombe, 2007:248). The data of the present study were both quantitative and qualitative, and the method of analysing them will be described in this section.

3.13.1. Analysing the quantitative data

Creswell *et al.* (2009:129) has suggested five stages of quantitative data analysis: 'data preparation (coding, categorising and checking the data), initial exploration of the data (look for obvious trends or correlations), analysis of the data (use of statistical test e.g. SPSS), representation and display of the data (tables, figures and written interpretation of the statistical findings) and validation of the data'.

The variables in quantitative data analysis can be divided into four main types: 'interval/ratio variables', 'ordinal variables', 'nominal variables' and 'dichotomous variables' (Bryman, 2008:322). 'Interval/ratio variables' are 'variables where the distances between the categories are identical across the range of categories', whilst 'ordinal variables' are 'variables whose categories can be rank ordered, but the distances between the categories are not equal across the range'. 'Nominal variables' are variables 'that cannot be rank ordered', whereas 'dichotomous variables' are 'variables containing data that have only two categories (e.g. gender)'. Most of the quantitative variables in this research can be considered to be 'ordinal', in which the different categories used in the questionnaire are ranged, for example, from 'always' to 'never' and from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. Only the categories in question 36 (see Appendix 4) can be considered as nominal variables, as they are not rank ordered.

The quantitative data in the current research were generated by the closed-ended questions in the questionnaire. The responses recorded for these questions were entered into a data file and statistically analysed with the use of the computer software program SPSS. Descriptive statistics was adopted for all of the variables in order to select the appropriate test for each variable, as this provides important information e.g. the means, medians, standard deviations and the distribution of the sample.

3.13.2. Analysing the qualitative data

Qualitative data can take various forms: field notes, interview transcripts, texts, photographs (Denscombe, 2007:289). As observation and interviews were the main research tools in this study, the qualitative data were represented in the form of field notes and interview transcripts. Creswell *et al.* (2009:129) suggested five stages of qualitative data analysis, including: ‘data preparation’ (transcribing the text, cataloguing the text or visual data, preparing the data and loading them onto the software ‘if applicable’); ‘initial exploration of the data’ (looking for obvious recurrent themes or issues and adding notes to the data); ‘analysis of the data’ (coding the data, grouping the codes into categories or themes, comparing the categories and themes and finding the concept that encapsulates the categories); ‘representation and display of the data’ (written interpretations of the findings, illustrating points using quotations and pictures and using visual models, figures and tables) and the ‘validation of the data’.

In the current research, all interviews were transcribed fully. The researcher transcribed each interview and revised the transcripts by repeated listening to the recordings. As the interviews were conducted in Arabic, the researcher translated them into English and the translation was then verified by two native Arabic speakers. At the next stage, all the field notes were printed in order to begin coding, while NVivo was used in analysing the transcripts.

I adopted a thematic approach to coding, in order to increase the reliability of the analysis. The initial stage in the analysis consisted of reading several times the transcripts and field notes in order to identify main themes and categories. In order to achieve this, a “line by line” examination was conducted. This type of analysis helps ‘to generate initial categories (with their proprieties and dimensions) and to discover the relationships among concepts’ (Strauss & Corbin, 1998:57). The transcripts and field notes were coded line by line, which helped to develop the categories which were related to the themes mentioned below, in Table 3.4. The categories were drawn from the data, and informed by the research questions, the principles of sociocultural theory and the input hypothesis.

Table 3.4: An example of the first process of analysing the students' interviews

Theme	Category	Extracts from transcript
Teaching vocabulary	Perspectives on vocabulary teaching techniques	<i>The teaching method of our teacher is very good because he explains the new words by giving examples which help to recognise the meaning.</i>
		<i>I feel there is no interaction between the teacher and the students. For example, the topic of today is about banks, you feel the students don't interact with the teacher. However, if he gave us a story or a newspaper to read about an event, like what happened in Japan, the students might be more active.</i>
Vocabulary learning strategies	Using VLSs	<i>First, I try to get the meaning of the word from the context,</i>
		<i>then if I feel that I could understand the passage without knowing the meaning of this word, I skip it.</i>
		<i>But if it is important and I failed to guess its meaning from the context, I use the dictionary on my mobile.</i>
		<i>I ask a friend about the meaning of this word.</i>

Most of the lines in the transcripts could be classified under these categories. Despite the fact that the same themes were used when coding the transcripts and the field notes, there were slight differences in the categories generated from them. Examples from analysing the students' and teachers' interviews, as well as from the field notes, are available in Appendixes 15, 16 and 17.

The next stage of the analysis involved reading the transcripts and the field notes several times, in order to generate subcategories for the existing categories, as illustrated in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5: An example of the second process of analysing the students' interviews

Theme	Category	Example	Subcategory
Teaching vocabulary	Perspectives on vocabulary teaching techniques	<i>The teaching method of our teacher is very good because he explains the new words by giving examples which help to recognise the meaning.</i>	Positive
		<i>I feel there is no interaction between the teacher and the students. For example, the topic of today is about banks, you feel the students don't interact with the teacher but they have to attend the class. However, if he gives us a story or a newspaper to read about an event like what happened in Japan, the students might be more active.</i>	Negative
Vocabulary learning strategies	Using VLSs	<i>First, I try to get the meaning of the word from the context,</i>	Guessing from context
		<i>then if I feel that I could understand the passage without knowing the meaning of this word, I skip it.</i>	Ignoring the new word
		<i>But if it is important and I failed to guess its meaning from the context, I use the dictionary on my mobile.</i>	Using dictionary
		<i>I ask a friend about the meaning of this word.</i>	Appealing for assistance

While coding progressed, different subcategories emerged from the transcripts and the field notes. Each subcategory was checked to ensure that it was fitted under the suitable category. The vocabulary teaching techniques were counted in terms of frequency of use, to identify the ones most employed by teachers. It should also be mentioned that when data could not be grouped under any of the subcategories which the study concentrated on, it was left out from the analysis, as it was considered unnecessary to interpret data unrelated to the research focus.

3.14. Conclusion

This chapter started by determining the research questions and it then explained the research approaches and instruments used in the study. In addition, the ethical issues involved in this research and the pilot for the study were described. Furthermore, information about the research sample and the universities that participated was provided. The procedure that has been followed in collecting and analysing the data was described in detail. The following chapters will focus on the research results.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS FROM THE ANALYSIS OF TEXTBOOKS USED IN CLASSROOM

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the results that emerged from the analysis of textbooks used in the classes observed as discussed in section 3.11. It includes four sections and each section deals with a particular category used in the analysis. These themes are: (i) the purpose of the reading passages used in the reading textbook, (ii) the underlying pedagogical and linguistic assumptions the textbooks make, (iii) new vocabulary introduced and the techniques used in introducing it and (iv) the cultural context of the textbooks.

4.2. The purpose of the reading passages

This section evaluates the purposes of the reading passages used in the “Interactions 2” reading textbook. The analysis of the textbook revealed that the reading passages aim to improve three aspects: “the ability to read”, “reading comprehension” and “the ability to guess the meaning from context”. Each one of these purposes will be discussed with examples from the “Interactions 2” reading textbook.

The first aim for using the reading passages in the “Interactions 2” reading textbook was “improving the students’ ability to read”. The task of the reading passages asks the students to read the passage first. For example:

Read



4 Reading an Article As you read the following selection, think about the answer to these questions: *How do animals communicate? Do animals have the capacity to learn language?* Read the selection. Do not use a dictionary. Then do the exercises that follow the reading.

Read



4 Reading an Article As you read the following selection, think about the answer to this question: *What are fads and trends, and why are they important?* Read the selection. Do not use a dictionary. Then do the exercises that follow the reading.

Read



4 Reading an Article As you read the following selection, think about the answer to this question: *What can we learn about a culture from its educational system?* Read the selection. Do not use a dictionary. Then do the exercises that follow the reading.

Read



6 Reading an Article As you read the following selection, think about the answer to this question: *What are some ways in which work is changing?* Read the selection. Do not use a dictionary. Then do the exercises that follow the reading.

Including a photo for a headphone at the beginning of each task indicates that the students should listen to the reading passage. Listening to the text first seems to help students read it more easily with fewer errors in pronunciation. All reading passages in the “Interactions 2” reading textbook used the same task before any reading passage. This shows the emphasis on helping learners to read correctly.

The second aim identified in the reading passages was “improving reading comprehension”, as shown in the example above where the students were asked to answer a specific question. According to this question, the students should provide an answer after reading the passage. The purpose of this question is to check whether or not the students have understood what they have read. Practising reading and emphasising reading comprehension is in line with Krashen’s Input Hypothesis (1985), which suggests learners should receive ‘comprehensible input’ to develop their language, where reading is seen as a helpful input.

Based on the “Interactions 2” reading textbook’s analysis, the third aim of the reading passages was “improving students’ ability to guess the meaning from context”. The same task above asks the students to use particular strategies. The task discourages the students from using the dictionary while reading the passage and implies that students should guess the

meaning of the unknown words from context. Through this task, the textbook provides the students with the opportunity to practise the ‘*Inferring from meaning*’ strategy. This could promote learners’ autonomy as they can deal with unknown words in the text themselves. Students, however, might need other strategies to confirm their guessing or to understand the meaning of words they could not guess by using, for example, a dictionary, which the reading textbook discourages students to use while reading the passage, as shown the examples above. This aim, “improving the students’ ability to guess the meaning from context”, refers to one of the sociocultural theory concepts, that is “self-regulation” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). When students are able to deploy the VLSs effectively and become less reliant on their teachers, it leads them to be “self-regulated” in their learning.

In addition to including a reading passage in each chapter in the textbook, another task asking students to summarise the key message of each paragraph independently also used in each chapter. These tasks have the same purposes that were discussed above as shown in the following extract:



2 Reading: Marking Text when You Read Read the paragraphs below. As you read, mark the topic, main idea, and important details of each paragraph. Do not use a dictionary. When you finish, write the topic and the main idea of each paragraph.

The task aims to “improve students’ ability to read” by asking the students to read each paragraph. Again, a headphone icon was included and anticipated that the students would listen to each paragraph, which would help them read correctly. The task also asks the students to find the main idea of each paragraph to “improve reading comprehension” and ensure that the students understand the text they read. Again, the task asks that students do not use a dictionary when reading. This suggests that the textbook wants the students to ‘*Guess the meaning from context*’ independently, which refers to another purpose for this task that is “improving the students’ ability to guess the meaning from context”.

To sum up, when analysing the reading passages in the “Interaction 2” reading textbook, three goals were identified: “improving students’ ability to read”, “improving reading comprehension” and “improving students’ ability to guess the meaning from context”. Each one focuses on a particular aspect to develop in relation to students’ English language.

4.3. The underlying linguistic and pedagogical assumptions the textbooks make

This section presents the underlying assumptions the textbooks make, by examining what the textbooks assume the teachers and students will do in the classroom while using the textbooks. These assumptions were divided into: “linguistic assumptions” and “pedagogical assumptions” based on the data, which emerged from the analysis of textbooks. The analysis of the “Vocabulary in use” textbook and the “Interactions 2” reading textbook showed that these textbooks expect certain actions from teachers and students when dealing with the included activities.

In one of these activities, which was appeared at the beginning of each chapter before the reading passage, students were asked to read several words and listen to their pronunciation:



3 Previewing Vocabulary Read the words and phrases below. Listen to the pronunciation of each word. Put a check mark (✓) next to the words you know. For the words that you don't know, *don't* use a dictionary. Try to understand them from the reading. You'll work with some of these words in the activities.

According to this activity, students were expected to listen to these words whether through a CD used or as read aloud by their teachers in order to help their pronunciation. Also, a pedagogical assumption was made in this activity by asking students to infer the meaning of these words from the reading passage. This aims to enhance the learners' autonomy and make them rely on themselves when finding out the meaning of unknown words while reading. Encouraging students to learn vocabulary through reading as shown in the example above matches Krashen's (1989) suggestion that reading is a crucial source for vocabulary. Another activity, which was included at the end of each chapter of the “Interactions 2” reading textbook asked students to complete sentences with words they had to choose from a list:

1 Focusing on Words from the Academic Word List Fill in the blanks with words from the Academic Word List in the box. When you finish, turn back to page 27 and check your answers.

The textbook assumed that this activity would be helpful for students' vocabulary learning in relation to using the new words in context, mainly academic ones. Pedagogically, the students were expected to check their answers themselves. As a result, they would need less assistance

from teachers for this activity, which supports the students' autonomy. Another linguistic assumption that the reading textbook makes is shown in the following example:

11 Using the Prefix Over- Read the definitions below. Write the words being defined. They begin with *over*. Then compare your answers with another student's.

The extract refers to the linguistic assumption, that students will learn, apart from the meaning of the words and their pronunciation; the use of "prefixes". Also, this activity refers to a pedagogical assumption that students will work in pairs, which is the main concept of the sociocultural theory. In general, the "Interactions 2" reading textbook introduced various aspects about the new words. For example:



2 Understanding Parts of Speech Read the words below. Write the missing noun, verb, adjective, or adverb in the blank white boxes. Then listen and check your answers. (The shaded boxes indicate that no word exists for that part of speech.)

This suggests that although the "Interactions 2" reading textbook focused on certain linguistic assumptions mainly in relation to the meaning of new vocabulary and pronunciation, which was assumed that the students would learn, other aspects were indicated.

Other activities in the "Interactions 2" reading textbook included pedagogical assumptions, for example:

3 Getting Meaning from Context Use both specific clues in these sentences and your own logic to determine the meanings of the underlined words and expressions. Then write your guess about the meaning. Compare your answers with those of a partner.

This example suggests an assumption that this activity will develop students' ability to '*Guess the meaning from context*', which leads to develop their vocabulary and their English in general. In this activity, the students were asked to compare their answers to their classmates' answers. This underpins a pedagogical assumption for both teachers and students. The activity encourages the teachers to conduct the activity in a communicative way and also encourages students to work in pairs and groups. This refers to the main concept of the sociocultural theory, which promotes activities which encourage working in groups or pairs

as helpful for learning (Mitchell *et al.*, 2012). Also, this activity provides the students with the scaffolded help they need when they interact with each other, as the students who guessed the meaning of the unknown words successfully could help others. Although the “Interactions 2” reading textbook concentrated on using ‘*Guessing the meaning from context*’ and asked the students not to employ a dictionary while reading, other VLSs were indicated, such as using the monolingual dictionary:

5 Understanding Dictionary Entries: Single Meanings Some words have only one meaning. You can find the meaning in a dictionary entry, which sometimes includes an example. Read these two dictionary entries and answer the questions about them.

en-roll, enrol /ɪnˈroʊl/ v. [I,T] to officially join a school, university, etc., or to arrange for someone else to do this.: *the students enrolled in honors classes* | *Nathan enrolled at City College.*

This example shows that the “Interactions 2” reading textbook introduces other strategies apart from “*Guessing the meaning from context*”, which helps students use different strategies in their learning to make them more autonomous. Providing information about using the dictionary to help students use it in their learning implies object-regulation, a concept suggested by the sociocultural theory, when learners use an object in their environment to manage an activity (Thorne & Tasker, 2011). Employing a dictionary was also introduced in other chapters:

The abbreviation appears before the meanings of the word with that part of speech. The dictionary entry below shows that the word *access* can be a noun (with two meanings) or a verb (with one meaning). A related adjective is *accessible*.

ac·cess¹ /ˈæksɪs/ n. [U] 1 the right to enter a place, use something, see someone, etc.: *Anyone with access to the Internet can visit our website.* | *Do you have access to a car?* 2 the way you enter a building or get to a place, or how easy this is: *The only access to the building is through the parking lot.* | *The law requires businesses to improve access for disabled customers.*
→ **gain access** at GAIN
access² v. [T] to find and use information, especially on a computer: *I couldn't access the file.*
ac·ces·si·ble /əkˈsɛsəbəl/ adj. 1 easy to reach or get into [≠ **inaccessible**]: *The park is not accessible by road.* 2 easy to obtain or use: *A college education wasn't accessible to women until the 1920s.* 3 easy to understand and enjoy: *I thought his last book was more accessible.*
—**accessibility** /əkˌsɛsəˈbɪləti/ n. [U]

A key assumption made in the “Interaction 2” reading textbook was that the teacher would explain to students how to use these strategies since several activities in the textbook referred to using ‘*Guessing the meaning from context*’, as well as ‘*Using the dictionary*’, which was indicated in some chapters.

Likewise, the vocabulary textbook includes linguistic and pedagogical assumptions. One of the linguistic assumptions is shown in the following extract:

Underline the stressed syllable in each of the words below.

- 1 photograph photography photographer photographically
- 2 telephone telephonist
- 3 zoology zoologist zoological
- 4 arithmetic arithmetical arithmetician

This exercise aims to develop an important linguistic aspect, which is pronunciation. In the same lesson, another exercise includes a pedagogical assumption, which is encouraging students to ask for their teacher’s help with the correct pronunciation for the words that they found difficult:

Follow-up: Are there other words which you know you personally have particular problems pronouncing? You might like to ask a teacher to help you answer this question. Note any such words down with their phonetic transcription beside them.

Also, writing the phonetic transcription beside each word was assumed as helpful to students when learning the correct pronunciation when dealing with dictionaries and improves their autonomy. When a teacher assists students in managing an activity, it is an example of scaffolding, as interaction with the teacher was suggested in order to provide the students with the support they need to deal with such an activity.

Pronunciation was emphasised in different lessons in the “Vocabulary in use” textbook, by including a phonetic transcription besides the words that the textbook anticipated students to find difficulty in pronouncing, as shown in the following extract:

Disasters/tragedies

earthquakes

[the earth moves/trembles] _____

drought /draʊt/ [no rain] _____

explosions [e.g. a bomb] _____

hurricanes/tornadoes /tɔ:'neɪdəʊz/

typhoons [violent winds / storms] -

Based on these extracts, the “Vocabulary in use” textbook assumed that the students were familiar with the phonetic transcriptions, which would lead them to pronounce new words correctly. The key pedagogical assumption that the “Vocabulary in use” textbook makes is evident through the use of certain VLSs on certain tasks. The “Vocabulary in use” textbook assumed that involving VLSs would help learners become more autonomous in their learning and make them less reliant on their teachers. In this sense, the back cover announces that the textbook ‘is primarily designed as a self-study reference and practice vocabulary book, but it can also be used for classroom work’. The “Vocabulary in use” textbook did not refer to any communicative activity, such as working in groups or in pairs, and focused more on using particular VLSs individually to deal with some exercises as will be shown in this section. Therefore, the “Vocabulary in use” textbook appears to aim and make the students self-regulated in their learning and more independent. As shown in section 3.11.1, the “Vocabulary in use” textbook introduced three VLSs in the early lessons: ‘*Guessing the meaning from context*’, ‘*Using a dictionary*’ and ‘*Using a notebook*’ by explaining how they can be used. For example,

Inferring meaning from context

There are a number of clues which you may be able to use to help you work out the meaning of an unfamiliar word:

The context in which it is used

- Visual clues: a picture in a book or film footage in a TV news broadcast may help you.
- Your own background knowledge about a situation: for example, if you already know that there has just been an earthquake in Los Angeles, then you will find it easy to understand the word ‘earthquake’ when you hear a news broadcast about it.

Don't forget that most words have more than one meaning. In this example, only the second meaning corresponds to the way **hairy** is used in this sentence:

It was a really **hairy** journey on the mountain road.

hairy /ˈheəri/. **hairier, hairiest**. 1 Someone or something that is **hairy** is covered with hair. *eg ...a plump child with hairy legs... ...a big, hairy man... The function of a mammal's hairy coat is to insulate the body.* ADJ QUALIT
2 If you describe a situation as **hairy**, you mean that it is exciting, worrying, and rather frightening; a very informal use. *eg It got a little hairy when we drove him to the station with less than two minutes to spare.* ADJ QUALIT = nerve-racking, scary

Organising words by meaning

Try dividing your notebook into different broad sections, with sections for **words for feelings**, **words to describe places**, **words for movement**, **words for thinking**, etc. In each section you can build families of words related in meaning, using some of the ways suggested in this unit.

It is clear that the “Vocabulary in use” textbook assumed that the students would deploy these strategies while working on some activities, for instance:

Here are some compound nouns based on phrasal verbs. Guess the meaning of the underlined word from its context.

Follow-up: Look in your dictionary. Can you find any other examples of words beginning with *gr-*, *cl-*, *sp-* or *wh-* with the association described opposite?

When recording these expressions in your notebook, don't forget to write the prepositions that go with them (e.g. result *in*, consequence *of*).

These activities provide the students with the opportunity to practise using VLSs. This is likely to lead to “internalisation”, which is suggested in the sociocultural theory when learners practise employing certain strategies as shown in the above examples (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). These strategies are likely to be internalised and, as a result, students will not need help from others to know how to use these strategies. Practising VLSs after being explained by teachers resonates with Anderson's (1982) ideas, which emphasises the role of practise in learning and suggests that the knowledge received should be effectively practised in order to be able to use it.

In summary, this section has presented the “linguistic” and “pedagogical” assumptions that the prescribed textbooks make. One of the main linguistic assumptions was in relation to pronouncing the new words correctly. Also, the “Interactions 2” reading textbook provided different information about the new vocabulary apart from the meaning and pronunciation, such as part of speech. It should be noted that the textbooks assumed that students would learn through certain techniques, which also provide the students with more information about the new words, as discussed in the next section. A key pedagogical assumption in the textbooks was enhancing the learner’s autonomy, which was represented in the form of introducing VLSs. While the “Interactions 2” reading textbook mainly dealt with “discovery strategies” such as ‘*Guessing the meaning from context*’ and ‘*Using a dictionary*’, the “Vocabulary in use” textbook referred to an additional consolidation strategy, ‘*Using a notebook*’. Moreover, the “Interactions 2” reading textbook assumed that some tasks would be conducted in a communicative way.

4.4. New vocabulary introduced and the techniques used in introducing it

The “Interactions 2” reading textbook analysis showed that approximately 20 new words are introduced in each chapter and a similar number of new words are introduced in each lesson in the vocabulary textbook. When these words were analysed according to their frequency, it had been revealed that few words were among the 2000 most frequent words, while most of the new words were over this frequency. The following vocabulary list was used in one of the chapters in the reading textbook:

Nouns		Verbs	
<input type="checkbox"/> career counselors	<input type="checkbox"/> manufacturing jobs	<input type="checkbox"/> distract	<input type="checkbox"/> passionate
<input type="checkbox"/> cell phones	<input type="checkbox"/> outsourcing	<input type="checkbox"/> keep up with	<input type="checkbox"/> rigid
<input type="checkbox"/> construction	<input type="checkbox"/> pleasure	<input type="checkbox"/> overwork	<input type="checkbox"/> secure
<input type="checkbox"/> drawback	<input type="checkbox"/> posts	<input type="checkbox"/> upgrade	<input type="checkbox"/> temporary
<input type="checkbox"/> globalization	<input type="checkbox"/> self-confidence	<input type="checkbox"/> varies (vary)	<input type="checkbox"/> worldwide
<input type="checkbox"/> identity	<input type="checkbox"/> stress		
<input type="checkbox"/> job hopping	<input type="checkbox"/> telecommuting	Adjectives	Expression
<input type="checkbox"/> job security	<input type="checkbox"/> workaholism	<input type="checkbox"/> flexible	<input type="checkbox"/> on the move
<input type="checkbox"/> livelihood	<input type="checkbox"/> workforce	<input type="checkbox"/> leisure	

Thirteen words in this list were among the 2000 most frequent while twelve words were among the 3000-5000 most frequent. Six words were among over the 5000 most frequent. This shows that the “Interactions 2” reading textbook employed vocabulary from different

frequencies and most of the vocabulary introduced is among over the 3000 most frequent. When the word is less frequent, it is likely to be more difficult for the students. Similarly, the “Vocabulary in use” textbook introduces new words from different frequencies as shown in this list:

- gr- at the beginning of a word can suggest something unpleasant or miserable, e.g. **groan** [make a deep sound forced out by pain or despair], **grumble** [complain in a bad-tempered way], **grumpy** [bad-tempered], **grunt** [make a low, rough sound like pigs do, or people expressing disagreement or boredom], **growl** [make a deep, threatening sound].
- cl- at the beginning of a word can suggest something sharp and/or metallic, e.g. **click** [make a short sharp sound], **clang** [make a loud ringing noise], **clank** [make a dull metallic noise, not as loud as a clang], **clash** [make a loud, broken, confused noise as when metal objects strike together], **clink** [make the sound of small bits of metal or glass knocking together]. Horses go **clip-clop** on the road.
- sp- at the beginning of a word can have an association with water or other liquids or powders, e.g. **splash** [cause a liquid to fly about in drops], **spit** [send liquid out from the mouth], **splutter** [make a series of spitting sounds], **spray** [send liquid through the air in tiny drops either by the wind or some instrument], **sprinkle** [scatter small drops], **spurt** [come out in a sudden burst].
- wh- at the beginning of a word often suggests the movement of air, e.g. **whistle** [a high-pitched noise made by forcing air or steam through a small opening], **whirr** [sound like a bird’s wings moving rapidly], **whizz** [make the sound of something rushing through air], **wheeze** [breathe noisily especially with a whistling sound in the chest], **whip** [long piece of rope or leather or to hit with one of these].
- ash at the end of a word can suggest something fast and violent, e.g. **smash** [break violently into small pieces], **dash** [move or be moved violently], **crash** [suddenly strike violently and noisily], **bash** [strike heavily so as to break or injure], **mash** [make soft or pulpy by beating or crushing], **gash** [a long deep cut or wound].
- ckle, -ggle, or -zzle at the end of a word can suggest something light and repeated, e.g. **trickle** [to flow in a thin stream or drops], **crackle** [make a series of short cracking sounds], **tinkle** [make a succession of light ringing sounds], **giggle** [laugh lightly], **wriggle** [move with quick short twistings], **sizzle** [make a hissing sound like something cooking in fat], **drizzle** [small, fine rain].



Six words from the above the list were among the 2000 most frequent whereas eleven words were among the 3000-5000 most frequent. The rest of the words were over the 5000 most frequent. This suggests that most of the vocabulary introduced in both the textbooks was among over the 3000 most frequent and a considerable number of words were over the 5000 most frequent. It should be noted that some of the words in the above list are informal ones, given that the “Vocabulary in use” textbook is mainly for self-study use and it can be used in the classroom. This means that a wide range of vocabulary will be employed in the textbook, including both the formal and informal. Introducing informal words in the “Vocabulary in use” textbook implies that this textbook is not only used for academic purposes, but it can also be used for daily language use.

Different techniques were used in the two textbooks when introducing new vocabulary. The reading textbook analysis revealed that three main techniques were employed: “using synonyms”, “defining new words in English” and “using the new word in a sentence”. The vocabulary textbook used the same techniques in addition to “using pictures”. These techniques show what the prescribed textbooks expect students to learn about the new vocabulary, as well as the type of vocabulary introduced, as shown earlier.

The following examples from the “Interactions 2” reading textbook show how synonyms are used in practising new vocabulary:

2 Recognizing Word Meanings Match the words with their meanings. Write the letters on the lines, as in the example.

1 Practice Look again at the reading “Trendspotting” on pages 95–98. Read it again if necessary. Then answer the vocabulary questions below. Try to answer all the questions in ten minutes.

7. Which of the following is closest in meaning to *founded*, as it is used in Paragraph F?
- (A) bought
 - (B) discovered
 - (C) closed
 - (D) started

2 Understanding General and Specific Words In each of the following items, circle the one word that includes the meanings of the others. The first one is done as an example.

1. (art) statue painting

These examples show that the “Interactions 2” reading textbook employed “synonyms” as a technique in the activities that students were expected to complete in order to help students practise the new words. Using synonyms in explaining the new vocabulary was also a common technique in the “Vocabulary in use” textbook:

Other compound adjectives describe a person's character.

Melissa was **absent-minded** [forgetful], **easy-going** [relaxed], **good-tempered** [cheerful], **warm-hearted** [kind] and **quick-witted** [intelligent] if perhaps a little **big-headed** [proud of herself],

In response to the pay offer, there was a **walk-out** at the factory. [strike]
There is going to be a **crack-down** on public spending. [action to prevent]

Lacking ability: stupid foolish half-witted simple silly brainless daft dumb dim (the last four are predominantly colloquial words)

response: reaction (to), attitude (to)

solution: answer (to), resolution (to), key (to), way out (of)

The extracts above indicate how the "Vocabulary in use" textbook employed synonyms to explain the meaning of new words. Synonyms were also used in different ways by occasionally providing more than one synonym or putting the new word in context and showing the synonyms of the new vocabulary between brackets.

Other examples from the "Interactions 2" reading textbook indicate employing the definition of the new words by asking students to write the word that fitted the definition:

9 Checking Vocabulary Find a word or expression in the reading for each definition below.

1. people who give advice about professions and careers = _____

7 Checking Vocabulary Check your understanding of vocabulary from the reading selection. Read the definitions below and write words and expressions that fit these definitions. The letters in parentheses refer to paragraphs in the reading.

1. a paper containing the laws that a country is based on (B) = constitution

A similar activity asked the students to provide a word for a definition:

11 Using the Prefix Over- Read the definitions below. Write the words being defined. They begin with *over*. Then compare your answers with another student's.

1. do something too much (verb) = overdo

In the last example, students were provided with clues to help them get the correct answer. Likewise, the next example for an exercise required students to write the definition of the underlined words in a sentence:

2. People spend hours in **gridlock**—that is, traffic so horrible that it simply doesn't move—when they **commute** daily from their homes to their work and back.

gridlock = _____

commute = _____

Showing the new word in a sentence is assumed to be helpful for the students when they are asked to define the new words correctly. While the “Interactions 2” reading textbook employed the definition as a technique to practise the new words through the activities, the “Vocabulary in use” textbook did the same; however, a definition was also used in introducing the new vocabulary as shown in the following extracts:

drop-dead gorgeous: inspiring admiration for someone's attractiveness

bank account [an account in a bank], **pedestrian crossing** [a place for people to cross a road], but sometimes they are written with a hyphen instead of a space between the

Definitions were also employed to explain new words used in sentences:

Just after leaving school he went through the stage of being a **dropout**. [person who rejects society]

The **proceeds** of the concert are going to the children's fund. [money from selling tickets]

The **crew** was/were saved when the ship sank. [workers on a ship/ambulance/plane]

terraced house: joined to several houses to form a row
cottage: small house in the country or in a village

I'm afraid I've **dented** your car. I'm really sorry. I'll pay for the repairs. [bent the metal a little bit by hitting something]

The explosion resulted in 300 **casualties**. /'kæʒəlti:z/ [dead and injured people]

director (member of the board of a company)

Here are some more new words and expressions. Match them with their definitions.

- 1 shopaholic
- 2 wannabe (informal)
- 3 snail mail

The extracts from the “Interactions 2” reading textbook and the “Vocabulary in use” textbook, which showed the employment of two techniques at the same time to explain a new word suggests an assumption that the use of more than one technique will help students understand new vocabulary. It seems that the authors of the textbooks believed that students may not always be able to guess the meaning of certain words from context; therefore, their definitions were provided. This suggests that the textbooks aimed to predict the ZPD stage, suggested by Vygotsky, when students need more help to achieve progress. Using an additional technique to explain new vocabulary is a form of scaffolding for learners who may use these textbooks as self-study books when their teacher’s or colleagues’ support is not available.

Another technique employed in the textbooks was that of “using the new word in a sentence”. The following example shows how this technique was used in the “Interactions 2” reading textbook activities:

2 Understanding Adjective and Noun Phrases In each sentence below, add a word to complete the adjective or noun phrase. Choose from the following words:

1. He looked through the classified ads and hoped to find his

One of the advantages of this technique is showing how the assumed new word is used in a context. A similar activity asks the students to complete the sentences with the correct word:

2 Understanding Parts of Speech Read the words below. Write the missing noun, verb, adjective, or adverb in the blank white boxes. Then listen and check your answers. (The shaded boxes indicate that no word exists for that part of speech.)

1. solve

They are trying to find a solution (n.) to the problem of overcrowding, but this is a difficult problem to solve (v.).

1 Focusing on Words from the Academic Word List Fill in the blanks with words from the Academic Word List in the box. When you finish, turn back to page 96, Paragraph D, and check your answers.

The Reason for Fads

What causes such fads to come and go? And why do _____ many people follow them? Although clothing

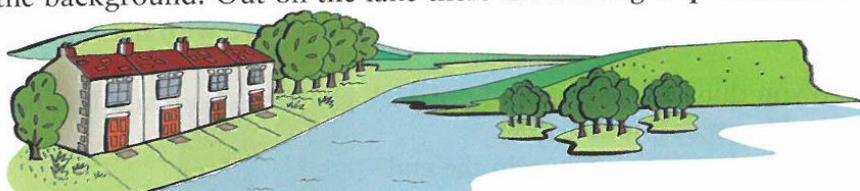
The extract below is from a lesson entitled “Onomatopoeic words”, which suggests that the lesson does not provide the students with only new vocabulary but it also provides them with the nature of some English words whose pronunciation is similar to their meaning:

Certain combinations of letters have particular sound associations in English.
gr- at the beginning of a word can suggest something unpleasant or miserable, e.g. groan

An important point, which should be noted through the examples provided on “using definitions” and “using the new word in a sentence” is that the nature of new vocabulary introduced might play a role in employing these two techniques in particular. Some of the words introduced (e.g. overdo, gridlock, commute, dropout, proceeds, muggy, classified, solve) seem to be more difficult to use with other techniques, such as synonyms and pictures.

Another technique used was that of “using pictures” when explaining the meaning of the new vocabulary. Although the “Interactions 2” reading textbook used some general pictures at the beginning of each chapter to provide an idea about the topic and what the reading passage was about, pictures were not generally used to provide the meaning of the new words. Nevertheless, pictures were employed in the “Vocabulary in use” textbook to explain new words:

In the picture we can see a **row** of cottages near a **clump** of trees with a **range** of hills in the background. Out on the lake there is a small **group** of islands.



There are a number of special words in English which are used to describe different kinds of containers. Look at the following pictures.



Tools, instruments, pieces of equipment



It could be noticed that the nature of the words in these examples allowed the use of pictures to represent them due to their concrete nature.

In summary, this section has shown the type of vocabulary introduced in the prescribed textbooks as well as the techniques employed to explain and practise this vocabulary. It revealed that most of the new words in the textbooks were among over the 3000 most frequent and a number of words were over the 5000 most frequent. Both the textbooks used different techniques, mainly: “using synonyms”, “defining new words in English” and “using the new word in a sentence”, and the “Vocabulary in use” textbook was “using pictures” as well. Furthermore, more than one technique has been used to explain some words. The section also shows the nature of the new words may play a role in determining a certain technique to use. These techniques revealed what the students were expected to learn about the new vocabulary and the type of vocabulary they were expected to learn.

4.5. The cultural context

The analysis of culture in the textbooks shows that most of the two textbooks' content was different to the students' culture. The following extracts are from the passages used in the "Interactions 2" reading textbook:

A City and Its Mayor

It might not be a surprise to find that life in **affluent** cities is improving. But what about cities that *aren't* rich? The city of Curitiba, Brazil, proves that it's possible for even a city in a developing country to offer a good life to its residents. The former mayor of Curitiba for 25 years, Jaime Lerner is

What Works, What Doesn't

Grameen Bank has had many successes and only a few failures. In a developing country such as Bangladesh, a person can buy a cow or a sewing machine and begin a small business with only \$20 to \$50. Today,

Job Security

The situation **varies** from country to country, but in today's economy, there is generally less job security **worldwide**. Even in Japan, where people traditionally had a very **secure** job for life, there is now no promise of a lifetime job with the same company. One reason for the lack of **job security** is the worldwide decrease in **manufacturing jobs**. Another reason is employers' need to hold down costs. This has resulted in two

Decrease in Manufacturing Jobs, 1995–2002

Brazil	↓20%
China	↓15%
Japan	↓16%
U.S.A.	↓11%
worldwide	↓11%

Popular Culture and the University

Possibly because of the importance of trendspotting in business, more and more universities are offering classes in popular culture. Some even offer a *major* in popular culture. Parents of students at New York University have sometimes been surprised to find their children taking

such classes as "Inside the Mouse" (about the influence of Disney), "Golden Arches East" (about McDonald's in Asia), or "Hope in a Jar" (about the cosmetics industry). At Bowling Green State University, in Ohio, there has been a course on *Pokemon*, found in Japanese culture. At

different meaning in other cultures. In the past, in Japan, it was the custom for women to blacken, not whiten, the teeth. People in some areas of Africa and central Australia have the custom of filing the teeth to sharp points. And among the Makololo people of Malawi, the women wear a very large ring—a *pelele*—in their upper lip. As their chief once explained about peleles: “They are the only beautiful things women have. Men have beards.”

Women in these societies have less need of body or face paint because they usually stay in the safety of the village. Women in Victorian society in England and the United States were expected to wear little or no makeup. They were excluded from public life and therefore didn't need protection from the outside world. In modern

The content of the above exercises has different elements from the students' culture, and each chapter followed through with the same context as used in the reading passage and most exercises through the chapter. It seems that the “Interactions 2” reading textbook aimed at introducing different cultures and might have assumed that this could raise the students' interests, which positively affecting their learning.

Similarly, the cultural context often referred to in the “Vocabulary in use” textbook was referred to different cultural values and attitudes from the students' culture. Examples from the lessons in the “Vocabulary in use” textbook:

Types of houses/places people live

detached house: not joined to any other house
semi-detached house (informal: semi-): joined to one other house
self-contained flat: does not share facilities with any other
terraced house: joined to several houses to form a row
cottage: small house in the country or in a village
bungalow: house with only one storey (no upstairs)

The words, **city** and **town**, are sometimes used interchangeably but a city is generally large with a wider range of facilities. This is a description of Cork, one of Ireland's main cities. Which words or phrases might be useful for describing your own or another town?

When I move to London, I'll have to find **lodgings**. [e.g. a room in a flat]

Some students at Oxford spend more time learning to **row** well than studying. /rəʊ/

Before you go to England I should give you two **bits** of advice

Autumn in London is usually **chilly** and **damp** with **rain** and **drizzle**.

Comprehensive schools in the UK are open to all and are for all abilities. You can only get into a **grammar school** by competitive entry (an exam). **Public schools** in the UK are very famous **private schools**. Colleges include **teacher-training colleges**, **technical colleges** and **general colleges of further education**.

In the UK a meal in a restaurant would typically be three courses: a **starter** [light snack/appetiser], a **main course** [the most important/substantial part of the meal], followed by a **dessert** [sometimes called a **sweet/pudding/after**s, especially at home].

The above examples assumed that teachers would not explain only the meaning of new vocabulary, but also the cultural context used in some of these examples. It seems that the students need to be familiar with the cultural content used in some of the examples in order to guess the meaning correctly. Also, teachers might need to explain the cultural context used in some of the examples to help students understand the meaning. It appears that the “Vocabulary in use” textbook assumed that using culture as context to introduce the new words might help students to know their meanings and usage. The exercises in the “Vocabulary in use” textbook also used culture as a context:

Use the word in brackets to complete the sentences. Add the necessary prefix and put the word in the correct form.

Example: The runner was ...*disqualified*... after a blood test. (QUALIFY)

- 1 Children (and adults) love parcels at Christmas time. (WRAP)
- 4 After a brief speech the Queen the new statue. (VEIL)

Fill in the blanks with connectors. An example is given.

- 1 *Prior*... to going to Manchester, Laura was in Paris.
- 2 Her next trip after Glasgow is on 24th. she can have a quiet time at home.

Write a *beginning* for these sentences, as in the example.

- 4 In contrast, the traffic in Britain drives on the left.

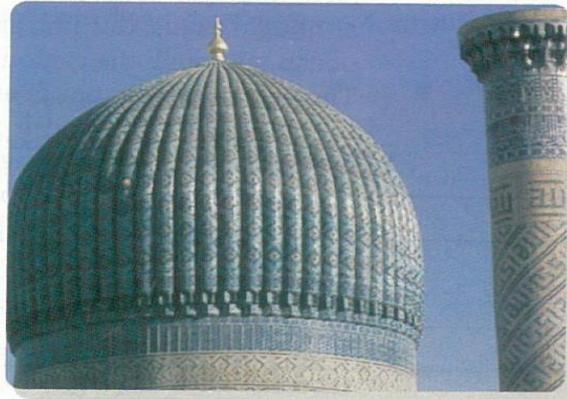
Correct the mistakes in these sentences.

- 2 In the North of England, most houses are made of stones, but in the South, bricks are more common.

It could be noticed that most of the cultural context in the “Vocabulary in use” textbook was largely British, as this textbook was written by British authors and publishers. So, the assumption made here is that both the teachers and learners who use this textbook may need to be familiar with the cultural context of this textbook in order to understand its content.

Very few paragraphs were found in the “Interactions 2” reading textbook were similar to the students’ culture, as shown in the following examples:

The spread of Islam toward the east, in the 7th century C.E., contributed to the disappearance of some art but the creation of other art. In Islam, the Qu’ran (Islam’s Holy Book) teaches that no images, human or of any other unholy object, are worthy of worship except that of Allah, the Divine. However, during this period, Islamic art and architecture **flowered** in many areas along the Silk Road. For example, in Samarkand—in



▲ Gur-i Amir Mausoleum in Samarkand, Uzbekistan

Islamic Weddings

A wedding in any culture is an important rite of passage. In Islam, the specific stages of a wedding ceremony may **vary** from country to country, but most share certain characteristics. Typical is the traditional wedding of

These examples might have been included in the “Interaction 2” reading textbook as this edition was written for the Middle East, as mentioned on the cover of this textbook. The next example asks students to choose the correct answer in relation to the topic of a paragraph:

Three common types of body decoration are *mehndi* or *henna*, tattooing, and scarification. *Mehndi* or *henna* is the art of applying dye (usually dark orange or dark brown) to the skin of women in India, Islamic cultures, and Africa.

In the same chapter, there was a comprehension task asking students to read paragraphs to find the main idea and provide a summary for the paragraph. One of these paragraphs was entitled “A New Emirati Wedding”, covering issues familiar in the students’ culture:

A New Emirati Wedding

B In the United Arab Emirates, on the Arabian Peninsula, the traditional wedding seems to be changing, at least for some people. A typical Emirati



Grooms at a mass wedding in the United Arab Emirates

wedding is extremely lavish—elegant, expensive, and huge. There might be 1,000 guests at the three-day celebration for the bride and groom. The groom has to pay these bills, and after such a wedding, the couple begins their marriage in terrible debt. Each wedding seems to be bigger than the one before it. Several years ago, the government decided that things were getting out of hand—out of control—so they started a Marriage Fund. This is money for young Emirati men who agree to marry Emirati women, not foreigners. Many of these men agree to have a group celebration. At one such group celebration, at which the UAE president was the guest of honor, there were several of the components of a traditional wedding: a lavish

feast of exquisite food and entertainment by Bedouin dancers waving their swords. The difference? There were 650 grooms. It was, one person pointed out, “a symbol of a new spirit of economy.”

It should be mentioned that these four examples were the only examples compatible to the students’ culture used in the “Interactions 2” reading textbook. An important theoretical aspect in relation to the sociocultural theory refers to the role of culture in learning, as shown in the examples in this section. According to the activity theory, a concept in the sociocultural theory, what is practised should be motivated by a ‘biological need’ or ‘culturally constructed need’ (Lantolf, 2000:8). This shows the importance of considering culture in learning and learners should be motivated to deal with that culture in order to achieve development.

To sum up, this section has considered the cultural context used in the prescribed textbooks. It revealed that most of the cultural content referred to in the textbooks was different from the students’ culture. While the culture contexts in the “Interactions 2” reading textbook were from different countries around the world, such as America, Canada and Asian countries, the cultural context referred to in the “Vocabulary textbook” was mainly British. Only four instances were found in the “Interactions 2” reading textbook to be similar to the students’ culture.

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter has presented the results of the analysis of textbooks. It showed the aims of the reading passages employed in the reading textbook. The “linguistic” and “pedagogical” assumptions that the prescribed textbooks make were also explained. While the main linguistic assumptions were related to pronunciation and providing different information about the new words, the pedagogical assumptions included promoting the learner autonomy by introducing certain VLSs. It was also assumed that some activities from the reading textbook would be conducted in a communicative way. New vocabulary introduced and the techniques used in introducing it were discussed, the analysis showed that most of the new words introduced were among over the 3000 most frequent. Different techniques were employed in the textbooks to deal with new words, including: “using synonyms”, “defining new words in English” and “using the new word in a sentence”, as well as “using pictures” as an additional technique in the “Vocabulary in use” textbook. Finally, the cultural context the textbooks referred to differed greatly from that of the students.

CHAPTER FIVE

TEACHERS' TECHNIQUES FOR INTRODUCING NEW VOCABULARY

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the techniques teachers of vocabulary and reading classes in Saudi universities used to teach new vocabulary to students. It presents the results of the data gathered during classroom observations and interviews with teachers and students. The chapter consists of three main sections: the first section examines the teaching techniques used by teachers when teaching vocabulary, as observed in their classes; the second section explores the techniques teachers considered to be the most successful and the third section discusses students' views of the techniques used by their teachers.

5.2. Teaching techniques used by teachers when teaching vocabulary

This section shows the teaching techniques that observed teachers employed in their classes, when trying to explain new words. Classroom observation showed that teachers used several different techniques when teaching vocabulary, such as: *'Employing synonyms'*, *'Defining the new words in English'*, *'Using Arabic to explain the meaning'*, *'Using the new word in a sentence'* and also by *'Employing drawings, pictures and gestures'*. In the interviews, teachers also reported implementing these techniques in their classes. *'Using synonyms'*, *'Defining the words in English'* and *'Using Arabic'* were the teaching techniques most commonly employed by the teachers observed. Before exploring each of these techniques further, it should be mentioned that a large proportion of the new words that were introduced during the classes observed were shown in a written text, as most classes observed were reading lessons.

5.2.1. Using synonyms

The technique most commonly used in the lessons, based on the number of incidents observed, was “providing a synonym”. For example:

The teacher interrupted the student reading to explain the meaning of the word “certain”. The teacher said “certain means sure”. (Class A, College E, 24 April 2011)

The next phrase was “takes after” and the teacher wrote on the board “take after = resemble”. (Class A, College B, 9 May 2011)

The expression “out of this world” came up in a list of answers to the task. The teacher said it means “wonderful”. (Class A, College F, 3 May 2011)

The teachers in these examples did not check whether or not the students knew already the meaning of “certain”, “take after” and “out of this world”. Also, they often provided the synonym verbally. Based on the results of the analysis of textbooks, the words in the above examples were not introduced as new vocabulary. This shows that both teachers and students dealt with other words apart from the new words introduced in the textbooks.

In other cases, teachers asked the class for the meaning of the new word before writing a synonym on the board, such as in these two examples:

The teacher interrupted the student reading to ask for the meaning of the phrase “affluent cities”, which the student had just read out, but no answer was given. Then, the teacher wrote on the board “well-off/rich”. (Class A, College A, 2 April 2011)

The teacher asked the students for the meaning of “livelihood”. One of the students answered, “Changing the job,” to which the teacher replied, “No.” He then wrote on the board: “job or work or source of income”. (Class A, College E, 18 April 2011)

These extracts suggest that, quite often, teachers were able to predict the words likely be new or difficult for their students, since students could not explain the meanings when asked. Writing the synonym on the board may also help students learn other aspects of a word, like spelling. These extracts show that teachers were able to identify and work within the

students' ZPD, a concept suggested by sociocultural theory, as they could determine the gap in students' knowledge and provide help to ensure comprehension.

In other instances, students would sometimes attempt to provide a synonym and the teacher would respond by either confirming the student's answer or correcting it. These are some of the examples observed:

The teacher asked the students for the meaning of the title, which was "subsidiary". One of the students said, "more important," to which the teacher replied, "less important," and wrote this on the board besides the word "subsidiary". (Class A, College D, 17 April 2011)

The student continued reading and completed the next blank correctly with the word "residents". Again the teacher asked: "What does it mean?" and the student replied: "People". The teacher said: "Good, but it's better to say citizens," and wrote on the board "residents = denizens = citizens". (Class A, College A, 2 April 2011)

One of the answers in the exercise included the word "eradication". The teacher asked the class about its meaning and one of the students said, "Finish." The teacher then said, "Yes, it means stop, finish, destruct". (Class A, College D, 20 April 2011)

In the examples above, the students provided only partially acceptable answers. Thus, their teachers occasionally provided more and better synonyms, as seen in the last two examples. This shows the importance of teachers as facilitators of learning, since they provide students with alternative answers. Also, it reveals the scaffolded help that the teachers provide for students in order to understand the meaning of the new words. In the next example, the student was able to provide the correct synonym at the first try:

The class moved on to the next sentence, which was "We were walking when suddenly that dog turned on us." The teacher asked the class to explain the meaning of the underlined phrase. One of the students answered: "It means attack." The teacher said, "Excellent!" and wrote the answer on the board. (Class A, College B, 9 May 2011).

An important aspect, which was revealed from the analysis of “Interactions 2” reading textbook was that all new words, which were explained by teachers in the previous examples by using synonyms, were introduced to students in the reading passages and other activities. The “Interactions 2” reading textbook assumed that the students would try to understand the meaning from context while reading the passage; if they could not, they would have to try to guess the meaning when dealing with these words in the activities. This was stated explicitly in the “Interactions 2” reading textbook, as shown in section 4.3. Nevertheless, the teachers provided the meaning of these words by using synonyms as shown in the previous examples. The teachers did this due to the fact that their students could not provide the exact meaning as shown above, which suggests that the students could not guess the meaning of the new words correctly. The contrast between what “Interactions 2” reading textbook expected teachers to do and what teachers actually did in the classroom shows the important role that textbooks play in the vocabulary teaching techniques used in the classroom. This shows that vocabulary learning in the social context of the classroom includes different aspects, such as the prescribed textbooks and the teaching techniques, as well as the autonomy of teachers when it comes to whether or not they use the techniques prescribed.

In line with the results from the classroom observations, during the interviews, five teachers out of nine reported regularly using synonyms to explain the meaning of a new word. The nature of the new word seems to play a part in deciding whether or not to use this technique. For instance, Khalid stated that:

*I always try to explain a new word by using another word, if it has a synonym.
(Khalid, Teacher, College A).*

This suggests that for some words, it may be easier for the teacher to provide a synonym, while for other words it seems easier to employ other techniques, especially if the teacher does not have a synonym available.

Two other teachers suggested an alternative way of providing synonyms. Rather than giving synonyms directly in a written or oral form, they reported using multiple choice exercises to teach their students synonyms for the new vocabulary:

I try to build up their vocabulary by using multiple choice exercises which include synonyms. (Abdullah, Teacher, College F)

I use new words in sentences, and the synonyms of the new words could come from a choice of possible options. The new words in these sentences are also underlined, so the student knows what they mean from the context. (Saleh, Teacher, College B)

These teachers believe that such exercises can be helpful in introducing new vocabulary. They believe that exercises which prompt students to identify themselves synonyms for the words given are useful in expanding students' vocabulary range.

This section has showed how the teachers observed used synonyms to clarify the meaning of new words. As stated previously, this is the technique that they employed most often in their classes. The next section will look at another technique often used in clarifying new vocabulary, that of '*Providing definitions in English*'.

5.2.2. Defining new words in English

'*Defining new vocabulary in English*' ranked second in terms of how often it was used as a technique to teach unknown words in the classes observed. Based on the data from the classroom observations, there was very little difference in terms of how often 'providing synonyms' and 'giving the definition of a new word' were used. These are some of the instances that were observed:

The teacher interrupted the student and asked for the meaning of the word "crime", last word in the sentence the student just read. The student did not answer and the teacher then said, "It's doing something that breaks the law". (Class A, College A, 2 April 2011)

The teacher explained the word "optimistic" by saying, "An optimist is a person who thinks positively". (Class A, College C, 15 May 2011)

Again, these notes suggest that these teachers explain certain words, even though the students themselves do not directly ask for an explanation on what the words mean. The teachers in

these examples defined the new words concisely and seemed to use accessible words in their clarifications, presumably to enable the students to grasp the meaning of the new vocabulary more easily. Also, these excerpts show another example for scaffolding by teachers, as they help students to understand the meaning of the unknown vocabulary.

According to the “Interactions 2” reading textbook’s analysis, the textbook assumed that the students would understand the meaning of the new words from context while reading a passage or while working on activities. However, most teachers explained the meaning of these words by using teaching techniques, such as defining them in English as shown in the following examples:

The teacher interrupted the student who was reading and asked the class for the meaning of “career counsellors”. No one provided an answer. The teacher then wrote on the board “people who give advice about jobs”. (Class A, College E, 24 April 2011)

The teacher asked the class to clarify “landlocked countries”, which was used in one of the sentences in an exercise, but no answer was given. The teacher explained it by saying, “Landlocked countries are countries that don’t have access to the ocean”. (Class A, College F, 3 May 2011)

These examples show that the teachers believed that their students were unable to obtain the meaning of these words from context; therefore, they employed a teaching technique to help them understand the meaning. The disagreement between teachers’ practices in the classroom and the assumption made in “Interactions 2” reading textbook highlights how teachers could employ their own teaching techniques to overcome some of the constraints in the textbook. This does not only show an example of teachers’ autonomy, but also highlights the significance of other factors that impact the social context of the classroom, including the prescribed textbooks and the teaching techniques.

Another example involving a teacher who used this technique when answering his student’s query about the word “refrigerator” is given below:

One of the students asked the teacher about the meaning of “refrigerator”. The teacher said, “We use it to keep food in”. (Class B, College C, 24 May 2011)

In the interviews, five teachers out of nine mentioned defining new words in English to help students understand what they meant. Khalid confirmed what was suggested above, that most teachers tended to use accessible words when explaining new words. He said:

If none of the students know the meaning of the new word, then I explain the word in English by using simple words. (Khalid, Teacher, College A)

This teacher said that he would first ask the students if one of them could come up with the meaning of the new word before defining the word in English himself. Similarly, another teacher, Saleh stated:

If the students don't understand the meaning of the new word, I explain the meaning in English (Saleh, Teacher, College B).

This section has illustrated how the teachers participating in the current research defined new words in English as a means of teaching vocabulary. It was suggested that these teachers tended to define new vocabulary succinctly and by using simple words. Another teaching technique was that of 'Using Arabic to explain new words', and this will be examined next.

5.2.3. Using Arabic

This section reviews the extent to which Arabic was used in classes observed to explain unknown vocabulary. Excerpts from classroom observations notes containing examples of teachers using this technique, as well as examples of teachers trying to discourage their students from using Arabic in class, will be discussed. Moreover, the justifications that teachers provided for both using and not using Arabic in explaining vocabulary are presented.

Introducing new vocabulary by using Arabic was ranked as the third most commonly used teaching technique, based on the classroom observations. However, many Arabic words were exchanged between some teachers and their students, as well as between the students themselves, throughout the classes that were observed. Examples for using Arabic to convey the meaning included the following:

The teacher asked the students for the meaning of “tourism”. Some students shouted the meaning in Arabic "سياحة". The teacher then gave the meaning of “ecotourism” in Arabic "سياحة بيئية". (Class A, College F, 3 May 2011)

The teacher asked the student for the meaning of the word “expert” in Arabic. As no one answered, the teacher gave the meaning in Arabic "خبير". (Class A, College D, 17 April 2011)

The teacher asked one of the students to translate this sentence: “He promised me to help, but later he backed out.” in Arabic. Then, the students shouted the meaning of the underlined word in Arabic "أخلف وعده". (Class A, College B, 11 May 2011)

These examples show that some teachers used Arabic to explain what new words meant before employing any other techniques. In other cases, teachers provided the meaning in Arabic after giving the synonym of the word in English. For instance:

The first answer was “hold back”. The teacher said it means “prevent” and then gave its meaning in Arabic "يمنع". (Class A, College F, 3 May 2011)

The teacher asked the class about the meaning of the word “senile”. No one volunteered to answer. The teacher said, “Old,” and repeated the meaning in Arabic "شيخ". (Class A, College B, 9 May 2011)

The reverse could also occur, where the teacher would accept an explanation in Arabic before asking for the meaning in English:

Students were asked to clarify the meaning of “blow up” in the following sentence: “Don’t light a match here. The whole lab will blow up.” One of the students provided the explanation of the word in Arabic "انفجار" and the teacher said, “Yes,” before asking for the meaning in English. Some students shouted, “Bomb,” and the teacher corrected them, saying, “explode”, and wrote this on the board. (Class A, College B, 11 May 2011)

In another class, a teacher who was a native speaker of English used Arabic in class and accepted the students’ answers in Arabic:

The student gave the answer to a question in the textbook in English, which was “solution”. The teacher said, “Good,” and asked this student what does

“solution” mean. The student provided the meaning in Arabic "حل" and the teacher said, “Yes”. (Class B, College A, 11 April 2011)

Later on, one of the students in this teacher’s class seemed to wonder which language to use when the teacher asked the class to clarify the meaning of the word “resort” in Arabic:

The teacher asked the class for the meaning of the word “resort” in Arabic. One of the students asked, “In Arabic?” and the teacher said, “Yes”. The student then provided the correct meaning in Arabic "منتجع" and the teacher said “Excellent” in Arabic. (Class B, College A, 3 April 2011)

When interviewed, this teacher justified using Arabic in class by saying that it saves time. He said:

I ask students questions about the word. If that doesn't work, I just translate, because translating saves time. Sometimes I don't have time [to wait for the explanation in English]. (Abid, Teacher, College A)

Another teacher, also a native speaker of English, called for other students to assist in Arabic when he found that one of the students misunderstood the meaning of “refrigerator”. He explained this word by saying:

“We use it to keep food in”. One of the students said, “Freezer” in Arabic and the teacher said, in English, “No, it’s not a freezer”. Then, he asked the class, “What does it mean in Arabic?” and someone said, “Fridge” in Arabic "ثلاجة". (Class B, College C, 24 May 2011)

The word “freezer” is often used in colloquial Arabic to refer to “refrigerator”, which is probably what helped this teacher recognised that the answer given by the student in the example above was only partially right. This may then have led him to ask other students for the correct meaning in Arabic.

In another class, the teacher, who was also not a native speaker of Arabic, asked his students to give the meaning of the words “outsourcing” and “belief” in Arabic, after he provided them with the definition of these words in English:

The teacher wrote the word “outsourcing” with its definition in English on the board.

Outsourcing —————> giving work to other companies in other countries.

While he was writing that sentence, the teacher asked the class, “Do you know its meaning in Arabic?” One of the students shouted the meaning in Arabic “تعافد خارجي” (Class A, College E, 18 April 2011)

The teacher asked the class, “What is this in Arabic: ‘belief?’” One of the students provided the right meaning “معتقد”. (Class A, College E, 24 April 2011)

These examples suggest that teachers may resort to using Arabic when teaching vocabulary even when it is not their mother tongue. In interviews, two teachers provided different reasons for using Arabic. These reasons were “the difficulty of the new word” and “the students’ level of English”. They said:

If the word is difficult, sometimes I use Arabic as a last resort. (Mazin, Teacher, College D)

You know, the level most of our students are at is low, and I have no choice. I have to provide the meaning in their native language. However, I try to avoid doing this, wherever possible. (Abdullah, Teacher, College F)

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, some teachers (four) occasionally spoke Arabic in class, even though they did not use it to teach. For example, they would praise students for answering correctly, by saying “excellent” in Arabic:

The teacher asked the students if anyone had completed the exercise. One of the students said, “Yes,” and the teacher went to him and checked his answers. He then said, “Excellent” in Arabic “ممتاز”. (Class A, College F, 3 May 2011)

Another teacher used the word “exactly” in Arabic to confirm that an answer given by his students was correct:

Two students provided the correct meaning of “consultation” in Arabic "استشارة" and the teacher said, “Exactly” in Arabic "بالضبط". (Class B, College A, 11 April 2011)

These extracts could suggest, what research based on the Vygotskian theory claims (e.g. Centeno-Cortes & Jimenez-Jimenez, 2004; Choi & Lantolf, 2008), that the L1 is more dominant in L2 learners’ thinking and often used as a mental tool. In this instance, teachers used Arabic to mediate their students’ vocabulary learning. The examples from classroom observations in this section show that teachers encouraged students to identify themselves the exact meaning of a word. This was supported by what the teachers said in the interviews:

I try to get the words out from the students themselves if possible. First, I see whether the students can come up with the meaning; whether they can come up with synonyms, or antonyms, or anything close to the new word; but if that doesn't work, then I give them the meaning. (Shakir, Teacher, College E)

Other teachers reported that the first thing they do when a student asks about a word is to open the question to the rest of the class:

I ask the student's classmates if they know what the unknown word means. (Khalid, Teacher, College A)

I either explain it to them or ask if someone else would like to help with the word. (Jack, Teacher, College C)

First, I just ask the students questions about the new word – try to let them guess. I do not give them the answer directly. If the student cannot get the answer, I ask other students. If this does not work, then I give them the answer. (Abid, Teacher, College A)

On the other hand, there were some teachers who discouraged their students from answering in Arabic. For instance, the following incident was noted during one of the classes observed:

The teacher asked the students about the meaning of “trying out” in the sentence “He’s been trying out his ideas before writing”. The students shouted the following answers in English: “address”, “make sure” and “organise”. One of the students said, “Revise,” in Arabic "يراجع" as his answer and the teacher admonished him, saying “Hello! In English, please!”. (Class A, College B, 9 May 2011)

This particular teacher was rather contradictory in his stance on using Arabic in class. The example above demonstrates how he tried to discourage a student from answering in Arabic; however, in other examples that were highlighted earlier in this section, he accepted answers in Arabic and in some instances even provided himself the meaning of new words in Arabic. This is likely to confuse his students on whether to provide answers in English or Arabic. The following is another example of students being discouraged from answering questions in Arabic:

The next discussed word was “twisted”. One of the students gave the right meaning in Arabic "ملتوي" and the teacher said, “Try to say it in English.” Next, the teacher gave an example in English to explain the meaning of the word. He wrote: “The child’s ankle twisted when he was playing”. (Class C, College A, 4 April 2011)

In the interviews, Majed expressed the belief that only English should be used in class:

The best thing is to explain English in English. (Majed, Teacher, College A)

Another teacher, also discouraged students from using Arabic in his classes:

The student completed the second sentence with the correct word, which was “global”. The teacher asked him about the meaning of this word, but when the student gave an explanation in Arabic "عالمي", the teacher said, “In English, please”. Then, the teacher said, “It means the whole world”. (Class A, College A, 2 April 2011)

When interviewed, Khalid said that the reason he preferred not to use Arabic when introducing new words is that it confuses students:

If I use Arabic, I will confuse students and as a result, they will practice code switching. They will be confused between the use of the two languages. Such things will affect their learning. (Khalid, Teacher, College A)

This teacher refers to private speech, suggested in the sociocultural theory, by highlighting the role of L1 and L2 in students' mental activities. The confusion that was mentioned by the teacher decreases when learners become more proficient in L2 (Lantolf, 1997). Nevertheless, the same teacher reported that he would use Arabic as a last resort, if various other techniques failed to work. He said:

Translation is a last resort. If I use different techniques and find that the student still doesn't understand, I translate the word. (Khalid, Teacher, College A)

Majed shared a similar view to Khalid in that he also believed that using Arabic should be the last resort. He stated:

The most important thing is not to give the meaning in Arabic. If I fail to convey the meaning of a word, I ask the student to use the dictionary. The last option, and only if no other way has been successful, is to provide the meaning in Arabic. (Majed, Teacher, College A)

Teachers' responses suggested that they were using Arabic as a last resort, and especially with the more difficult words. This implies that teachers see using L1 as an effective technique to deal with the most difficult vocabulary, although they seem reluctant to use L1 as their initial technique to explaining new vocabulary and actively discouraged students from using L1 on occasions as shown in the previous examples. An example of using Arabic after failing to convey the meaning of a word by using other techniques is shown in the following extracts from the observation notes:

One of the students asked the teacher about the meaning of “in conjunction”. The teacher said it means “in linking”, but the student still looked confused. Then, the teacher provided its meaning in Arabic "مترابط". (Class A, College D, 20 April 2011)

The teacher was explaining the meaning of “recycle”. He said to students “do you know the word “recycle”? No answers were given. He said “recycle is transferring waste materials to usable materials”. Then, the meaning in Arabic was given "إعادة تدوير". (Class B, College A, 11 April 2011)

This shows that these teachers may implement more than one technique to assist students in understanding the meaning of new vocabulary. As shown in the above examples, they could employ various techniques to clarify the meaning of the unknown word. When it came to using Arabic, this was done for a range of reasons: to confirm the meaning given by students, to manage the class or as a last resort when the English explanation was not clear. This implies that teachers see the use of L1 to explain the meaning of the new vocabulary as an effective technique, especially when other techniques fail. As shown earlier, teachers found some of the new words difficult to explain by using synonyms or by defining them in English. An important aspect was revealed during the classroom observations, when teachers were employing Arabic in teaching vocabulary and from their responses in the interviews: teachers were free to use any techniques they believed were effective to teach the new words, including the use of L1, exercising thus their teacher autonomy. However, their use of teacher autonomy was often constrained by the structure and content of the textbooks, as mentioned before in section 3.12. Another important point is that although the analysis of textbooks did not refer to the use of the L1 in introducing new vocabulary, Arabic was one of the most common teaching techniques used by teachers. This supports the result suggested earlier that teachers were autonomous in terms of using vocabulary teaching techniques.

This section has explored the use of Arabic to communicate the meaning of new vocabulary. Data revealed that using Arabic was one of the teaching techniques most commonly applied by the teachers in this study. Also, apart from its role in teaching vocabulary, Arabic was found to be used by some teachers and students in some classes as a means of interaction. The next section will focus on ‘Using the unknown word in a sentence’ as a technique employed to help students understand new vocabulary.

5.2.4. Using the new word in a sentence

Providing an example of how a new word can be used in a sentence was the fourth most common teaching technique used for introducing vocabulary by teachers in the classes observed. The reason this technique came in fourth might be that most of the words that were being taught by the teachers in this study appeared in sentences, as most of the classes observed were reading courses.

The technique of '*Presenting a new word within a sentence*' seemed to be related to the '*Guessing from context*' strategy which will be discussed in the next chapter. Hence, if students are not adequately competent in using the '*Guessing from context*' strategy, the technique of using the new word in a sentence might not work for them. The next few excerpts from the classroom observation notes illustrate how teachers introduce unknown words in a sentence to help students understand the meaning:

The teacher wrote "Man is the architect of his life" on the board and asked the student to guess the meaning of "architect". The student said, "A person who design buildings," and the teacher said, "Yes, exactly, a person who designs buildings". (Class A, College A, 2 April 2011)

The next word was "arbitrary". The teacher explained what this word means by saying, "Language is arbitrary". (Class C, College A, 4 April 2011)

The class moved on to the next part of the lesson which was titled "Entertainment". This part included different words. The teacher explained the meaning of the word "drop-dead gorgeous" by saying, "I saw a drop-dead gorgeous lady". (Class B, College C, 24 May 2011)

These examples indicate that when using the new word in a sentence, teachers try to use simple sentences which include familiar words to most of students, to facilitate understanding. An important aspect revealed from these examples is that some of the sentences used by teachers may be unhelpful. For instance, the word "drop-dead" in the sentence which was used in the example above, "I saw a drop-dead gorgeous lady", some students may guess the meaning wrongly and might think it means unbeautiful. Similarly, the meaning of "arbitrary" in the second example was not made clear in the sentence given by teacher. This suggests these words may not be learned by the students, since the input used in language learning should be comprehensible to achieve learning, as Krashen (1985) argued.

When the examples above were compared to the results emerging from the analysis of textbooks, it was found that teachers employed other techniques to explain new words, which were different from those used by the textbooks. For example, the word “drop-dead” was introduced in the vocabulary textbook by defining it in English as shown in section 4.4, whilst in the classroom observation, the teacher used this word in a sentence to explain the meaning. Teachers in these examples thought that their students did not understand the meaning through the techniques used in the textbooks; therefore they used their own, which shows the teachers’ autonomy in relation to using vocabulary teaching techniques.

Most teachers interviewed (seven out of nine) reported using sentences containing the new words in their classes:

First, I show the students the new vocabulary in context, by using it in a sentence. (Mazin, Teacher, College D)

I use the word in examples. I try to encourage the students to guess until they know the answer. (Saleh, Teacher, College B)

I usually provide the students with an example which includes the new word. (Majed, Teacher, College A)

Sometimes, I may teach the students the unknown words by using examples. (Abdullah, Teacher, College F)

I put the new vocabulary in a sentence to convey its meaning. (Khalid, Teacher, College A)

These examples show that teachers attempted to help learners to be self-regulated by providing them with the opportunity to find the meaning of the unknown words themselves. Since the majority of the teachers referred to using new words in a sentence, it seems that they generally considered this technique helpful for their students. One of the teachers pointed out that an advantage of using this technique is that it provides students with more than just the meaning of a word. They also learn how it is used in context:

I provide the student with a sentence containing the unknown word, to show its meaning and usage. (Tariq, Teacher, College C)

To sum up, although ‘*Using the new word in a sentence*’ was placed fourth in terms of how commonly it was used during the classroom observations, teachers observed mentioned using this technique when teaching vocabulary. This may be due to the fact that most of the classes observed were reading classes; thus, most of the new words being taught were shown in texts. It also revealed that teachers tend to use simple sentences when using this technique. The next section will look at ‘*Using gestures, drawings, pictures and antonyms*’ as techniques for teaching vocabulary.

5.2.5. Using gestures, drawings, pictures and antonyms

According to the data gathered during the classroom observations, there were some techniques that teachers rarely used in class when explaining vocabulary. ‘*Using gestures*’, ‘*Using drawing*’ and ‘*Using pictures*’ to teach new vocabulary were ranked as the fifth, sixth and seventh most commonly used techniques respectively. Furthermore, ‘*Using antonyms*’ was mentioned by only one teacher during the interviews.

The first of these techniques – ‘*Using gestures to describe a new word*’ – was adopted by only three teachers out of the nine observed, and occurred only in a small number of instances. The examples below show how gestures were used to communicate the meaning of unknown words:

The teacher was opening and closing his hand [fingers in a fist] to explain the word “handy”. (Class A, College B, 11 May 2011)

The teacher pointed to his neck and shoulder to explain the meaning of “sling”. (Class C, College A, 4 April 2011)

While the student was reading, he read the word “know” as “now”. The teacher wrote them both on the board and read them aloud to show the difference in terms of pronunciation. When he read the word “now”, he looked at the class, closed his hands and pointed downwards with his index fingers to remind them of the meaning of “now”. (Class C, College A, 4 April 2011)

It was noticed that the words being explained in these examples (“handy”, “sling”, and “now”) seemed to be easy to describe using gestures. This suggests that the nature of the new word plays a part in whether teachers choose to use gestures to suggest their meaning.

Another teacher resorted to using gestures as a second option when the student seemed not to understand the meaning of the word “borrow”, after it was explained in English:

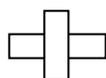
One of the students asked the teacher about the meaning of “borrower”. The teacher said, “A person who takes money from the bank.” Then, the teacher asked the student, “Is that clear?”, to which the student replied, “No”. At that point, the teacher repeated the same sentence while extending his hands forward and backward to suggest an exchange of money, as if giving with one hand and taking with another. (Class A, College D, 17 April 2011)

This again suggests that teachers may resort to a range of techniques within the same instance to deliver the meaning of a new word. If one technique seems to fail, then an alternative is sought, to ensure that the meaning is expressed in more than one way, increasing thus the students’ chances of understanding. Interestingly, the teachers who used gestures in their classes did not refer to this technique in the interviews, which might suggest lack of awareness of teachers’ part on their use of non-verbal techniques, since these are often spontaneous and natural. However, a teacher who was not observed using the technique, mentioned using it occasionally:

Sometimes I use body language to explain the meaning of a new word. (Abdullah, Teacher, College F)

The second technique discussed in this section – ‘Using drawings’- usually involving drawing on the board to illustrate the meaning of a word – was adopted by only three of the teachers included in the study. Examples of how this technique was applied are given below:

The teacher drew the following diagram on the board:



He then said, “It’s always in red.” He asked the students, “Where do you see it?” Some students said, “On an ambulance”. The teacher replied, “Yes, it’s called the red cross”. (Class B, College C, 24 May 2011)

To explain the meaning of “rang”, the teacher drew a house and asked the students, “How can I call Ahmad? Do I have to shout ‘Ahmad’?”. (Class C, College A, 4 April 2011)

Jack and Majed did not ask the students to guess what the aforementioned words meant based only on the pictures on the board. They also provided the students with hints to assist them in inferring the definitions of these words by asking several questions about what was drawn on the board. This could suggest that a drawing on its own may not always be enough to help students understand the meaning of new words. In the interviews, only two teachers reported using drawings to describe an unknown word. One of them said:

I sometimes draw pictures to explain new words. (Majed, Teacher, College A)

The third vocabulary teaching technique to be discussed in this section – ‘Using pictures’ – was put into practice by only one teacher of those observed. Abid tried to make use of pictures available in the textbook (which reflected the topic of the chapter being discussed), to express the meaning of the word “pollution”:

The teacher asked the students to look at a picture in the textbook to understand the meaning of “pollution”. The picture showed a factory with smoke around it. (Class B, College A, 3 April 2011)

This teacher used one of the tools available in the textbook in order to help students understand the topic of the chapter, which seemed to be an instance of object-regulation, a concept from the sociocultural theory, where learners use the objects in their environment to manage an activity.

In the interviews, two other teachers also referred to using pictures. Majed stated:

I explain unknown vocabulary by providing an example in English or showing it in a picture. (Majed, Teacher, College A)

Mazin attributed the decision to use pictures to the nature of the new word, which should describe something tangible. He said:

I sometimes use pictures if the words are concrete. (Mazin, Teacher, College D)

As highlighted by Mazin's view, when teaching concrete words, using pictures might be more helpful for students than other teaching techniques. Mazin's view resonates with employing pictures in the "English vocabulary in use" textbook as the analysis revealed that most of the words that were explained by using pictures in this textbook were tangible.

Finally, Mazin was the only teacher who referred to the '*Use of antonyms*' to help students understand the meaning of new vocabulary:

Sometimes I use antonyms. One student asked me about the word "mysterious", which is derived from "mystery". I told him that the adjective of "mystery" is "mysterious", which is the opposite of "clear". (Mazin, Teacher, College D)

The reason why only one teacher referred to employing antonyms when teaching vocabulary might be due to the fact that antonyms can be used in only a limited number of instances, as they are not always available.

In conclusion, the teachers involved in the current research appeared to employ a diverse range of teaching techniques when introducing new vocabulary. However, they tended to use some techniques more than others. '*Using synonyms*', '*Defining new words in English*', and '*Using Arabic*' were the techniques far more commonly adopted than '*Using gestures, drawings, pictures and antonyms*'. The next section will concentrate on teachers' views on the techniques they found most successful.

5.3. Teachers' views on the most appropriate vocabulary teaching techniques

This section presents the techniques that the teachers in this study believed to be the most successful when teaching vocabulary. All the teachers who were interviewed thought that they used the techniques most likely to help their students understand new vocabulary. One of the teachers, Abdullah, suggested that the success of any technique is linked to the word that is being taught and the situation:

It depends on the word and on the situation. Sometimes you should give the meaning of the word in English with examples, sometimes you should give the

meaning in Arabic, and sometimes you could use all possible means without any success. (Abdullah, Teacher, College F)

Other teachers believed that teaching new vocabulary in context is likely to be the most effective technique:

The best technique is to try to convey the situation in which the new word would be used. If you are in a restaurant, you need the words which concern eating and drinking. First, I write the words in sentences; then, we try to act as we would in real situations. I feel that the students enjoy this and benefit greatly from it. (Saleh, Teacher, College B)

I think teaching in context, teaching vocabulary within phrases, linking words with the information that is given in a text are the most successful techniques for teaching vocabulary. (Shakir, Teacher, College E)

Mazin had a similar view and provided an example of how he explains the meaning of a new word:

I found teaching vocabulary in context to be the best way. For example, in one class, a student asked me about the word "reserve", so I gave two examples of how it might be used in a sentence. I wrote: "Fatima is a reserved woman, she prays five times a day," and "Al Shawmary is a wildlife reserve in Jordan, where there are many animals". (Mazin, Teacher, College D)

Mazin said then that the benefit of applying this technique was that the students could learn more than one meaning of the word, as well as how to use it correctly. Another teacher felt that asking students about their understanding of the words and discussing what they might mean together is a good technique. However, he admitted that this is rather time consuming and he often tended to resort to translation instead:

I think discussing new words with students by asking them about the words and listening to their answers can be a successful technique for teaching vocabulary, but I cannot do that all the time because of time constraints. So I have to use translation. (Abid, Teacher, College A)

Abid worried about the lack of time and he sometimes uses teaching techniques he knew to be less effective, simply because they were less time-consuming. In contrast, Khalid, who only used translation as a last resort, employed English in explaining vocabulary and discouraged his students from using Arabic in class, felt that the techniques he used were generally successful with his students. Nonetheless, he reported receiving complaints from a few students:

These are the techniques which I have used since I started teaching. I feel they are good and have not had anybody complain. Of course, there are a few students who do complain [about the insistence on using English at all times]; however, when I explain to them that they are students majoring in English and it is better for them to be taught in this way, they are convinced. (Khalid, Teacher, College A)

This extract shows that some students may be unhappy with a teacher's teaching techniques, even though they are considered to be effective and successful by the teacher. This may be somewhat expected, as different students will have different preferences and styles of learning. This point will be discussed further in the next section, which deals with students' perspectives on the vocabulary teaching techniques used by their teachers. In the interviews, two teachers reported how they knew that the vocabulary teaching techniques they used were successful:

From the students' eyes, smiles and their enthusiasm. (Saleh, Teacher, College B)

When I look at them, I can tell from their body language and their facial expressions whether or not the teaching technique that I'm using is working. (Jack, Teacher, College C)

This shows that these teachers seemed to think that they were able to tell whether the techniques they applied were suitable for their students by studying their students' reactions. This seems to be helpful for these teachers, to decide which teaching techniques are most useful to their students. Also, it shows the importance of the social context in which learning takes place, as teachers try and ensure the usefulness of the teaching techniques they employ for their learners. Teachers' responses provided interpretations for their practices, as explained in the previous section. More importantly, their responses show how teachers'

beliefs affect the vocabulary teaching techniques used in the classroom and this suggests that there are aspects which affect the social context of learning beyond the practices that occur in the classroom. Thus, it can be argued that, in addition to the role that the prescribed textbooks and the teaching techniques play in the classroom, teachers' own beliefs about how useful or appropriate the techniques are play a key role.

In summary, this section has presented the teaching techniques that the teachers participating in the research believed to be the most successful when teaching vocabulary. All of the teachers who were interviewed reported that the techniques they implemented appeared to be the most helpful ones for teaching vocabulary. The next section deals with students' perspectives on the vocabulary teaching techniques employed by their teachers.

5.4. Students' perspectives on the vocabulary teaching techniques used by their teachers

This section concentrates on the perspectives the students in this study held on the vocabulary teaching techniques that were employed by their teachers. The results in this section emerged mainly from the questionnaire used with the students taking part in the study and the follow-up interviews with some of these students.

The results from the questionnaire revealed that most of the participants seemed to be happy with the techniques used by their teachers when learning vocabulary. The students felt that their teachers were helpful in clarifying the meaning of new words. Table 5.1 shows the responses given to a statement in the questionnaire that assessed whether the participants were satisfied with their teachers' teaching methods. The results suggested that most of the students (62%) were "satisfied" or "very satisfied".

Table 5.1: Outline of answers to the statement: "I am not satisfied with the methods that teachers use to explain the new vocabulary in reading courses".

Student's perspective	Number of students	Percentage of students
Strongly agree	17	11.3
Agree	32	21.3
Disagree	65	43.3
Strongly disagree	28	18.7
I don't know	6	4.0

However, 21.3% of the respondents seemed to be less satisfied with their teachers' teaching techniques and a further 11.3% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement. As a whole, the findings suggest that more than half of the students in this study were satisfied with the teaching techniques used by their teachers, but a third of them had different expectations.

Table 5.2 reveals that more than half of the participants (52.7%) believed that their teachers were 'very helpful' in explaining the meaning of unknown words, while a further 26.7% of participants strongly agreed with this view. However, 10% of the students disagreed and another 7.3% of the students 'strongly disagreed' that their teachers were helpful in clarifying the meaning of words they did not understand. Nonetheless, this suggests that the majority of students in the present research considered their teachers to be helpful in providing clarification of unknown words when learning vocabulary.

Table 5.2: Outline of answers to the statement: "Teachers in general are very helpful in clarifying the meaning of a word that I don't know when I read".

Student's perspective	Number of students	Percentage of students
Strongly agree	40	26.7
Agree	79	52.7
Disagree	15	10.0
Strongly disagree	11	7.3
I don't know	3	2.0

Most of the students interviewed (eighteen out of twenty two) held positive views of the teaching techniques implemented in their classes. Only three students expressed negative views, while one student was neutral. Examples of these perspectives are given below. Ayman is one of the students who seemed satisfied with his teacher's teaching techniques, of which he provided some examples:

If we come across a difficult word, the teacher defines it in English; and if we still don't understand the meaning, he gives the meaning in Arabic. I feel these techniques work well. (Ayman, College F)

Another student reported that the techniques implemented in class motivate him to attend. He mentioned that:

My teacher's techniques are good. They give me the motivation to attend classes regularly. (Abduljabbar, College E)

The techniques used by Abduljabbar's teacher seem to play a positive role in encouraging him to keep attending classes. Another student provided a reason as to why he sees his teacher's techniques were helpful. He said:

Our teacher explains the words in English, which is good because it helps to put the words in our minds. (Ali, College F)

Ali clearly feels that the techniques his teacher implements have a positive effect on his vocabulary learning, in terms of retaining the new words. Sattam shares Ali's view and also felt that his teacher's techniques positively affected his vocabulary learning, as well as providing him with the opportunity to learn more new words:

I think the teaching techniques which my teacher implements are very good because he explains using only English and this helps me learn other words. (Sattam, College E)

The opportunity to get further information about a new word is the main reason that Tariq describes his teachers' techniques as excellent. He said:

The techniques used by our teacher are excellent. He gives us different information about unknown words, such as whether it is a noun, verb or adjective. (Tariq, Teacher, College C)

Faris also valued his teacher's vocabulary teaching. He stated:

I see the techniques of my teacher for teaching vocabulary as excellent. Because he is a native speaker of Arabic, if we cannot understand the meaning of a new word, he is able to tell us things in Arabic. (Faris, College A)

According to Faris, when his teacher speaks Arabic, it helps him in learning vocabulary. This suggests that this student may prefer Arabic teachers to non-Arabic teachers, when it comes to learning vocabulary. One other student, Fahad, expects better teaching techniques from his teacher:

Our teacher has good techniques, but I think we need even better techniques. I would like to know for example, the various meanings of a word, because you may come across a word that has several meanings. (Fahad, College C)

One of the students was more neutral in his perspective of his teacher's techniques and described them as 'standard'. He said:

The techniques used by my teacher are standard ones. Before he asks us to read the text, we read the difficult words. If I ask him about the meaning of a word, he asks me to read the whole line in which the word is contained; and then, if I still don't understand, he gives the meaning first in English and, if we don't understand that, he says it in Arabic. (Jaber, College D)

Jaber's opinion suggests that his teacher focuses on a particular set of techniques without experimenting with other ones. This may cause this student to become bored in classes. By comparison to the views expressed so far, three students out of twenty-two interviewed held more negative perspectives of how new words were taught. One of these students thought that the techniques applied by his teacher tended to lack effective interaction between teacher and students. He said:

I feel there is no interaction between the teacher and the students. For example, the topic today was about banks. You see that the students don't interact with the teacher, but they have to be in class. However, if he gives us a story or a newspaper article about an event to read, like what happened in Japan, the students might be more active in class. (Hamad, College D)

In his answer, Hamad mentioned one of the reasons he held a more negative view of the teaching techniques used in his class. He complained that the texts used in class were not relevant to the students' everyday lives. He suggested that the teacher should make the most of the important events happening in the world and bring texts that deal with these events to

class. Hamad felt that this may make students interact more with the teacher. His answer shows different concepts, reflective of both input hypothesis and the sociocultural theory. First, he seems to acknowledge the role of the social context, which in this instance he felt was not effectively used in class. Second, he mentioned the role of motivation: the input should be interesting in order to facilitate learning.

Two other students tended to be dissatisfied with their teachers' teaching techniques, as they believed these techniques were not appropriate for their level of English. They stated:

To be honest, the teacher is quite bad. His techniques are good for those at an advanced level, not for Level Two. I am OK with his techniques because my level of English is good, but my friends don't really understand the classes. He just gives us a paper containing a passage and sits down and tells us to go through it ourselves. He doesn't actually explain what the unknown words mean. (Fawwaz, College C)

The teacher gives us synonyms of the new words, but we don't know the meanings of these synonyms. This would work for students whose English is at an intermediate level, not at our level. (Abdullah, Teacher, College B)

Fawwaz's teacher seemed disengaged, as he expected the students to learn completely independently. In the two classes observed, the teacher clarified the meaning of a new word only once. Abdullah agreed with Fawwaz that the techniques used by his teacher seemed inappropriate for the students' level of competence in English. This suggests that using the appropriate techniques depending on students' level of competence in English is critical. These two students' answers refer to an important aspect in the input hypothesis (Krashen, 1985), which claims that learning does not occur when the input is too difficult for learners. This means that there is no vocabulary development expected for these students. The students' perspectives discussed here appear as a crucial feature of the social context of the classroom. Previous sections referred to the importance of the prescribed textbooks, the teaching techniques and teachers' beliefs in the social context of the classroom while this section highlights the important role of the students' own perspectives. This shows the classroom as a community, which is affected by several factors with impact on learning opportunities. Vocabulary learning in the social context of the classroom is a social practice where different aspects are involved. More discussion supporting this argument will be provided throughout the rest of the thesis.

To summarise, this section has presented the students' perspectives on the techniques used by their teachers in teaching vocabulary. The results revealed that most students were pleased with the teaching techniques implemented by their teachers and they saw their teachers as very helpful when learning vocabulary. The reasons provided by students for viewing their teachers' teaching techniques as effective were various, and ranged from enriching their vocabulary knowledge when the teacher provided a range of uses for the new word to motivating them to learn and avoiding misunderstandings through the use of Arabic.

5.5. Conclusion

This chapter has presented the findings on the vocabulary teaching techniques employed by teachers in Saudi universities, their views on the success of the techniques used and students' perspectives on these techniques. The results suggest that teachers employ various teaching techniques when introducing new words. These included: *'Using synonyms'*, *'Defining new words in English'*, *'Using Arabic'*, *'Using the new words in a sentence'*, and *'Using drawings, pictures and gestures'*. However, teachers tended to use synonyms and defining new words in English or Arabic over other techniques. All teachers believed the techniques they used to be the most appropriate for teaching vocabulary. Finally, most of the students expressed positive views of the techniques used and agreed that their teachers were generally helpful when it came to learning vocabulary. The next chapter explores teachers' and students' attitudes towards learning and teaching vocabulary through reading.

CHAPTER SIX

VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES

6.1. Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of students' perspectives on the vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) they thought they were more likely to use, as well as the strategies they found most useful and felt themselves to be competent in. In addition, the type of information that students said to seek about an unknown word and the teaching strategies used by teachers will be reviewed. The chapter is structured into five sections, each considering one of these issues. The results shown here emerged mainly from the questionnaire data, supplemented by findings from the interviews with teachers and students and classroom observations.

6.2. The VLSs that the participants thought they were more likely to use

This section will discuss the VLSs that the participants reported themselves as using the most. As shown in Table 6.1, nearly half of the students (45.3%) stated that they “always” use the strategy of ‘*Appealing for assistance from others*’ to find out information on a new word. Given that ‘the others’ could refer to a teacher or a peer, this could be an indication of the importance of the teacher’s role in the class and the role of peer and group work. Also, it shows that the participants try to make use of their social context. This strategy reflects one of the essential concepts in the sociocultural theory, that of scaffolding, when the students ask for help from their classmates or teachers in order to get information about unknown vocabulary. This strategy has already been identified in previous research as simpler and faster in its deployment than other strategies, such as using a dictionary (see Al-Fuhaid, 2004:173). When filling in the questionnaire, many students reported that they had similar reasons for using this strategy. They described it as an “easy” and “quick” strategy to use, especially in those cases wherein a dictionary was not available. However, this strategy could mislead students if a peer provides the wrong information.

Table 6.1: The VLSs that the participants thought that they used the most

VLS	Category	Frequency						Mean
		*A	O	S	R	N	I	
1. I ask someone (a friend, a classmate, a teacher).	Discovery Strategies (soc) **	68	34	29	13	2	0	5.05
2. I use an electronic or computer dictionary.	Discovery Strategies (det)	64	36	29	8	8	1	4.94
3. I guess the meaning from pictures, if available.	Discovery Strategies (det)	54	43	28	15	4	3	4.81
4. I use a bilingual dictionary to look up the unknown words.	Discovery Strategies (det)	48	37	34	18	10	0	4.65
5. I repeat the word silently in my mind.	Consolidation Strategies (cog)	41	27	36	29	14	0	4.65
6. I listen to the word repeatedly.	Consolidation Strategies (cog)	41	40	35	24	6	0	4.59
7. I practise using the new words by talking to myself in English.	Consolidation Strategies (met)	45	32	42	21	8	0	4.57
8. I ignore the unknown word while reading when I want to read without interruption since the meaning might be revealed later on in the text.	Consolidation Strategies (met)	46	27	43	23	5	2	4.55
9. I guess the meaning from the context (e.g. surrounding sentences).	Discovery Strategies (det)	25	59	40	18	3	2	4.54
10. I associate the new words and the words that I already know.	Consolidation Strategies (mem)	28	44	48	17	10	0	4.43

* A = always, O = often, S = sometimes, R = rarely, N = never, I = I don't know

** det = determination, soc = social, mem = memory, cog = cognitive, met = metacognitive

The second most popular strategy appeared to be *'Using an electronic or computer dictionary'*. In total, 42.7% of the participants reported they always adopted it. This strategy was also commonly involved in the classes observed, as this extract from the field notes illustrates:

The next word was "collaborative". The teacher asked the students to check their dictionaries to find the meaning. Two students went on to use their mobiles to check the meaning. (Class B, College A, 11 April 2011)

This excerpt shows that the teacher encourages students to use a dictionary, although the “Interaction 2” reading textbook asks the students to guess the meaning of new words from context while reading, rather consulting a dictionary. According to the classroom observations, some teachers asked the students to work in pairs while working on exercises and the students employed a dictionary to deal with the unknown vocabulary:

The teacher asked the students to work in pairs for five minutes on the next exercise and to use their dictionaries. Some students were asking each other about the meaning of the unknown words, but if none of them knew the answer, they used their mobiles to check the meaning online. (Class A, College D, 17 April 2011)

An important aspect revealed here is that those teachers had encouraged the students to work in a communicative way, which was one of the key pedagogical assumptions that the “Interactions 2” textbook makes. It was also noted throughout the classroom observations that even when the students were working alone, they tended to use the dictionaries on their mobile phones as they were unable to appeal for assistance from classmates, as recorded in one of the observations:

The teacher asked the students to work on the next exercise. Some students were using the dictionaries on their mobiles to deal with the new vocabulary. (Class B, College A, 3 April 2011)

These examples show that the students’ use of their mobile phones to know the meaning of the new words does not correspond to what the prescribed textbooks assumed the students would do to deal with the new vocabulary. The analysis of the textbooks revealed that these textbooks encouraged the students to guess the meaning of the new words from context, especially the “Interactions 2” reading textbook, which asks the students when they fail to guess the meaning correctly to try again in other exercises as the new words were used. Also, they provided some exercises on practising the monolingual dictionary, not the electronic one. Nevertheless, the students as shown employed their mobile phones to obtain the meaning.

In addition, five students in the interviews reported using their mobiles to look for the meaning of new words. For example:

I use the dictionary on my mobile because the paper dictionary is heavy to carry and the electronic one is expensive. (Abduljabbar, College E)

This shows the students making use of the objects in their environment to mediate a learning activity, in line with Vygotsky's concept of mediating tools. Also, these extracts show that the participants tended to utilise the strategies that provide them with the required information quickly and were also simple to manage. One of the students explained that the recent spread of technology had led him to use the electronic dictionary. He said:

I used to use the paper dictionary in the past, but nowadays, because of widespread technology, with computers which contain dictionaries, I use the electronic dictionary. (Thamer, College F)

Some students provided tangible examples of using a dictionary to look for a new word whilst reading:

I came across a new word while reading; the word was "serious". I tried to find out the meaning from the context, but this was difficult, so I used the online dictionary. (Saud, College E)

I encountered the word "depression" in a passage in the textbook. I could not discern it from the context, so I looked it up on my mobile. (Hassan, College E)

These answers provide an example of a contradiction between what the "Interactions 2" reading textbook assumed the students would do when they encountered unknown words, and what the students actually did. As the "Interactions 2" textbook's analysis showed, one of the aims of the reading passages was "developing guessing from context" and the question in these passages asked students not use a dictionary. Even if the students could not infer the meaning of the unknown words correctly, these words would be used in other activities through the chapter, as this textbook suggested. Having 'Using the dictionary' in the fourth rank and 'Guessing the meaning from context' in the ninth rank shows that the students tend

to practise the strategy that they are discouraged to use more than the strategy they are encouraged to employ. Teachers also asked the students to use the dictionary while reading the passage. A comparison between the shared and differing assumptions between teachers, students and “Interactions 2” textbook shows the significant role of teachers’ and students’ own beliefs on using particular VLSs in the classroom. This highlights the role of both the prescribed textbooks and VLSs deployed by the students in vocabulary learning. In relation to the teaching techniques discussed in the previous chapter, the VLSs and the textbooks were useful to conceptualise the link between them and, as a result, revealing their influence in vocabulary learning as a social practice.

Another student in the questionnaire associated using the dictionary with the difficult new vocabulary. He claimed that:

Using the dictionary is the last solution, after failing to guess the meaning through the context, especially with words that I feel are hard to pronounce or are long in terms of the number of letters.

Only five students out of the twenty-two students interviewed claimed that they use a paper dictionary. One of the students provided the following reason for this:

I use the paper dictionary because when I use it and work hard to find out the meaning of the unknown vocabulary, I tend not to forget the meaning. (Ahmad, College C)

This seems to suggest that some students believed that the more effort one puts into looking for information on a new word, the more likely they are to remember the meaning of the word. Four students in the interviews referred specifically to the Oxford Dictionary. For instance, Mohammed (College B) stated:

If the teacher does not provide me with the meaning of a word, I use the dictionary [to get the meaning]. I usually use the Oxford Dictionary.

However, an important barrier that can prevent some students from using a paper dictionary is the practical aspect of it being “heavy to carry”, as Abduljabbar (College E) mentioned previously.

The third most commonly talked about VLSs was ‘*Guessing the meaning of the new word from pictures, if available*’, and 36% of the students surveyed said they “always” used it. Next were the strategies of ‘*Using a bilingual dictionary to look up unknown words*’ and ‘*Repeating a new word silently in the mind*’, which were represented by an equal number of responses in the survey. The main reason given for using a bilingual dictionary, as many students explained in the questionnaire, was that it seemed “fast” and “easy” to use, and therefore appeared to save time. Other reasons for using a dictionary were also reported during the interviews:

When you guess the meaning from the context, your guess might be wrong.
(Abdulaziz, College D)

Sometimes I hesitate to ask the teacher, so I use the dictionary. (Khalil, College D)

This shows that some students may resort to applying independently strategies they know because they hesitate to ask the teacher for assistance. It should be mentioned that ‘*Using a dictionary*’ is one of the strategies that was introduced in the prescribed textbooks as the analysis of textbooks has shown.

Nearly half of the students reported in the interviews that they tended to use the ‘*Guessing from context*’ strategy before resorting to the use of a dictionary. For example, Ayman (College F) said:

Firstly, I try to guess the meaning of the word from the context. If I cannot get the meaning, I use a dictionary.

One of the students provided an example of his discerning the meaning in context:

While I was reading a paragraph, I encountered the word “upset” which was new to me. The word was in this sentence “he was alone and upset”. First, I thought it means “sad”, then realised the right meaning was “worried”. (Talat, College D)

The ‘*Guessing from context*’ strategy was also in the list of the ten VLSs identified as ‘most used’ by the students. Two teachers in the interviews emphasised the use of ‘*Guessing from context*’ and referred to the situations where a dictionary may not be available, making ‘*Guessing through context*’ even more important. They stated that:

Students should practise guessing from context, because the dictionary is sometimes unavailable, for example in exams. (Tariq, Teacher, College C)

The best strategy is guessing, especially in class, because not every student has a dictionary. (Khalid, Teacher, College A)

This strategy was highly emphasised in the textbooks, especially the “Interactions 2” reading textbook since it deals with different texts that require this strategy to understand the meaning of the unknown words. However, it was expected for this strategy to be in a higher rank since it was introduced in every chapter in the “Interactions 2” reading textbook.

‘*Listening to the word repeatedly*’ and ‘*Practising using the new word by talking to myself*’ were two other strategies that the participants in the survey said they were likely to use. The repetition strategies, especially those that could be practised silently in mind, show also the use of private speech suggested in the sociocultural theory, which learners seemed to use to regulate their mental activity. The next strategy in the list was ‘*Ignoring the new word while reading*’. One of the students explained in the questionnaire the reason that led him to ignore the unknown word while reading. He said:

I skip the new word while reading when this word is long in terms of the number of letters and I feel it is difficult to pronounce.

This means that some students may skip unknown words when they might think the word is too hard to learn. Other reasons for ignoring new words while reading were suggested. For example, one of the students reported that:

If I try to find out the meaning of every new word in the text, I will waste too much time. Also, my mind will be busy with looking for the meaning of the unknown word and I'll forget what I'm reading about.

This shows that time is seen as a key factor by some students, when using VLSs. Although the strategy of '*Associating the new word with words that are already known*' was placed tenth in the list in the questionnaire, it received the largest number of responses in terms of students who said they used it "often" (forty-four students said this) and "sometimes" (forty-eight students said this).

As can be seen in Table 6.1, the top four strategies that were identified as being the 'most used' by the students were *discovery strategies*, whereas the remaining strategies on the list were *consolidation strategies*. This suggests that the students are more likely to make an effort to discover the meaning of a new word than trying to consolidate their understanding. This result is consistent with what students reported in the interviews that they focus largely on discovery strategies, such as '*Using the dictionary*' and '*Guessing from context*'. The strategies in Table 6.1 include determination, social, memory, cognitive and metacognitive strategies.

Although '*Appealing for assistance from others*' and '*Ignoring the new word while reading*' were ranked as two of the ten most frequently used strategies, only three students out of twenty-two students interviewed referred to the '*Ignoring*' strategy and only six students pointed to '*Appealing for assistance from others*'. An example of when a new word might be ignored came from Jaber (College D), who stated that:

If I feel that I can understand a text without knowing the meaning of an unknown word, then I will skip it.

The strategies that were not identified as being commonly used by the students included both discovery strategies and consolidation strategies, as shown in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: The VLSs that the participants thought that they used the least

VLS	Category	Frequency						Mean
		*A	O	S	R	N	I	
1. I use an English only dictionary to look up unknown words.	Discovery Strategies (det)**	14	24	36	42	29	1	3.65
2. I use the keyword method (e.g. If I want to memorise the English word “fine”, I may think of an Arabic word that is similar in pronunciation “fayen” which means “tissue” , then I create a mental image of a person who uses tissue and looks fine.)	Consolidation Strategies (mem)	19	24	41	26	34	4	3.70
3. I associate the sound of new words with the sound of familiar word (e.g. link, ink).	Consolidation Strategies (mem)	16	33	38	34	23	3	3.84
4. I test myself or ask others listen to me and correct my mistakes.	Consolidation Strategies (met)	22	26	37	33	29	1	3.84
5. When I encounter unknown vocabulary while reading I guess the meaning from the part of speech of the word from the sentence in which the word appears.	Discovery Strategies (det)	20	25	48	35	15	5	3.90
6. When I encounter unknown vocabulary while reading, I guess the meaning from the word structure (i.e. prefixes <i>unhappy</i> and suffixes <i>comfortable</i>).	Discovery Strategies (det)	25	33	44	20	13	13	3.99
7. I write the new words in a word list.	Consolidation Strategies (cog)	26	35	35	28	24	0	4.07
8. I associate the new words to their synonyms or antonyms (e.g. big - huge and short - tall).	Consolidation Strategies (mem)	29	30	45	27	14	2	4.18
9. I associate the new word with the text in which it appeared.	Consolidation Strategies (mem)	24	45	35	25	15	3	4.20
10. I go back to refresh my memory of words that I learned earlier.	Consolidation Strategies (mem)	24	33	46	39	6	0	4.20

* A = always, O = often, S = sometimes, R = rarely, N = never, I = I don't know

** det = determination, soc = social, mem = memory, cog = cognitive, met = metacognitive

For example, the VLS perceived as least used, '*Referring to an English only dictionary*', is a discovery strategy. Forty-two students stated that they 'rarely' use it. Only three students mentioned in the interviews that they use a monolingual English dictionary. For instance, Thamer (College F) stated that:

First, I try to guess the meaning of the unknown word from the context once or twice and if I cannot, I use an English-English dictionary.

One other student interviewed justified not adopting the monolingual dictionary because of the difficulty he perceived in using it. He said:

I don't feel I have reached a stage [in my level of competence] where I am able to use an English-English dictionary. (Abdulmajeed, College F)

On the other hand, five students stated in the interviews that they used both monolingual and bilingual dictionaries:

I use the English - English dictionary first, but if I do not get the meaning, then I use an English - Arabic dictionary. (Tariq, College D)

It was surprising to see '*Using a monolingual dictionary*' among this list because both of the prescribed textbooks introduced this strategy and provided information about how to employ it. Therefore, the textbooks assumed this strategy would be used. Also, as the analysis of textbooks showed, the textbooks used some exercises to practise this strategy.

At the same time, a consolidation strategy, '*The keyword method*', which requires learners to create a mental image for the meaning of the new word, was identified as the second least used strategy by the students. In total, 22.6% of the students reported that they never had used it. This may be because it is a slightly complicated strategy and learners tend to use mechanically simple strategies rather than more complex ones (Schmitt, 1997). '*Associating the sound of the new words with the sound of a familiar word*' was not commonly used either, according to students' accounts. This may be because the students did not know how to deploy this strategy or the strategy may require a wide active vocabulary to identify almost

instantly a familiar word with a similar phonetic structure. Likewise, the strategy of *'Self testing or asking others to listen and correct my mistakes'* did not appear to be used extensively by the students, based on their responses. This could be attributed to the fact that English was not the first language of the country, which made it difficult to find a native or competent speaker to practise English with. As such, the rate of using this strategy might have been higher if the students were learning English in an ESL environment. One of the students wrote in the questionnaire:

I would like to meet native speakers of English to practise my English with.

This indicates that this student was eager to communicate with native speakers of English to improve not only his vocabulary, but his English overall.

The strategies *'Guessing the meaning of unknown vocabulary from the part of speech of a word based on the sentence in which the word appears'* and *'Guessing the meaning of a word from its structure'* were among the VLSs identified as the least used by the participants. Nevertheless, they received high response rates in terms of being strategies that students thought they used "sometimes" (48 and 44 responses respectively). Four strategies appeared to be the 'least used' overall by the students, including *'Writing the new words in a word list'*, *'Associating the new words to their synonyms or antonyms'*, *'Associating the new word with the text in which it appeared'* and *'Going back to refresh my memory of words learned earlier'*. Despite the fact that these strategies were not being commonly used, according to the participants' self-evaluation, there appears to be a relatively equal number of responses in each answer field. For example, under the four strategies, the lowest number of responses in the field of "sometimes" was thirty-five and the highest number was forty-eight. This indicates a reasonable number of students who believe that they deploy these strategies. Analysis shows that half of the strategies in Table 5.2 were memory strategies. Thus the students in this study seemed to employ other kinds of strategies rather than memory strategies. To summarise, certain strategies might be less commonly used and possible reasons for this include the lack of knowledge on how to use these strategies, the complexity of applying certain strategies and the nature of the learning environment within the College as well as in the country overall. Although the "Vocabulary in use" textbook introduced *'Using*

a notebook', the students who were taking this course didn't mention using it in the interviews.

The remaining strategies, such as '*Saying the word aloud several times*' or '*Associating the new word with words that are already known*' showed moderate perceived usage rates. It was noted that all of these remaining strategies are consolidation strategies, which is in line with what was suggested previously that participants tended to say that they used discovery strategies more than consolidation strategies. Few students mentioned examples of other consolidation strategies than the ones listed in the questionnaire. Some examples of strategies given by students in addition to those mentioned in the questionnaire included:

I write the new vocabulary on my own board.

I write the new vocabulary on pieces of paper and hang them in familiar places where I can see them all the time.

I use cards to write new words and stick them on the wall in my room.

To memorise a new word, I write it down in a pocket notebook which I have with me always.

If I am outside and come across a new word, I write it down then I use the dictionary later to confirm the meaning.

This section has presented the VLSs that were reported as most used by the students participating in this study. The questionnaire results revealed that students tended to say that they used discovery strategies such as '*Asking others about the unknown word*' and '*Using a dictionary*' more often than they used consolidation strategies, such as '*Repeating the word silently in their minds*' and '*Listening to the word repeatedly*'. The participants tended to employ a range of different VLSs rather than particular strategies. Complicated strategies that require deep mental processes were unlikely to be used by students. The observation data supported these results. The interview results highlighted the reasons given by the students for focusing on particular strategies. It was evident that students involved in the study said they were more likely to employ a strategy that was seen as "easy" and "quick" to use.

6.3. The VLSs that were reported by the participants as the most useful

In addition to asking participants which were the VLSs they were more likely to use, the questionnaire aimed also to elicit data on the VLSs students found more useful. This section will review participants' evaluation of the most helpful VLSs. As shown in Table 6.3, most of the VLSs that were seen by the participants to be frequently used were also perceived as the most useful. In total, 60% of the students saw '*Practising using the new words as many times as possible in daily conversation or writing*' as a very useful strategy. While in Table 6.1, which summarised the strategies students thought they used more often, the discovery strategies received most responses and the consolidation strategies were at the bottom, the reverse occurred when participants reported on the strategies they thought most useful (summarised in Table 6.3).

Table 6.3: The VLSs that were perceived by the participants as most useful

VLS	Category	Frequency					Mean
		*VU	U	QU	NU	I	
1. I practise using the new words as many times as possible in my daily conversation or writing.	Consolidation Strategies (mem) **	90	43	13	1	1	4.49
2. I listen to the word repeatedly.	Consolidation Strategies (mem)	81	49	13	1	1	4.43
3. I write the word several times.	Consolidation Strategies (cog)	92	31	19	1	3	4.42
4. I ask someone (a friend, a classmate, a teacher).	Discovery Strategies (soc)	91	32	16	7	0	4.42
5. I use a bilingual dictionary to look up the unknown words.	Discovery Strategies (det)	88	30	23	3	1	4.39
6. I use an electronic or computer dictionary.	Discovery Strategies (det)	61	41	34	4	6	4.35
7. I write the new words in a word list.	Consolidation Strategies (cog)	79	45	17	5	2	4.31
8. I test myself or ask others listen to me and correct my mistakes.	Consolidation Strategies (met)	76	48	18	2	4	4.28
9. I guess the meaning from pictures, if available.	Discovery Strategies (det)	67	42	29	4	4	4.12
10. I guess the meaning from the context (e.g. surrounding sentences).	Discovery Strategies (det)	59	41	44	4	0	4.05

* VU = very useful, U = useful, QU = quite useful, NU = not useful, I = I don't know

** det = determination, soc = social, mem = memory, cog = cognitive, met = metacognitive

Moreover, four out of the ten strategies identified as most useful were “determination strategies”. This may imply that the students taking part in this study felt that many of the “determination strategies” are useful strategies.

The second strategy considered as very useful by more than half of the students was ‘*Listening to the word repeatedly*’. However, teachers did not seem to promote this strategy often in the classes observed. One of the teachers did not use a tape or DVD for an exercise, which required students to listen and check their answers as this extract from the field notes shows:

The second exercise involved writing the missing noun, verb, adjective or adverb in the blank boxes within a table. The exercise also instructed the reader to listen to a recording to check the answers given. However, the teacher did not play a recording, but instead read out the text. (Class A, College A, 2 April 2011)

The teacher justified this later by saying there were no tapes with the textbook. According to the analysis of the “Interactions 2” reading textbook, students were expected to listen to the reading passages in order to develop their “ability to read”, which was one of the purposes of the reading passages, and one of the linguistic assumptions of this textbook focused on pronunciation. Although the teachers corrected the students’ pronunciation as will be shown in section 6.5, they did not use any tape or CD in their classes and they did not themselves read the passages aloud. It seems that when the students listen to the passage first, that might decrease the errors in the pronunciations since teachers were interrupting the students to correct their errors. This shows an example of teachers’ autonomy when dealing with the textbook tasks.

‘*Writing the word several times*’ and ‘*Appealing for assistance from others*’ were rated as ‘very useful’ by an equal number of students. One of the students described the latter strategy as useful and provided a reason for this in the questionnaire:

This strategy is useful for the person asking for help, but also for the students in the class, who can learn new information.

One potential problem with this strategy, ‘*Appealing assistance from others*’, is that the person asked might be unable to assist or might provide misleading information. This point was referred to by a student in the questionnaire:

I ask for help to learn the meaning of new vocabulary from the person that I believe is at a higher level [of competence] than mine.

However, another student thought that asking others for help will support retention in the long term:

I think if I got the meaning of an unknown word from a classmate, I would not forget it.

The fifth strategy identified as most useful was ‘*Using a bilingual dictionary to look up the unknown words*’. Eighty-eight students (58% of total) believed this to be a very beneficial strategy, whilst sixty-one students (40% of total students) saw ‘*Using an electronic or computer dictionary*’ as a very useful strategy. The students reported in the interviews and the questionnaires that the dictionary provides them with different information on the unknown word, such as its meaning and how to use it correctly. For example:

The dictionary gives you more information on the new word, such as the meaning, the definition and part of speech. (Abdulaziz, College D)

There is a big difference between guessing from context and using the dictionary. When you guess, you get only one meaning, but the dictionary gives you different meanings. (Fahad, College C)

Another student stated a further reason why this strategy was useful:

The dictionary provides accurate information about the new word, but when I guess the meaning from context, my guess might be wrong. (Faris, College A)

One of the teachers provided a similar view on using the dictionary:

The dictionary helps students find the meaning quickly instead of reading the whole text and the student can underline the new words [in text] and look for the meaning in the dictionary. If students try to infer the meaning, their guess might be wrong. So a dictionary is always more accurate. (Majed, Teacher, College A)

On the other hand, one teacher posited that the dictionary can be unhelpful for students, if they do not know how to use it appropriately. He stated that:

The problem with using a dictionary is that it gives you different meanings and the students always accept the first meaning without looking at the other meanings, especially with bilingual dictionaries. This is what I noticed as a teacher of translation, so I prefer monolingual dictionaries. (Khalid, Teacher, College A)

It seems that a possible problem in using a dictionary highlighted above is not merely restricted to bilingual dictionaries, but applies to monolingual dictionaries which provide several meanings of a word. One of the students referred to a different type of dictionary, a picture dictionary, which he described as ‘useful’, without explaining why. The picture dictionary may be beneficial for beginner learners, as it shows simple words with an equivalent picture. It conveys one meaning for the word, but it does not provide any other information such as pronunciation, parts of speech and usage.

The classroom observations supported this result on teachers’ and students’ perspectives on the usefulness of ‘*Using a bilingual and an electronic dictionary*’, since the students used their mobile phones to get the meaning of new vocabulary while reading and their teachers asked them to do so while reading. This practice disagrees with what the “Interactions 2” reading textbook assumed students would do while reading. The textbook asked students explicitly not to use the dictionary while reading and to try to guess the meaning of the unknown words from context. In addition to the teachers’ and learners’ autonomy that this example shows, other behaviours pointing to the social aspects of learning were indicated. Teachers and students practised what they believed was helpful for vocabulary learning rather than what the textbook advised them to do. This draws attention to the impact of teachers’

and students' own perspectives on the learning taking place in the classroom, which supports the concept of vocabulary learning as a social practice, influenced by different factors.

'Writing the new words in a word list' and 'Testing myself or asking others to listen to me and correct my mistakes' were also seen by most participants as helpful strategies. It was noted in the classroom observations that teachers tended to correct the students' mistakes in pronunciation while they read aloud and the students would then re-read the sentence, after the teachers' correction. For example:

The teacher asked one of the students to read the example. The student read the word "astonishing" wrongly. The teacher corrected his pronunciation. The student then reread the sentence. (Class A, College F, 3 May 2011)

The analysis of the "Interactions 2" reading textbook revealed that pronunciation was one of the linguistic assumptions that this textbook made. This might be the potential reason for focusing on pronunciation in the classroom. Another point is that the consolidation strategies in table 5.3, *'Practising using the new words as many times as possible in daily conversation or writing'*, *'Listening to the word repeatedly'*, *'Writing the word several times'* and *'Testing myself or asking others to listen to me and correct my mistakes'* were heavily relied on practise in order to learn the new vocabulary and, as a result, retain this vocabulary. These strategies suggest that the more the new words are used and practised, the more likely they are to be learned and memorised. This underpins Anderson's theory that suggests 'knowledge in declarative memory degrades with lack of use ... leading to the inability to perform the task' (Kim *et al.*, 2013:26).

The last two strategies in terms of perceived usefulness were *'Guessing the meaning from pictures, if available'* and *'Guessing the meaning from the context'*. Pictures are helpful in conveying meaning, but they are not always available in texts such as novels, stories and linguistics books. Nine students in the interviews reported that *'Guessing the meaning from the context'* was a useful strategy:

Guessing is more useful than other strategies because if you guess the meaning of the new word correctly, you will not forget it. You will understand how to use this word [in context], not only know its meaning, unlike using the dictionary, which can make you forget the meaning quickly. (Abdullah, College F)

The other students had a similar view of this strategy as being beneficial in terms of helping one remember the word. One of the students mentioned in the questionnaire that:

Guessing plays a role in retaining the word in mind and helps me to remember it later if needed.

One of the teachers reported the same advantage in using 'Guessing the meaning from context':

I always stress to the students that the more they guess [the meaning in context], the more they understand the word and will not forget it. (Abdullah, Teacher, College F)

Holding this view on the role of guessing in vocabulary retention resonates with the common belief that 'the more one engages with a word (deeper processing), the more likely the word will be remembered for later use' (Schmitt, 2000:120). This shows that some students agree that 'Guessing the meaning from the context' has a positive effect on memorising the word. Likewise, eight teachers saw this strategy as being a useful strategy. For example, Mazin and Jack said:

The student who learns from the context seems to be more successful than the student who uses the dictionary. I always say leave your dictionary aside, try to guess, because you are going to move to an advanced level, you are going to read novels, short stories and dramas. You don't need to pick up the meaning of every word in the text. Sometimes you find the words which come next or before will explain the new word. (Mazin, Teacher, College D)

Once you can guess the meaning, this means that you have enough background in the language and are able to work out the meaning of the word. (Jack, Teacher, College C)

This shows that some teachers assumed a link between being able to infer through the context successfully and the student's level of competence in English. It was noticed through the interviews that both teachers and students concentrated mainly on 'Using a dictionary' and 'Guessing from context' strategies. This might be because these two strategies seem to be the most relevant strategies that can be used while reading.

This section will now move on to examine the strategies perceived as ‘the least useful’ by the learners surveyed. The two strategies that were evaluated as the least helpful were ‘*Ignoring the unknown word while reading when the unknown word is not important*’ and ‘*Ignoring the unknown word while reading when partially understands the meaning*’. As it can be seen in Table 6.4, there was a big difference in the number of students that considered these two strategies as unhelpful.

Forty-nine (32%) students stated that the first strategy was not a useful strategy, while only twenty students (13%) felt that the second strategy was not a beneficial strategy. Both strategies rely on ignoring the new word. A possible explanation for this result is that students could have evaluated these strategies as unhelpful because they do not provide them with new information. The third least useful strategy, based on students’ responses, was ‘*The keyword method*’, which involves creating a mental image for the meaning of the unknown word. The justification for viewing this strategy as unhelpful might be due to students’ limited knowledge on the use of this strategy or the more complex mental action required to use it. Also, students may consider it as time-consuming and may find it difficult to create an image for two words from L1 and L2 (Al-Fuhaid, 2004:193). ‘*Guessing the meaning of the unknown vocabulary from the word structure*’ came fourth. The fifth least useful strategy was ‘*Repeating the word silently in my mind*’, while a similar strategy, ‘*Saying the word aloud several times*’ received a better evaluation. One of the students reported in the questionnaire that:

*Repeating the words in any form, whether written or verbal, is useful for me.
Unless I use these new words, I will forget them easily.*

Table 6.4: The VLSs that were perceived by the participants as least useful

VLS	Category	Frequency					Mean
		*VU	U	QU	NU	I	
1. I ignore the unknown word while reading when the unknown word is not important and I can understand the sentence without its meaning.	Consolidation Strategies (met) **	13	38	44	49	2	3.08
2. I ignore the unknown word while reading when partially understands the meaning of the unknown word.	Consolidation Strategies (met)	19	44	58	20	4	3.37
3. I use the keyword method (e.g. If I want to memorise the English word “fine”, I may think of an Arabic word that is similar in pronunciation “fayen” which means “tissue” , then I create a mental image of a person who uses tissue and looks fine.)	Consolidation Strategies (mem)	41	43	36	15	13	3.57
4. When I encounter unknown vocabulary while reading I guess the meaning from the word structure (i.e. prefixes unhappy and suffixes comfortable).	Discovery Strategies (det)	37	53	31	11	16	3.57
5. I repeat the word silently in my mind.	Consolidation Strategies (cog)	38	43	36	26	3	3.60
6. When I encounter unknown vocabulary while reading, I guess the meaning from the part of speech of the word.	Discovery Strategies (det)	40	45	40	8	14	3.61
7. I want to read without interruption since the meaning might be revealed later on in the text.	Consolidation Strategies (met)	44	43	37	17	5	3.71
8. After recognising the meaning of the unknown word, I say the word aloud several times.	Consolidation Strategies (mem)	49	43	37	12	5	3.82
9. I associate the new word with the text in which it appeared.	Consolidation Strategies (mem)	47	58	31	3	8	3.90
10. I use an English only dictionary to look up unknown words.	Discovery Strategies (det)	61	41	34	4	6	4.01

* VU = very useful, U = useful, QU = quite useful, NU = not useful, I = I don't know

** det = determination, soc = social, mem = memory, cog = cognitive, met = metacognitive

The next least useful strategies, based on students' responses, appeared to be *'Reading without interruption since the meaning might be revealed later on in the text'*; *'Saying the word aloud several times'*; *'Associating the new word with the text in which it appeared'* and *'Using an English only dictionary to look up unknown words'*. Despite these four strategies appearing as the least beneficial strategies for participants based on the overall responses, a significant number of students stated that these were 'very useful' and 'quite useful' at times. Overall, the number of responses which suggested that the strategies were entirely unhelpful was relatively low. The range of responses in the 'not useful' box was between three and forty-nine. This means that although these strategies were considered to be the least useful strategies, they are still seen as quite beneficial strategies by a significant number of students, perhaps in specific circumstances. Finally, there was no difference between the types of strategies considered as 'most useful', as these were both discovery and consolidation strategies.

To sum up, this section has discussed the VLSs that were evaluated as being the most and least useful by the students. The results revealed that the VLSs that were highly valued by the students surveyed were similar to those that were seen to be the most used by them. The participants thought that these strategies were helpful in giving accurate and detailed information on the new words, as well as for their positive impact on retaining these words. Both teachers and students focussed mainly on *'Using a dictionary'* and *'Guessing from context'*, when interviewed.

6.4. The strategies that the participants felt most competent in

This section presents the VLSs that the students felt most competent in. Sixteen out of the twenty-five strategies presented in the questionnaire were evaluated in terms of the students' perceived competence. A rationale for excluding some of the strategies from this evaluation can be found in the Methodology chapter (see Section 3.6.2). As shown in Table 6.5, nearly half of the students reported that they felt very competent in *'Using the electronic or computer dictionary'*.

Forty-seven students (31%) stated that they considered themselves very competent in *'Using a bilingual dictionary to look up the unknown word'*. However, students might report that they feel skilled in using these strategies simply because these are the only strategies they are

familiar with, as explained in section 6.2. The following justification was given by one of the students in the interviews:

Of course I am competent in using a dictionary because I always use it more than the other strategies and that has made me skilful in using it. (Abdullah, College B)

Another student suggested another reason for being skilled in using a dictionary:

I feel that I am good at using the dictionary rather than at other strategies because the dictionary is straight forward to use. (Fawwaz, College C)

Table 6.5: The VLSs that the participants felt most competent in

VLS	Category	Frequency					Mean
		*VC	C	QC	NC	I	
1. I use an electronic or computer dictionary.	Discovery Strategies (det) **	66	46	23	8	3	4.12
2. I use a bilingual dictionary to look up the unknown words.	Discovery Strategies (det)	47	50	32	11	4	3.87
3. I practise using the new words by talking to myself in English.	Consolidation Strategies (mem)	36	43	56	9	3	3.68
4. I go back to refresh my memory of words that I learned earlier.	Consolidation Strategies (mem)	28	43	53	21	3	3.49
5. I practise using the new words as many times as possible in my daily conversation or writing.	Consolidation Strategies (met)	33	29	63	21	2	3.47
6. I associate the new words to their synonyms or antonyms (e.g. big - huge and short - tall).	Consolidation Strategies (mem)	27	37	56	19	7	3.40
7. I write the new words in a word list.	Consolidation Strategies (cog)	31	30	56	27	4	3.39
8. I associate the new words and the words that I already know.	Consolidation Strategies (mem)	22	40	56	23	4	3.37

* VC = very competent, C = competent, QC = quite competent, NC = not competent, I = I don't know

** det = determination, soc = social, mem = memory, cog = cognitive, met = metacognitive

Thus, some students seem to believe that if they used a strategy often and if the strategy was easy to use, it meant that they were skilled enough to deploy the strategy. Forty-three students (28% of total) believed that they were competent at '*Practising using new words by talking to themselves in English*'. The same number of students felt competent at '*Going back to refresh my memory of words that were learned earlier*'. This means that students believe that they employ these two strategies properly and successfully. '*Practising using new words as many times as possible in daily conversation or writing*' was ranked fifth in terms of strategies students thought most competent in, with thirty-three students feeling very competent in using it. It can be noticed from Table 6.5 that this strategy had the highest number of participants feeling "quite competent" (a total of sixty-three students or 42%). This means that a large number of students feel they were able to use this strategy relatively well, despite it being ranked fifth.

'*Associating the new words to their synonyms or antonyms*' was the sixth strategy, as thirty-seven students (24%) students felt competent in using. The last two strategies were '*Writing the new words in a word list*' and '*Associating the new words and the words that I already know*'. Thirty-one students (20%) thought that they were 'very competent' in using the first strategy, while forty students (26%) believed they were 'competent' in using the latter. It could be seen that the last three strategies in addition to the third strategy, '*Practising using new words by talking to themselves in English*', received the same number of responses (fifty-six students) in terms of students feeling 'quite competent' in using it. This may indicate that students believe they utilise these strategies well, even though they were placed at the end of their list of perceived competence. Furthermore, the first two strategies out of the ten are '*Discovery strategies*', whilst the rest are '*Consolidation strategies*'. This suggests that the students taking part in this study felt that they were competent in using both types of strategies, with an emphasis on '*Discovery strategies*'. Also, five of these strategies were among the top ten VLSs participants said they were most likely to use (see Table 6.1). This supports the students' belief, as indicated before, that the more one uses a strategy, the more likely they are to declare themselves competent in using it. Moreover, four strategies in Table 6.5 were '*Memory strategies*', which may suggest that the students felt they were more skilled in utilising '*Memory strategies*' over other types of strategy.

The strategies that the students believed they were the least competent in are listed in Table 6.6. The proportion of *'Discovery'* and *'Consolidation'* strategies is quite equal in this table. In addition, most of the strategies were *'Determination'* and *'Memory'* strategies. *'Guessing the meaning from the part of speech of the word from the sentence in which the word appears'* and *'Guessing the meaning from the word structure'* were the strategies that most students believed they were the least competent in. Only 10 students stated that they are very competent in adopting these strategies, whereas thirty-nine (26%) and twenty-nine (19%) students respectively said that they did not see themselves as competent in managing these strategies. It appears that the students are not familiar with this type of guess work and this was confirmed during the interviews, in which they only referred to *'Guessing from context'*.

Thirty-nine students (26%) stated that they did not see themselves as competent in *'Associating the sound of new words with the sound of familiar word'* and thirty-seven (24%) of them expressed the same feeling in terms of the strategy *'Using an English only dictionary to look up unknown words'*. *'Using an English only dictionary'* appears to be difficult for students, since it does not provide any information in Arabic. In addition, it includes abbreviations, which need to be learnt in order to use the dictionary appropriately. According to the analysis of textbooks, information about *'Using an English only dictionary'* was provided as well as some exercises to practise. Therefore, it was thought that the students would be more familiar with using it. *'Using the keyword method'* received the largest number of responses in terms of students not knowing how to use the strategy, as eighteen students said they were not familiar with this strategy. This is not a surprising result, since this is considered one of the more complex strategies in the literature. *'Guessing the meaning from the context while reading'* ranked sixth. One of the students in the interview talked about his perceived competence in using this strategy:

I think I am skilled in "guessing from context", although a dictionary might be more useful, as it gives you more information about the new word such as pronunciation, while in "guessing from context" you only get the meaning. (Ali, College F)

Table 6.6: The VLSs that the participants felt least competent in

VLS	Category	Frequency					Mean
		*VC	C	QC	NC	I	
1. When I encounter unknown vocabulary while reading, I guess the meaning from the part of speech of the word from the sentence in which the word appears.	Discovery Strategies (det)**	10	22	61	39	11	2.87
2. When I encounter unknown vocabulary while reading, I guess the meaning from the word structure (i.e. prefixes <i>unhappy</i> and suffixes <i>comfortable</i>).	Discovery Strategies (det)	10	37	54	29	17	2.96
3. I associate the sound of new words with the sound of familiar word (e.g. link, ink).	Consolidation Strategies (mem)	18	31	46	39	11	3.04
4. I use an English only dictionary to look up unknown words.	Discovery Strategies (det)	19	30	47	37	11	3.06
5. I use the keyword method (e.g. If I want to memorise the English word “fine”, I may think of an Arabic word that is similar in pronunciation “fayen” which means “tissue”, then I create a mental image of a person who uses tissue and looks fine.)	Consolidation Strategies (mem)	21	35	45	28	18	3.09
6. When I encounter unknown vocabulary while reading, I guess the meaning from the context (e.g. surrounding sentences).	Discovery Strategies (det)	10	23	84	25	2	3.10
7. I associate the new word with the text in which it appeared.	Consolidation Strategies (mem)	17	40	58	24	8	3.23
8. I test myself or ask others listen to me and correct my mistakes.	Consolidation Strategies (met)	25	39	47	28	9	3.29

* VC = very competent, C = competent, QC = quite competent, NC = not competent, I = I don't know

** det = determination, soc = social, mem = memory, cog = cognitive, met = metacognitive

This suggests that the student can use the strategy effectively, although he knows there are other strategies that are more useful. One of the students connected being skilful in guessing from context to the size of vocabulary one has. He said:

I do not have a large vocabulary to enable me to guess correctly the meaning of the unknown word through the context.

It was anticipated that the students would be competent in '*Guessing the meaning from the context while reading*' since this strategy was emphasised in the "Interactions 2" reading textbook. According to this textbook's analysis, the students were assumed to practise this strategy in every reading passage as well as through other exercises. One of the possible interpretations for feeling less competent in using this strategy might be due to the fact that teachers asked the students to guess the meaning rather than teaching them how to do this and the textbooks did not provide detailed instructions on how to use VLSs. Teachers also asked students to use their dictionaries to find out the meaning of the unknown words while reading rather than guessing, as the textbook instructed them to do. The ways in which teachers introduced the VLSs and how the textbooks introduced them impacted negatively on learners' use of certain VLSs. This shows the significant role that teachers play in vocabulary learning and highlights once again how learning is a social practice influenced by a range of various factors.

Next came '*Associating the new word with the text in which it appeared*'. Twenty-four (16%) students reported they did not see themselves as competent in deploying this strategy. Finally, in terms of '*Testing myself or asking others to listen to me and correct my mistakes*', twenty-eight students (18%) stated that they did not see themselves as competent in using this strategy. Although these strategies are the ones in which the students felt least competent, some of these strategies received large number of responses stating that students believed they were "quite competent" in using them. For example, '*Guessing the meaning from the context while reading*' received eighty-four responses of "quite competent" and '*Guessing the meaning from the part of speech of the word from the sentence in which the word appears*' received sixty-one responses in the same category.

The occurrence of these strategies in the list (Table 6.6) is not surprising, since most of them are among the VLSs least used and evaluated as less helpful by the participants. This supports what has been suggested above that the students appear to be unaware as to how to use these strategies effectively and, as a result, these strategies might be difficult for them to employ. The students referred throughout the interviews to mainly two strategies when they asked to discuss their competence in adopting VLSs. These strategies were '*Using a dictionary*' and '*Guessing the meaning from the context*'.

In summary, the VLSs that the students participating in this study felt most competent in were reviewed here. The results showed that the participants in the study believed that they were most competent in using the electronic or computer dictionary and a bilingual dictionary. Furthermore, they thought that they were skilful in their use of mainly discovery strategies, as well as some consolidation strategies. Findings suggested that there is a relationship between employing certain strategies regularly and students perceiving themselves as being competent in them. On the other hand, the students felt that they were the least skilled in were those involving guess work, such as ‘*Guessing the meaning from the part of speech of the word*’ and ‘*Guessing the meaning from the word structure*’.

6.5. The type of information that the students seek in relation to a new word

This section explores the information that the participants said they looked for when they encounter an unknown word while reading. Table 6.7 gives an overview of the type of information that the students seek in relation to a new word. The results show that, in relation to the first five items, the number of responses in the fields ‘always’, ‘often’ and ‘sometimes’ is high, while the number of responses in the fields ‘rarely’ and ‘never’ is low. The responses are more equally distributed for the last four items. This means that the students participating in this study routinely try and familiarise themselves with more than one aspect of a new word.

As shown in Table 6.7, it can be noted that nearly three quarters of the students (71.3%) said they ‘always’ looked for the Arabic meaning of the new vocabulary. Half of the participants in the interviews reported that they searched for the meaning in Arabic. Abdulmajeed (College F) stated:

The meaning of a new word in Arabic is the most important thing for me to know.

Another student stated that the priority for him is figuring out the meaning in Arabic:

First, I try to get the meaning in Arabic, and then in English. (Ayman, College F)

This shows the extent to which knowing the meaning of a word in the L1 is important for students. This is predictable, since the students cannot comprehend and learn a new word unless they know its meaning in their native language. This reflects the Vygotskian perspective, which suggests that the L1 seems to be more dominant in L2 learners' thinking and often used as a mental tool.

Table 6.7: Type of information that the participants seek about the unknown word

Type of information	Frequency						Mean
	*A	O	S	R	N	I	
1. Its Arabic meaning.	107	26	13	1	2	0	5.58
2. Its pronunciation.	92	33	16	6	1	0	5.41
3. Its spelling.	79	42	17	7	3	0	5.26
4. Its usage.	42	51	46	4	6	0	4.80
5. One of its meanings.	43	54	34	12	4	2	4.77
6. Its English definition by paraphrase.	31	40	43	27	8	0	4.40
7. All meanings.	29	28	50	28	12	0	4.23
8. Its English synonyms / antonyms.	19	43	43	28	15	0	4.16
9. Parts of speech.	30	26	39	30	23	1	4.05

* A = always, O = often, S = sometimes, R = rarely, N = never, I = I don't know

More than half of the students (61.3%) said they 'always' sought the pronunciation of the unknown word. Five students referred to this when they were interviewed:

I check out the pronunciation of the word because reading the word correctly is necessary. (Sameer, College E)

I use the dictionary to learn how to pronounce the new words. (Abdullah, College B)

Pronunciation is one of the aspects that teachers focused on in their classes, as seen in the classes observed. Clarifying the pronunciation of the new words was provided by teachers by correcting the students' mistakes in pronunciation while they read the text aloud as shown in

section 6.3. Another important point is that pronunciation was one of the linguistic assumptions that the prescribed textbooks make. The analysis of textbooks revealed that pronunciation was assumed to be learned through different tasks. Thus, this assumption meets one of the aspects that the students seek to know about the new words. Also, teachers concentrated on correcting students' pronunciation as recorded in some of the observations:

The student read the word "housing" wrongly and the teacher interrupted him and wrote on the board "house - housing" and said, "There is a difference between their pronunciations". He said: "house" is pronounced with /s/ whereas "housing" is pronounced with /z/. (Class A, College A, 2 April 2011)

While the student was reading the sentence aloud, he mispronounced the word "astonishing". The teacher interrupted him to correct his pronunciation and the student then reread the sentence using the correct pronunciation. (Class A, College F, 3 May 2011)

The teacher interrupted the student when he pronounced the word "heat" as "hate". The teacher wrote on the board "Coal is used for heating", and "I hate sleeping late", on the board, then read these sentences aloud before also writing "heat = warm". (Class A, College A, 2 April 2011)

More than half of the participants (52.7%) said they 'always' checked the spelling of a new word. Three students said in interviews that knowing the spelling is a key thing for them:

I always look up the spelling of a new word. (Sameer, College E)

It appears that these two aspects are associated, as it is important for the learner to know the spelling of the word in order to learn its pronunciation. Knowing how to use the unknown word in context ranked fourth, since 34% of the students reported they 'often' looked up this information. Seven students commented on this in the interviews. For example:

The first thing that I look up when I come across new words is where to use them. (Thamer, College F)

I try to learn the different uses of a word. (Tariq, College D)

I look up how to use the new word in a sentence. (Saad, College B)

I like to know the context of the word, whether it is, for example, related to politics or economics. (Fahad, College C)

A similar number of students (36%) said that they ‘often’ sought the meaning of the new word. This item received the largest number of responses in the category ‘often’, which means that checking out the meaning of a new word is important for a significant number of students, despite it being ranked fifth. Only 28.7% of the participants in the questionnaire stated that they ‘sometimes’ searched for the English definition of an unknown word by paraphrasing. Only three students stated in the interviews that they do this:

When I come across a new word, I look for its meaning in English first. (Ali, College D)

This result confirms the importance of knowing the meaning of a new word in Arabic first for most students after which they check for further information, like pronunciation and usage. Nevertheless, one of the students reported that he checks for both English and Arabic meanings:

I seek the meaning in English first, then in Arabic. (Talal, College D)

Checking all meanings of a new word came seventh in terms of students’ declared preferences. In total, 33% of the students stated that they “sometimes” try to find this type of information. Although this item is ranked seventh, it had the highest number of responses in terms of it being sought “sometimes”. This may suggest that a relatively large number of students liked to figure out more than one meaning of an unknown word. The last two types of information about the new vocabulary that the participants said they looked for when they used VLSs were ‘synonyms or antonyms’ and ‘parts of speech’ of the new word. About 28.6% of the participants said they sometimes sought the ‘synonyms or antonyms’ of the new word, whilst 26% of them believed they ‘sometimes’ searched for ‘parts of speech’. It appears that most participants feel that these two aspects of information are less important than the categories mentioned above. Four students in the interviews pointed to their searching for antonyms and synonyms:

Synonyms and antonyms are one type of information that I seek. (Abdulaziz, College D)

It is important for me to find out the antonyms and synonyms of the new word. (Abduljabbar, College E)

On the other hand, three students referred to looking for parts of speech the new word:

I use the dictionary to find out the part of speech of the new word. (Ahmad, College C)

I would like to know the part speech of the word, whether it is a verb, adjective or noun and its suffixes and prefixes. (Faris, College A)

Despite looking for the ‘part of speech’ of the new word was in the last rank, it was one the main linguistic assumptions in the “Interactions 2” reading textbook based on the analysis of this textbook. This shows an example of what the textbook encourages students to learn and what they are actually learning.

Different aspects of word’s knowledge were provided to students in the class according to the vocabulary teaching techniques that were used by teachers, as discussed in the previous chapter. Also, other aspects of the knowledge about a word were available through the context in which the new word appeared, where the spelling and usage of the new word is clear. The part of speech was given by some teachers while the classroom observations. However, this was observed in classes where students were working on exercises which asked for this information. For example,

The student read the word “beaten” and the teacher said “the verb of this word is beat” (Class C, College A, 4 April 2011)

Teachers did not focus on spelling as much, as the new words were often seen by learners in a written form, in a text. However, in one class, the teacher asked the students to give the spelling of the word “difficulty”:

The student said, “difficulty”, and the teacher replied “correct”, and asked how it is spelt. The student missed one of the letters, which was an “f”. The teacher wrote “difficulty” on the board and said, “with a double f”. (Class A, College A, 2 April 2011)

In summary, the ‘Arabic meaning’ of the new word, its ‘pronunciation’ and ‘spelling’ were the main pieces of information that the students participating in this study said they would look for. Knowing ‘the meaning in Arabic’ was considered the most important aspect for students. Seeking the ‘synonyms or antonyms’ for the new word and check its ‘part of speech’ was information that students said they did not usually search for.

6.6. Introducing VLSs to students

This section will examine how teachers in the Saudi universities involved in the study introduced the VLSs to students. The data in this section is derived from the student interviews and the classroom observations. Nearly half of the students interviewed (twelve in total) reported that their teachers explicitly taught them how to manage VLSs. Students mainly referred to two strategies which were taught in class: ‘*Guessing the meaning of the new word from the context*’ and ‘*Using a dictionary*’. One interviewee gave this example:

The teacher told us to divide longer sentences into smaller parts to make understanding the meaning easier. (Mohammed, College B)

Seven students stated that their teachers taught them about ‘*Guessing the meaning from context*’, two students referred to being taught how to ‘*Use a dictionary*’ and two students reported that they were taught both these strategies. The students’ comments on their teachers’ effectiveness in teaching the strategies varied. One of them stated that the teacher taught them about ‘*Guessing from context*’, without giving any details. He said:

The teacher encourages us to use our brains to figure out the meaning from the context. (Ali, College F)

Another student described his teacher’s explanation as being too brief:

The teacher told us how to guess from context, but his explanation was brief and quick. (Hamad, College D)

This shows that the students may need more elaboration in terms of the VLSs and introducing these strategies only briefly may not be enough for students to use them properly. Other students referred to how the teachers convey the ‘*Guessing from context*’ strategy by providing examples. Sameer (College E) and Saad (College B) mentioned that:

The teacher teaches us how to guess [the meaning in context]. For example, what do you think comes in this incomplete sentence? I drink..... Your guess should be something fluid, a drink.

He [the teacher] gives us a sentence which includes a new word while the rest of the words are familiar to us. Then, he asks us to guess the meaning of this word.

Other students reported that teachers prompt them to infer the meaning from the context, before consulting the dictionary. For example:

He [the teacher] asks us to read and look for the meaning and advises us to use the dictionary if we cannot figure out the meaning from the context. (Khalil, College D)

Ayman (College F) was more precise in terms of determining the type of dictionary that the teacher encourages them to use:

The teacher encourages us to use the English - English paper dictionary, but he asks us to try and infer the meaning from the context first.

Encouraging students to utilise a strategy is different from teaching them how to use it appropriately. Teaching these strategies to students before encouraging them to adopt a particular one seems key, as shown in the last extract of Ayman’s interview (College F), who referred to using an English - English paper dictionary. If the students had not been taught how to use dictionaries, they might not be able to obtain the information that they need or they might spend substantial time and effort searching for a word. Teaching VLSs relates to one of the aspects of the sociocultural theory, as teaching VLSs helps students become self-regulated. In time, the help they need from their teachers and peers will decrease as they will be more independent.

Other students reported that their teachers did not explain how they could use certain VLSs:

Unfortunately, the teacher did not explain how we should look for the meaning of a new word. We just discuss the words and memorise them. (Fahad, College C)

Teachers do not teach these strategies. They seem to think we know these things and this was a surprise for me when I came for the first time to the university. (Ahmad, College C)

The teacher does not usually explain how to guess the meaning from the context. He just says 'pick up the meaning from the context'. (Hatim, College E)

These comments suggest that students felt their teachers did not pay particular attention to teaching VLSs. Teachers in the interviews reported similar views to those of the students, since they did not clearly say how they taught VLSs. According to the teachers' interviews, they only asked students to use particular strategies rather than teach them how to use these strategies properly. For example:

I try to let the students guess the meaning from context. I give them two texts and ask, 'so this word here in this phrase, what do you think it means?' and then I try to let them use the word in another context. (Jack, Teacher, College C)

I always tell the students, 'when you come across a new word, do not use an English-Arabic dictionary. Always use a monolingual dictionary' because a monolingual dictionary illustrates the meaning of a word through its context and gives them examples to explain the meaning of words. (Khalid, Teacher, College A)

Students infer the meaning from context while reading in the class and sometimes I give them extra time to check their electronic dictionaries. (Shakir, Teacher, College E)

The last two answers indicate an important aspect that those teachers encourage students to employ 'Using dictionary'; which was discouraged while reading in the "Interaction 2" reading textbook as the analysis of this textbook showed. Another teacher implied that the textbook is helpful in guiding the students on how to deploy VLSs. Like other teachers; however, he did not state how he assisted the students in using these strategies:

The textbook is full of strategies. Each unit introduces a different strategy, such as guessing the meaning from context and every strategy has many examples and illustrations. (Mazin, Teacher, College D)

Evidence from classroom observations also suggests that teachers did not actually explain how these strategies should be deployed. Instead, they tended to ask students to use a specific strategy, like ‘*Guess the meaning from the context*’ or ‘*Use a dictionary*’, when they were working on an exercise:

The teacher wrote on the board twelve sentences. He read the first sentence aloud, “I can see through his plans” and asked the students to guess the meaning of the underlined words, which were phrasal verbs. The students started shouting out their answers. (Class A, College B, 9 May 2011)

The teacher asked the students to work in pairs for five minutes on the next exercise and asked them to use their dictionaries. The students were using the dictionaries on their mobiles. (Class A, College D, 20 April 2011)

These notes show that teachers were merely encouraging students to practice the strategies rather than actually guiding them to using these strategies. The focus of the teachers in the classes observed was on mainly two strategies: ‘*Using a dictionary*’ and ‘*Guessing from context*’. Importantly, the priority given by teachers to these strategies is reflected in the textbooks used. The textbook had activities encouraging students to infer the meaning from the context, more than using a dictionary. It also had a section in every chapter titled ‘*Getting meaning from context*’, which included some tips on guessing, followed by an exercise as a practical example. In addition, a section at the beginning of each chapter called “Vocabulary preview” asked students to look over a list of words and try to understand them from the reading that followed, without using the dictionary. The textbook also pointed to other strategies, like ‘*Guessing the meaning from the word structure (prefixes and suffixes)*’ and ‘*Guessing the meaning from the part of speech of the word*’, which were not indicated by teachers.

The result revealed in this section, which suggests that teachers were asking students to practise VLSs rather than teaching them how to employ these strategies could explain why the students felt themselves to be less competent in using certain strategies like ‘*Guessing the meaning from context*’ and ‘*Using monolingual dictionary*’, as shown in section 6.4, since the students did not have knowledge about using these strategies. This refers to Anderson’s theory that suggests the ability of learners’ cognition depends on the amount of knowledge ‘encoded’ and the use of this encoded knowledge (Anderson, 1996:355). The teachers did not provide the students with sufficient knowledge about using these strategies in order to help them employ these strategies effectively.

This section has focused on the teaching of VLSs in the four Saudi universities involved in this research. Many students suggested teachers did not give much attention to explicit teaching of VLSs. The data from the classroom observations and interviews revealed that teachers did not teach these strategies, although they regularly asked students to use them. ‘*Guessing the meaning from the context*’ and ‘*Using a dictionary*’ were the only strategies that the teachers used in the classes observed.

6.7. Conclusion

This chapter has presented the results on the participant students’ perceived use of VLSs, their views on these strategies and how these strategies were introduced in the class. The results showed that the participants believed they regularly deployed a range of VLSs, more than specific strategies. Also, the “simplicity” and “quickness” of using certain strategies were important factors in making a strategy more likely to be used. The VLSs that were considered as more complex were seen by students as less likely to be used. Most of the VLSs that were identified by the participants as the most used were perceived also as the most helpful. At the same time, the students involved in this study thought they were competent in using these strategies. Students believed that there is a link between being skilful in adopting a strategy and the likelihood of using it often. Another result was that students taking part in the study said they tended to look for the meaning of a new word in Arabic first and to check its pronunciation and spelling more than other aspects. Finally, the results regarding the teaching of VLSs were heterogeneous, since some students suggested that their teachers taught them how to use these strategies, whereas other students stated that

their teachers did not spend much time on explicit teaching of VLSs. Data from the classroom observations suggested that teachers did not provide regular guidance on how to handle these strategies, but they nevertheless asked students to use some of them in class. The next chapter will examine in more detail the attitudes of the teachers and students who participated in this study towards learning vocabulary through reading.

CHAPTER SEVEN

TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS LEARNING VOCABULARY THROUGH READING

7.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the reported attitudes of the teachers and students who took part in this study towards learning vocabulary through reading. These attitudes emerged mainly through the questionnaire that was completed by 150 students and from interviews with nine teachers and twenty-two students. The chapter is structured in two sections: the first section looks at teachers' attitudes, whilst the second one concentrates on students' attitudes.

7.2. Teachers' attitudes towards students' learning of vocabulary through reading

This section focuses mainly on how teachers thought of their students' learning of vocabulary through reading. It begins by outlining the teachers' beliefs on learning vocabulary and showing their attitudes on students' learning vocabulary through reading. Also, as the prescribed textbook all classes used was an important factor in mediating students' learning of vocabulary, teachers were questioned on their perspective on the textbook they had to use. The findings in this section are mainly derived from the interviews with the teachers taking part in the study.

The findings revealed that all the teachers interviewed believed that learning vocabulary was a crucial aspect of learning English. For example, Jack, who referred to vocabulary as an essential part of learning the language, provided an example of one of the VLSs that he thought were very useful in learning vocabulary:

I think vocabulary is very important. Teaching it is part of teaching the language. I really believe that vocabulary is a vital and essential part of learning any new skill. Students also need to know how to use the dictionary, how to look up a word. (Jack, Teacher, College C)

Another teacher also described vocabulary as crucial, especially for students in their first year at university, who will later on have courses which require a good grasp of vocabulary. Moreover, he suggested that students' English learning development is directly linked to expanding their vocabulary.

Building vocabulary in the first year of studying at university is important. It is the year when students build up their knowledge of the language. I always tell students to pay attention in their first year because they will later study subjects like literature and linguistics. The more words you know, the more you can improve your language later on. (Abdullah, Teacher, College F)

During the interviews, a number of teachers pointed out the key role of vocabulary in students' ability to communicate with others. They expressed the following views:

Learning vocabulary is very important. If you have a broad enough vocabulary, you can communicate, you can understand other and express your thoughts also. (Majed, Teacher, College A)

Vocabulary is very important and one should have a vast vocabulary to be able to communicate with others. A student who is familiar with a wide number of words is able to understand the meaning of new words more easily. (Mazin, Teacher, College D)

Without vocabulary, students are unable to communicate, to listen, or to comprehend what others express. Therefore, I try to develop their vocabulary in the class as much as possible. (Saleh, Teacher, College B)

When you expand your vocabulary, you become a more proficient user of English. You have the ability to read, to write and to speak better. If you are not learning new words, it means that you are stuck at the same level and you will have trouble in improving your English. (Shakir, Teacher, College E)

Majed and Mazin asserted that students should have a sufficient number of words to be able to communicate with others. Also, Mazin suggested that with a larger vocabulary, students will be better equipped to learn new words. In addition to the importance of vocabulary in communication, Saleh and Shakir referred to the relationship between vocabulary and English skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening). These teachers suggested that there is a mutual relationship between vocabulary and the learning and development of these skills. Therefore, they believed that the wider vocabulary a student possessed, the more likely they were able to improve upon other skills. The teachers highlighted through their answers one of the main concepts in the sociocultural theory, which emphasises the role of language as a tool for communication.

As already seen, most of the teachers interviewed referred to the importance of vocabulary for students. Khalid, however, believed that learning new vocabulary was also crucial for the teachers themselves. He reasoned that if teachers do not have a substantial grasp of vocabulary, they would struggle to teach the lesson successfully:

Vocabulary is important for both the student and the teacher of a second language. I think teachers should have a wide vocabulary too. If teachers don't have a sufficient number of words to conduct a lesson, they will not be able to teach very well. (Khalid, Teacher, College A)

As all teachers interviewed considered learning vocabulary an important part of learning English, they also held positive attitudes towards learning and teaching vocabulary through reading and believed this to be a useful strategy. For instance, one teacher talked about the relationship between reading and learning new vocabulary and suggested that the more students read, the more likely they were to learn new words:

You learn more and more through reading. If you don't read, you will find it increasingly difficult to pick up new words. (Tariq, Teacher, College C)

Majed shared a similar attitude and referred to reading as one of the main sources of learning new vocabulary. He also talked about the importance of listening, which he thought had the same importance as reading:

If a student doesn't read, he will not acquire words. If he doesn't listen, he will not acquire them either. Both are important. (Majed, Teacher, College A)

The teachers' attitudes towards learning vocabulary through reading resonate with Krashen's views on reading as an important input for language development. Furthermore, Abdullah suggested two other sources of learning new words, speaking and listening, which he believed were also important:

Reading has a very big influence on learning vocabulary. However, speaking and listening are also very important. (Abdullah, Teacher, College F)

Saleh described learning vocabulary while reading as greatly beneficial and thought this was better than learning vocabulary deliberately and out of context:

It is a very useful strategy to learn vocabulary through reading. A word on its own may not be enough for one to fully understand it. In order to be clearly understood, a word needs to be learned in context with other words. (Saleh, Teacher, College B)

Another teacher thought that reading assists students in understanding the meaning of words more easily. He mentioned that his students understood the meaning better when he explained new words through reading:

As you saw today in the classroom, the students can grasp vocabulary better within the context. When I explain it to them outside the context, they cannot always understand the new words. So, I don't explain the new words before reading the passage, I do it after reading the passage and by using the context. (Abid, Teacher, College A)

Similarly, Shakir saw learning vocabulary through reading as useful for students to learn new words, better than learning them in isolation. He reported using this strategy himself when he was learning English:

When I compare this strategy to other strategies for learning vocabulary, I think this one is better and more useful than learning from lists of words. When I was learning English, I learned vocabulary mainly through reading because there were not many opportunities for me to converse with other English speakers. (Shakir, Teacher, College E)

Shakir also referred to reading as an important tool for learning vocabulary, especially in the EFL context, where contact with native speakers can be limited, as was the case with the participants in this study. One of the teachers made a distinction between learning vocabulary through reading and learning it deliberately. He said:

It is better to learn vocabulary through reading than learn words on their own. Learning each word separately will not help when creating sentences or a dialogue, but when you read, you get the full picture. (Khalid, Teacher, College A)

Here, Khalid highlighted the advantage of learning new words through reading, as he thought it enabled students to know how to use new words correctly in context, something which is not always possible when learning vocabulary deliberately. Mazin pointed out another advantage:

Learning unknown words through reading makes them more memorable than getting the meaning directly. (Mazin, Teacher, College D)

Mazin suggested that this type of learning had a positive effect on memorising new vocabulary. Jack also brought up another valid point:

I think learning vocabulary through reading is very important. It works, it is of value and I believe in it. It probably also helps students in their pronunciation. It helps by allowing students to see the words in context, which really is another advantage and I think it is very useful, so I encourage it all the time. (Jack, Teacher, College C)

Jack suggested that learning vocabulary while reading may help students improve their pronunciation. This was mainly achieved in the classroom when the students read aloud and the teacher corrects their pronunciation. Although the teachers showed awareness of the importance of learning vocabulary through reading, the classroom observations revealed that they skipped the main question that checks the students' comprehension for the reading passage, which is one of the purposes of the reading passages used in the reading "Interactions 2" textbook, as shown in section 4.2. As shown in section 6.3, teachers asked the students to read the passage aloud directly without reading it for them in advance or using a CD. While the students were reading, the teachers were correcting the errors in pronunciation and explaining the meaning of the new words, as shown in chapter five. After reading the passage, the students were moving on to the next activity without answering the main comprehension question. The potential justification for this might be due to the fact that the activity that followed the reading passage was always assessing the students' reading comprehension.

In conclusion, this section has shown that the teachers involved in this study viewed vocabulary as a vital part of learning English and referred to the key role that vocabulary plays in students' ability to communicate with others. They also held positive attitudes towards learning vocabulary through reading and believed that reading texts developed students' vocabulary learning. The next part will concentrate on teachers' perspectives on the compulsory textbook used.

7.2.1. Teachers' perspectives on the prescribed textbooks

As shown in the previous sections, teachers were in agreement when it came to their beliefs on learning vocabulary and their attitudes towards students' learning of vocabulary through reading. However, their perspectives regarding the compulsory textbooks that all of them used differed. For example, the following teacher held a positive view:

I think the textbook we use is good because it contains an adequate amount of exercises, it is clear; it is rich in new words and is very well set out. I believe, you know, if you use it properly, it has the potential to be effective. It is good, I am happy with it. (Jack, Teacher, College C)

It should be mentioned that this teacher was a vocabulary teacher and the textbook he used in the classroom was different from the reading book that most of the other participating teachers used. Jack described this book as useful for a range of reasons, such as the activities provided and the new words that it contained. Another teacher talked about other advantages of the reading textbook used. He stated:

I find it to be the best series in handling vocabulary. It contains easy words to help students understand the meaning through context and gives them additional strategies to learn vocabulary. (Mazin, Teacher, College D)

Mazin implies that the textbook seemed to be suitable for the students' level of English, since he referred to the nature of the words that were used in the book. Moreover, he thought that the textbook provided students with a wider range of VLSs, rather than just asking them to guess the meaning from the context. This textbook dealt with various VLSs, although it focused mainly on guessing the meaning from the context. Another teacher agreed with this in terms of viewing the textbook as generally good, however, he mentioned some of its drawbacks:

I think most textbooks, irrespective of their author, are good. All of them contain new vocabulary which the students have to learn from the context. The reading textbook we use is a bit above the students' level. Our textbook follows the same structure, from the first to the last chapter. The book lacks entertaining games that could motivate the students to use their ability to think. (Khalid, Teacher, College A)

Khalid talked about two disadvantages of the textbook he had to use. First, he found that the textbook was not suitable for the students' level of English, as it was above their level. Second, the lessons were introduced in a similar manner and followed the same structure, and there was a lack of entertainment. This is a crucial point, as this lack of interesting material could be detrimental students' motivation. Other teachers expressed mainly negative perspectives of the textbook. One of them said:

The textbook seems to be too difficult for students. I think we should use an easier textbook because of the students' level. With new vocabulary, new ideas, new knowledge, all suddenly heaped on the students, they may be intimidated as there are a lot of ideas, words and new sentences to take in. (Shakir, Teacher, College E)

Shakir agreed with Khalid in that the textbook appeared to be unsuitable for some of his students' level. He also said that it was difficult for students to cope with large number of new words in one session, which could be a barrier for the students' learning and motivation. Another teacher, Tariq, thought that the material was irrelevant to his students' cultural values and identity and failed to meet the students' interests:

I find that the reading book is mostly American; it is like a brochure, all about a big city and space. There should be passages that are relevant to the students' interests. For example, the passage that I was teaching yesterday to students about economics was difficult. (Tariq, Teacher, College C)

The analysis of textbooks supports this teacher's view on the textbook in terms of the cultural context since the analysis revealed that both the prescribed textbooks were highly employed different context from the students' own culture. Another teacher mentioned that the textbook was not only hard for students, but also posed challenges for the teacher, since the material was above the students' level, which made the teaching more difficult.

The textbook is too difficult; the job of the teacher is then more difficult too. It's impossible to teach students these texts, since they are not at their level at all. (Abid, Teacher, College A)

The analysis of textbooks, which was conducted and discussed in section 3.11, supports these teachers' views in terms of the difficulty of the words presented to the students and the large number of new words introduced in the textbooks. The analysis of textbooks showed that approximately over 30 new words were introduced to students, which appeared to be difficult for both teachers and students to deal with. Also, most of these words were among over the 3000 most frequently used and a number of them were over the 5000 most frequently used, which make them more difficult for the students to learn.

The teachers were also asked in interviews whether they used texts other than the textbook and six of them (out of nine) reported that they occasionally referred to other texts. One of the teachers said that he brought additional texts in, although he relied heavily on the textbook.

I depend about 80% on the texts in the textbook and 20% on texts that I bring in. I used to give the students a handout relevant to the topic. (Majed, Teacher, College A)

Another teacher explained that he used texts from outside the classroom regularly:

I used to give my students other texts every three weeks. I prepare comprehension questions and sometimes focus on certain words in the passage by preparing questions about them. These texts could be scientific, social or historical. (Mazin, Teacher, College D)

Jack and Saleh both discussed other texts that they sometimes brought to the class:

I sometimes use passages from reading books. I sometimes use fables, stories with a moral or a lesson. (Jack, Teacher, College C)

Last year, I used a text from the Windows magazine to help students read faster and I'm going to repeat this in two weeks with my current students. (Saleh, Teacher, College B)

Three of the nine teachers interviewed said that they only used the prescribed textbook. One of them discussed his experience in using texts from outside the prescribed textbook:

Throughout this term and the previous one, I had audio and PDF files of short stories. I gave these out to the students on a flash memory drive so that they could listen to the correct pronunciation used by native speakers while they read the stories. The stories are 30-40 pages long and are meant as an extracurricular activity or activity to be completed at home since most of the students have computers. I found that the reading of a lot of them improved during this time. (Khalid, Teacher, College A)

Khalid then explained why he did not deploy this activity in class:

I have to finish at least half of the textbook. If I use the data projector, and I did try it actually, I will run out of time. When I tried using it, we got through only a page or a page and a half from the textbook. Since I believe that everybody has a computer, I prefer to make it a self-study activity. (Khalid, Teacher, College A)

It seems that demands in terms of having to cover textbook were a barrier for some of the teachers, as three of them referred to this issue. Two other teachers shared Khalid's view, saying that bringing texts to class can be time consuming. In addition, they pointed out that it can also be difficult for students with lower levels of English:

I don't use texts other than the textbook because of time constraints. Most of the time I explain the text in the class, which can be difficult. Bringing in additional material would only make it harder. I may, however, bring in texts for the advanced reading course. (Abid, Teacher, College A).

I don't normally bring texts outside of the textbook because we are exam-bound and textbook-bound, so we don't have the time. Sometimes the textbook provides extra materials on the McGraw Hill website. I tell the students to try and read stuff from there. We focus on the textbook and even that is very difficult to complete. Also, judging by the students' level, they've come straight from school and they don't have good linguistic skills yet, so they need time to settle and need a slow start. With better students, you can speed up the process by introducing extra materials, for example, by using newspapers or other materials. (Shakir, Teacher, College E).

In principle, teachers in Saudi Arabia can decide on the texts they bring to class and these do not have to be difficult, as teachers could select texts suitable for their students' level. However, according to the classroom observation notes, none of the teachers observed used texts other than the prescribed textbook.

To summarise, this section has given an overview of the teachers' beliefs about learning vocabulary, their attitudes towards students' learning of vocabulary through reading and their perspectives on the textbooks they used. The results revealed that all teachers in this research believed that vocabulary plays an important role in learning a new language and showed positive attitudes towards students' learning of vocabulary through reading. Their perspectives on the value of the textbooks used varied, since some of them viewed it as a

good aspect of the curriculum, while others did not. Also, during the classroom observations, none of them brought texts from outside the class, to use in addition to the textbook or as an alternative, although some said they did this on other occasions.

7.3. Students' attitudes towards learning vocabulary through reading

This section sheds light on students' beliefs in relation to their vocabulary learning, their attitudes towards learning vocabulary through reading, the type of texts that they preferred to read and their views on the reading passages in the textbooks used in their classes. The results presented in this section have emerged from the students' interviews and the data from the questionnaire.

All students agreed that vocabulary learning is an important part of learning English. For instance, the following student believed that vocabulary is the foundation of learning English and thought that one's level of English cannot develop without improving their vocabulary:

Vocabulary is the basis of learning English. It is the language itself. You should memorise words and review them frequently. How can you improve your level of English without learning vocabulary? (Abduljabbar, College E)

Likewise, another student with similar beliefs on vocabulary thought that learning new words is key to develop language:

All sentences contain words, so you have to improve yourself by learning more words. (Ahmad, College C)

These students explain that language is made of words, which makes learning vocabulary a key activity. Furthermore, many students referred to the importance of vocabulary in enabling learners to communicate well in English. Tariq thought that vocabulary is crucial in being able to communicate with others.

You cannot communicate if you don't have a good range of vocabulary. (Tariq, College D)

Jaber shared Tariq's belief and thought that increasing the number of words that the students know makes them able to communicate better:

*I think the more vocabulary you have, the more capable you are to communicate.
(Jaber, College D)*

Another student held the same belief and thought that vocabulary was important in speaking English fluently.

Vocabulary is very important for communication. It helps you speak English fluently. (Ayman, College F)

Ali referred to the type of vocabulary that he thought learners should have, which are the words that they need in their field of study. He appeared to suggest that focusing on academic words when learning vocabulary was importance for those aiming for a professional qualification:

Vocabulary is important, you should have vocabulary to communicate, especially the vocabulary you need in the field of your specialty. (Ali, College F)

Khalil feels that not having a developed vocabulary will make communication with others hard:

*It's very crucial because without vocabulary, it's difficult to communicate.
(Khalil, College D)*

The extracts above show that students view vocabulary as having a key role in their ability to communicate. Other students identified more clearly the contexts in which they believed vocabulary played a role, as communication is involved in various skills, such as writing, reading, speaking and listening. For instance, the following student referred to the importance of vocabulary in producing sentences:

Without vocabulary you cannot build sentences. (Faris, College A)

Other students connected the learning of vocabulary with the development of other skills:

*If you learn vocabulary, it means you can read and write in that language.
(Hamad, College D)*

*It's important to learn vocabulary for speaking, writing and reading. (Thamer,
College F)*

When discussing the learning of vocabulary through reading as a strategy, the majority of the students showed positive attitudes. Only three students suggested that there were other strategies which they believed could be more effective when learning new words. One of the students suggested that learning vocabulary via reading had a positive impact on language learning in general:

*I always use this strategy because it helps to improve my language. (Abdulaziz,
College D)*

This attitude is similar to the students' belief about learning vocabulary in general that was outlined earlier in this section. Others saw reading as a source of new vocabulary. Fahad said:

*The more you read, the more likely you are to come across new words. (Fahad,
College C)*

It seems that these students believed that learning new words through reading is helpful for the development of their English language skills in general. Another student who shared Fahad's view also suggested that understanding the text while reading could motivate the reader to continue reading:

*Reading is important for vocabulary learning. Whatever you read, you come
across many new words, and if you understand what you are reading, you feel
more motivated to continue. (Ali, College F)*

This student brought up a key point on the role of reading comprehension in creating the motivation to continue reading. When a learner encounters a text which appears to be too difficult to understand, they may lose the motivation to keep reading the text. This might be what led Mazin to believe that this strategy was not appropriate for him, since he considers himself a beginner in English. He linked the usefulness of this strategy to his level of competence in English:

Learning vocabulary through reading depends on the student's level. As a beginner, I find it difficult because I don't always have the words that could help me understand what I read. (Mazin, College E)

Two important points were mentioned by the students, which the input hypothesis also asserts: the input should be comprehensible and it should be interesting, in order to develop language. Other students recognised the advantage of employing this strategy and the positive impact on their vocabulary learning. For example, the following student thought that reading new words in a text helped him understand the meaning, as he could grasp the meaning from the context. When employing other strategies like learning vocabulary through listening, however, he felt he could miss the new word or misunderstand the speaker.

Learning new words through reading is excellent. You can understand many words from the context. If you learn vocabulary, for instance, from listening to others, you may not understand their pronunciation. However, if you read the words and try to understand the meaning from the context, then you write the meaning, it will help you much more. (Abduljabbar, College E)

Hamad has a similar view, as he discussed what makes learning the new words through reading better than learning them deliberately. He believed that when the unknown word was shown in a text, the context could be helpful to clarify its meaning, and this was not possible if the word appeared in a list:

Learning new words while reading is better than learning them in isolation; reading provides you with the opportunity to think and figure out the meaning from the context. (Hamad, College D)

Ahmad suggested another advantage of this strategy, which is learning the correct spelling and pronunciation:

Learning vocabulary through reading is the best strategy. You can get, for example, the right spelling of the new words. (Ahmad, College C)

Abdullah shared Ahmad's view and added another aspect, pronunciation. He said:

[Learning vocabulary through reading] is a good strategy. You learn new words and when you read, you know how to spell and pronounce. (Abdullah, College B)

Encountering a new word in a text may therefore be helpful in learning its correct spelling. However, it may not always be straight forward to determine the correct pronunciation, as this might be influenced by the learner's level of proficiency and experience in using similar words. Advanced learners may have a greater ability to guess the right pronunciation. The following three students suggested another benefit to learning words through reading, that of retaining more easily new vocabulary. They said:

It is very good to read and understand the meaning of the new words in texts because these words will not be forgotten easily. (Fayez, College A)

I think reading is the best way to learn vocabulary. When I see a word, I remember it because I came across it in a text I read before. (Hatim, College E)

It's a good strategy because when you read you become familiar with the spelling of the unknown words and you can figure out the meaning from the context, which then becomes easy to memorise. (Faris, College A)

In contrast, three students suggested that there were other strategies which they thought could be more useful than learning vocabulary from reading. Jaber, for example, discussed the learning of vocabulary through listening.

I think learning words through listening is better than learning them through reading because learning by listening is faster and easier. (Jaber, College D)

Another student, who viewed reading as helpful for learning vocabulary, thought that there was another strategy which could be more useful:

Reading is beneficial, but I don't think it is the best strategy to learn vocabulary. Learning vocabulary comes from interacting with native speakers, unlike reading, in which you may learn something, but forget it later. (Saad, College B)

This student disagreed to a certain extent with the students who suggested that learning new words through a text was useful in retaining new words. He and others thought that, in addition to reading, other strategies such as listening to others and speaking might be more useful in learning new words.

Students' attitudes expressed here emphasise their views of learning as a social practice, where the interaction with others is seen as an important medium for learning. Their attitudes, together with the attitudes and beliefs that teachers hold, as shown in the previous sections, suggest the complexity of the social environment in which learning takes place, which is not only shaped by teaching techniques, VLSs and the textbooks, but also by other aspects beyond these practices. This also suggests that the classroom is influenced by different attitudes and perspectives that participants hold in relation to what is being taught and learned in the classroom.

This section can be concluded by saying that all of the students in this study perceived learning vocabulary to be crucial in the learning of English. They viewed vocabulary as the foundation of learning English and saw it as important for communication. Their attitudes towards learning vocabulary through reading were largely positive and they believed that reading was as an important source of learning new words. They also thought the strategy was helpful in terms of also learning the spelling of the word and how to use it correctly, as well as in terms of helping them memorise new words. The next section will discuss the students' preferences for different types of texts.

7.3.3. The type of texts that students prefer to read

This part will discuss the types of texts that the students involved in this study said they preferred to read. The students were asked two questions on the reading of different types of texts. The participants were first asked about their habit of reading English newspapers and then about their preferences when reading other types of texts in English. As shown in Table 7.1, 28.75% of the respondents reported that they ‘never’ read English newspapers and 23.3% of them said they ‘rarely’ read such newspapers. Some of the respondents mentioned reading international newspapers such as *The New York Times*, *The Sun*, *The Independent*, the *BBC News* website, and local newspapers published in English, for instance, *Arab News* and *The Saudi Gazette*.

Table 7.1: Students’ answers to the statement ‘I read English newspapers to develop my English vocabulary’

How often do you use this strategy	Number of students	Percentage of students
Always	20	13.3
Often	17	11.3
Sometimes	33	22.0
Rarely	35	23.3
Never	43	28.7
I don’t know	1	0.7

A fifth of students surveyed (22%) reported that they ‘sometimes’ read newspapers in English. However, more than half of the students surveyed appeared not to refer to newspapers when they read in English.

The participants were also asked how useful they perceive this strategy for their vocabulary learning. More than half of the participants (59.3%), as illustrated in Table 7.2, reported that they believed reading English newspapers was a very useful strategy to develop their vocabulary.

Table 7.2: The participants’ perception of the usefulness of reading English newspapers

How useful is this strategy for you	Number of students	Percentage of students
Very useful	89	59.3
Useful	32	21.3
Quite useful	17	11.3
Not useful	0	0
I don’t know	9	6

From the students surveyed, 21.3% viewed the reading of newspapers as a ‘useful’ strategy, whilst 11.3% saw it as ‘quite useful’. None of the participants perceived this strategy as not useful. This suggests that the majority of the students who took part in this research felt that this strategy would be beneficial for them, although more than half of them said that they did not use it. This result shows that although a reasonable number of students in this study do not read English newspapers to develop their English vocabulary, most of them perceive this strategy as beneficial to the improvement of a student’s English vocabulary.

Furthermore, the participants were asked about their preferences in terms of the types of texts that they prefer to read outside the class. Table 7.3 displays the type of text that students said they preferred to read in English.

Table 7.3: The type of texts that students said they preferred to read in English

Type of text	Number of students	Percentage of students
Literary	57	38
Sport	47	31.3
Scientific	19	12.6
Arts	17	11.4
Other	10	6.7

From the students surveyed, 38% reported that they preferred to read literary texts, whilst 31.3% preferred sport texts and 12.6% of the respondents said that they preferred scientific texts. A similar number of participants (11.4%) reported reading arts texts. Only 6.7% of the respondents said they prefer to read ‘other’ types of texts. This result suggests that the majority of the students in this study said they preferred reading literary and sport texts over other types of texts.

During interviews, some of the students expressed a preference for literary texts, such as novels and short stories, while others said they preferred to read newspapers, especially the sport news. Only three students reported that they did not read any other texts apart from the class textbook. One of the students displayed an interest in reading sport news, specifically to do with football:

I like to read sport news on international sport, especially football. (Ayman, College F)

Some of the students who referred to reading literary texts provided examples of texts and also gave their reasons for reading them. For example, Ahmad mentioned reading short stories written in a simple language. He also stated that reading novels and stories could benefit the reader's overall life experience.

I read works by Shakespeare like King Lear and also read short stories like Sense and Sensibility with easy words. I benefit from the sayings, sermons, and experiences about life I read about. (Ahmad, College C)

Hamad and Thamer gave the same reason for reading stories and novels. They suggested that these texts have a theme and a story line which encourages the reader to keep reading.

I always have a story to read but I also read magazines and newspapers. The reason I read stories may be their plot. When it is interesting, it motivates me to keep reading. (Hamad, College D)

I like reading novels such as Dan Brown's Angels and Demons and The Da Vinci Code. I like these texts because the stories have a beginning and an end. There is a theme for the novel, it makes you enjoy it and want to continue reading. (Thamer, College F)

Abdullah shared the same interest as the students quoted before, but provided different reasons for reading short stories. He liked the fact that they are short, interesting and enhance his vocabulary:

I read short stories. For example, I read a story called Amistad and I am now reading a story called Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. I read them because they are short, interesting and enrich me with more vocabulary and provide entertainment. (Abdullah, College B)

These students seem to prefer reading novels and short stories because they have interesting plots, which seem to create the motivation to read. The simplicity of the vocabulary used in these texts and their length may also play a role in these being selected as reading material by the students. Another student talked also about reading in line with his interests:

I like novels and documentaries. This is my interest. I like to read about religions and old customs. (Fawwaz, College C)

This student's interest in religions and customs led him to read materials in English. Jaber mentioned an interest in newspapers, focusing on the political news in particular:

I'm interested in reading newspapers, especially the political news. I like them because I always look for the recent news and feel the language used in them is easier than the language of literary novels. (Jaber, College D)

Jaber said that literary texts are written with a more difficult vocabulary, whilst newspapers use simpler words. This suggests that the perceived level of difficulty of a text is likely to influence the type of text preferred by the students. If a student reads older classic novels and stories, they may include words which are not commonly used nowadays. Another student, Khalil, said he preferred to concentrate on reading only short articles, because he thought they are easier to translate and understand. Khalil said:

I read newspapers and focus on short articles. I don't try to read long texts because I can translate the short articles easily, unlike the long texts, which I tend to ignore. (Khalil, College D)

The three students who reported that they did not refer to texts other than those in their textbooks provided various reasons for doing so. One of them gave two reasons, mainly to do with the cultural effect on the texts which were unfamiliar to him and the difficulty to understand. He stated:

I only read my textbook because if I read, for example, newspapers, they are always about politics in other countries and about other communities whose cultures you have to understand. Also, I have to look up almost 90% of the words and that is a tiring job. (Abduljabbar, College E)

Highlighting the different cultural values that the prescribed textbooks introduce, as discussed in the interviews of teachers and students, reveals the role of cultural values in the social practice of vocabulary learning. Holding perspectives on the relevance of the textbooks suggests that students' beliefs are aspects which influence significantly the practice of vocabulary learning.

Another student believed that texts other than the textbook would be hard for him to understand, even though he had not tried to read any. He appeared to have a prior assumption that these would be difficult to comprehend:

I don't read texts other than the textbook. I only read the textbook. I haven't tried it because I think it is difficult and feel I won't understand what I read. (Mazin, College E)

Another student said:

There is no specific reason for not reading texts outside of the textbook, but if I want to study, I only study the texts from my book. (Mohammed, College B)

Mohammed feels that it would be better for him to use his time and effort reading the texts available in the textbook, thinking that it will benefit him in terms of his studies. He believed that reading other types of texts would be a waste of time.

As learners reported a preference for reading certain texts in order to develop their vocabulary, it can be assumed that materials which do not engage learners' interests will influence their motivation, which could then impact on their vocabulary learning in the classroom.

Overall, the results of this section revealed that when it comes to reading outside class, literary and sports texts were the texts most preferred by the students involved in this study. Although the number of the students who referred to reading English newspapers was limited, most of them perceived this strategy as a useful strategy in learning vocabulary.

7.3.4. The students' perspectives on the textbook's texts

This final section considers students' perspectives on the texts available in their textbook. This aspect was investigated through the questionnaire, which reviewed students' satisfaction with the texts included in their textbooks, which were their main source of learning vocabulary in class. Also, the questionnaire and the students' interviews explored the students' views on how suitable the texts that they read in relation to their level of English.

The results from the questionnaire revealed that most of the participants seem to be satisfied with the texts that were used in their reading textbook, as illustrated in Table 6.4.

Table 7.4: Responses to the statement ‘I am satisfied with the passages that are used in reading courses’

Students’ perspective	Number of students	Percentage of students
Strongly agree	14	9.3
Agree	98	65.3
Disagree	18	12.0
Strongly disagree	13	8.7
I don’t know	6	4.0

A large proportion of the students surveyed (65.5%) agreed with the statement that assessed their satisfaction with the passages in their textbook, and 9.3% strongly agreed with this statement. Only 12% of the respondents disagreed with the statement and 8.7% strongly disagreed. This indicates that the majority of the students surveyed were satisfied with their textbooks. The results of the questionnaire also revealed, as shown in Table 6.5, that more than half of the participants (56%) agreed that the texts in their reading textbook were suitable for their level of competence in English and 8.7% strongly agreed with this statement.

Table 7.5: Responses to the statement ‘The passages that are used in reading courses are suitable for my English level’

Students’ perspective	Number of students	Percentage of students
Strongly agree	13	8.7
Agree	84	56.0
Disagree	35	23.3
Strongly disagree	12	8.0
I don’t know	3	2.0

In total, only under a quarter (23.3%) of the respondents disagreed with this statement and 8% strongly disagreed. This result suggests that the majority of the students who participated in the current study felt that the texts in their reading textbook were appropriate for their level in English.

In addition, the students were asked during the interviews whether they were likely to encounter new words in the textbooks used for their reading courses or in the texts in English they accessed outside of the classroom. The students' responses were varied, as ten students reported that they encountered more new words in other texts than their textbook, while eight stated that they faced more new vocabulary in their textbook. Four students said that they encountered new vocabulary both in the textbook and in other texts they used. One of the students, who thought that the passages included in the textbook were easy for him, said:

I think I see more new vocabulary when I read something other than the textbook because our textbook seems to be an easy book and you do not find many new words in it. (Hatim, College E)

Another student believed that the texts that were available outside the class were difficult for him to read. However, he mentioned that these texts differed, in that they were useful for communication with others:

There are many unknown words for me when I read texts other than the textbook. However, the words in the textbook are only related to my studies whereas, the texts that are available outside class provide me with words that are useful in my social life. (Ahmad, College C)

Some students identified certain texts that contained difficult vocabulary for them when they read something other than the textbook. For instance:

I feel I come across more new words in the texts outside the class, especially when reading newspapers. (Ayman, College F)

I found more new words in novels than in the textbook. (Fawwaz, College C)

In the texts that I read outside class, like novels, I encounter more new vocabulary. (Thamer, College F)

These students say that they attempted to read materials other than their textbook, although they were aware that they might face more challenges when reading these texts. In contrast, other students disagreed and felt that the vocabulary used in the textbook was more difficult. One of them stated:

I always come across new words in the texts of my reading book. (Abduljabbar, College E)

Abdulaziz shares the same view and thought that the reading passages in his textbook were hard, as they included many unknown words:

There are more and more difficult words in our reading book [than in other texts]. (Abdulaziz, College D)

One of the students gave a possible explanation for encountering more new vocabulary in the textbook:

I encounter more unknown vocabulary in the reading textbook because when I read texts outside, I read texts that are familiar to me. (Mohammed, College B)

The justification given by Mohammed might be shared by other students, as shown above, as several students said they chose texts that are easy for them to read and appropriate for their level of competence in English. This may also be the reason why some students believed the texts that they read outside the class had a large number of new words for them. Thus, it could be concluded that students choose the texts they read outside class based on their perceived level of competence in English, which also influenced their views on the texts used in class. The data emerging from the analysis of textbooks, which was explained in section 3.11, resonates with these students' views on the level of difficulty of the texts in the prescribed textbooks. Many new words were introduced in each lesson, which seemed to be challenging for the students, and then not used again in subsequent chapters, which limited the opportunities for effective vocabulary learning, comprehension and long-term retention. Also, the analysis showed that most of the new words were among over the 3000 most

frequently used and a number of them were over the 5000 most frequently used, which make them more difficult for the students to learn. Incidents from the classroom observations in section 5.2 support the students' views on the level of difficulty of the texts as teachers explained words which were not introduced in the textbooks as new since the students showed a lack of knowledge about them.

Other students thought that both the texts from the textbook and the texts they could access outside the class were hard to understand. One of these students suggested that all texts in a foreign language require a reader with a large vocabulary:

I feel there is a difficulty in both the texts that I read in and out the textbook. You need to know a lot of words to understand what you are reading. (Ali, College F)

This student suggested that his level of English might be a barrier for him in reading any text, irrespective of the type of text. Learners' level of competence was mentioned by both teachers and learners, which highlights its perceived impact on learning. It shows that students encounter challenges in the prescribed textbooks which can be beyond their ZPD and as a result, their motivation to engage and vocabulary learning could be negatively affected. Dealing with materials that are too challenging for learners' level of competence makes teaching harder, as shown in chapter 5 (see sections 5.2.1, 5.2.3, 5.2.5), when teachers had to use more than one technique to explain one word or had to explain words that were not identified as 'new' by the textbook.

To summarise, most students surveyed were satisfied with the texts in the textbooks used by their teachers and felt that these were suitable to their level of English. Nevertheless, some students thought that they encountered more unknown vocabulary while reading texts other than the textbook, especially newspapers and novels, whereas other students believed that their textbooks included more new words.

7.4. Conclusion

An overview of teachers' and students' attitudes towards learning vocabulary through reading was presented in this chapter. Both students and teachers viewed learning vocabulary as crucial for learning a foreign language. In addition, all of the teachers involved in this study perceived learning vocabulary through reading as a beneficial strategy to expanding students' vocabulary and most of the students shared this view. While teachers' perspectives on the value of the textbooks used varied, the majority of the students were satisfied with them. Lastly, outside class, the students tended to prefer reading texts such as literary and sport texts over other types of texts. Although most of the students surveyed said that reading newspapers was a helpful strategy for expanding one's vocabulary knowledge, few of them appeared to read newspapers in English. The chapter has revealed the key role that a range of other factors play in the social practice of vocabulary learning. In addition to teaching techniques, VLSs and the textbook, which have been suggested in the previous chapters as significant, other aspects, such as participants' beliefs and attitudes, learners' interests, cultural values and learners' level of competence were identified as impacting on learning. The relationship between this range of factors and how they influence each other will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT

OVERALL RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

8.1. Introduction

The findings that emerged from the research and which were presented in Chapters Four to Seven are discussed in this chapter. The discussion examines the extent to which these findings answer the research questions identified initially in Chapter Three and whether or not they support previous research. The chapter starts with a reminder of the research focus of the study, the aims of the research and data collection, and a summary of the research questions along with their findings. Then the second part discusses the five key findings. The first finding looks at how teachers explained new vocabulary and the teaching techniques that they were most likely to employ. The next three findings illustrate the VLSs that the participants believed they used most frequently, found most useful, and in which they felt most competent. Finally, the last finding discusses teachers' and students' attitudes towards learning vocabulary through reading. The discussion makes links with current theoretical frameworks in EFL and draws some implications of the findings for the field of EFL more generally.

8.2. The research focus of the present study

The main aim of this research was to investigate teaching and learning vocabulary through reading at Saudi universities, with a focus on students majoring in English. The research focused on three aspects: how teachers introduce the meaning of new vocabulary, the VLSs that were perceived by students as most used and teachers' and students' attitudes towards learning vocabulary through reading as a VLS. Based on the review of existing research presented in Chapter two, the research questions, restated in the next section, were developed.

Data was collected by adopting a mixed method approach, using different research tools and gathering data from different sources.

8.3. Research findings

The main findings are outlined in this section. Five major findings were deduced from the data and have been summarised here in direct relation to the research questions. A detailed discussion on these findings will be presented later in this chapter.

Question 1: What are the teaching techniques used to teach vocabulary in reading and vocabulary classes at four Saudi universities?

Finding 1: Teachers in the current research relied mainly on prescribed textbooks and employed diverse vocabulary teaching techniques, with a focus on specific techniques such as using synonyms, defining new words in English, and using Arabic. Although teachers were textbook-centralised, they showed autonomy in their vocabulary teaching and classroom interactions were not always aligned with the assumptions made by the textbooks.

Question 2: Which vocabulary learning strategies are perceived as useful by Saudi students and which do they feel most competent in using when learning vocabulary through reading?

Finding 2: The students said they were most likely to use VLSs that they believed were fast and easy to use. They said they used certain VLSs more than others. Complex strategies that require active mental processes were unlikely to be used by the students, in their view. The students showed autonomy through their vocabulary learning, as they did not always follow the teachers' instructions or the textbook.

Finding 3: Students believed that most of the VLSs that they used were helpful to them and their preferences did not always align with the VLSs promoted by teachers or the textbooks used. They perceived certain VLSs as very useful, mainly in terms of providing them with accurate and diverse information on the new words and in helping them memorise these words.

Finding 4: Students considered themselves skilled in using most of the VLSs that they employed regularly and found most useful. They made a link between the strategies they used most often and their level of competence in employing these strategies and teachers did not explain how to use VLSs effectively.

Question 3: What are the attitudes of teachers and students at Saudi universities towards learning vocabulary through reading?

Finding 5: All of the teachers involved in this study perceived reading as a useful strategy in learning vocabulary and the majority of the students shared this view. They saw reading as an important source of new words; it helps to use the new words in a context and has advantages for vocabulary retention. However, they did not always agree that the prescribed textbooks were suitable in terms of content, type of reading activities or appropriateness for students' cultural values and level of competence.

8.4. Discussion of the findings

This section provides a discussion on the main findings. Finding 1 suggests that teachers in the study were 'textbook centralised' and used different vocabulary teaching techniques with concentrating on particular ones. Findings 2 to 4 discuss different aspects on students' VLSs. These findings suggest the features of the VLSs that led the students to use them most, perceive them as useful and made them see themselves skilful in using them. Finally, finding 5 discusses the participants' positive attitudes towards learning vocabulary through reading.

8.5. Teaching techniques used by teachers when teaching vocabulary

Finding 1: Teachers in the current research relied mainly on prescribed textbooks and employed diverse vocabulary teaching techniques, with a focus on specific techniques such as using synonyms, defining new words in English, and using Arabic. Although teachers were textbook-centralised, they showed autonomy in their vocabulary teaching and classroom interactions were not always aligned with the assumptions made by the textbooks.

The findings from the analysis of the classroom observation notes showed that teachers were highly “textbook-centralised” as they were heavily dependent on the prescribed textbooks and did not employ any texts outside of them. However, using well-prepared activities in learning helps learning as it builds on the social aspects that learners are familiar with from outside class. Based on the principles of sociocultural theory, employing texts outside the textbooks can improve students’ vocabulary development when these texts cover a range of topics and are suitable for the students’ level of proficiency.

This finding resonates with Hutchinson & Torres’s (1994) and Tomlinson’s (2008) argument that the structure of textbooks directs teachers’ approach to teaching and makes them mainly dependent on the materials and activities presented in the textbooks. The linear structure of textbooks can prevent teachers and learners from being creative in their teaching and learning process (Ur, 1996). This finding is also supported by other studies (Al-Nafisah 2001; Al-Maini, 2006; Al-Seghayer, 2011) conducted in Saudi schools, which showed that a textbook-based approach is also used in the school context. In this research, teachers justified being “textbook-centralised” mainly due to the fact that they were required to cover a vast amount of material in the textbook. Bringing texts from outside the textbook, with the given pressures of time, was seen as time-consuming and possibly as preventing teachers from covering the textbook. These reasons showed the limited autonomy that teachers felt they had. Autonomy, as self-directed action or development and free from the control of others (McGrath, 2000) requires a more flexible environment, in which teachers have the time and the confidence to make decisions about the content of the teaching. Teachers in the present study were controlled by both the institutions that required them to cover a specific amount of material and by the highly structured textbooks. This is in line with Leithwood *et al.* (2004) and Benson’s (2008) suggestions that educational institutions play a key role in establishing the degree of teachers’ autonomy. Despite these constraints, teachers showed some degree of autonomy in their teaching, as discussed later in this section.

The analysis of the textbooks used in the classrooms observed helped to provide a better understanding of the findings discussed above. The analysis revealed a range of linguistic and pedagogical assumptions made in the textbooks, which did not often match teachers’ practices in the classroom. The textbooks made some linguistic assumptions, such as that the teachers would follow the instructions. The teachers concentrated on some them, but often used them in their own ways; for instance, they often provided students with the correct

pronunciation, as required by the textbook, but also offered other information about the new words apart from their meaning, such as part of speech. Teachers occasionally asked students to work on tasks in pairs and groups, as the textbook asked them to do so. This shows some shared assumptions between teachers and the authors of the textbooks. Both thought that activities which involve students in a communicative way are likely to support students' learning. They promote opportunities for students to scaffold each other's learning and overcome together any challenges encountered while working on the tasks. Nevertheless, teachers often distributed the students randomly on tasks, ignoring the principle that in order to be able to scaffold each other's learning, students should be at different levels of competence in a group.

Using the VLSs correctly was one of the important pedagogical assumptions made by the textbooks analysed; however, this aspect was not always followed strictly by teachers, as discussed in section 8.8. Teachers showed autonomy in deploying VLSs in the classroom, for example, when they asked the students to use a dictionary to find out the meaning of the new words while reading the passage instead of guessing the meaning, as instructed by the textbook. The reading passages in the "Interaction 2" reading textbook assumed that the students would guess the meaning of the new vocabulary from context and explicitly asked the students not to use the dictionary. This shows that although teachers were mainly textbook-centralised, they had some autonomy in the ways they managed the tasks by occasionally ignoring the instructions in the textbooks. Teachers' decision to ask students to use a dictionary rather than guessing might have been a way of saving time, as teachers often referred in the interviews to their concern for time pressures. Another reason could be the perceived difficulty of the reading passages where students may have struggled to guess the meaning from context (teachers' perspectives on the textbooks they used are discussed further in section 8.9). Although the reading passages in the "Interaction 2" reading textbook aimed to encourage students to learn new vocabulary through reading, teachers, as mentioned earlier, either asked students to use dictionaries or they explained the meaning by using other teaching techniques; this, again, disagrees with what the "Interaction 2" reading textbook expected students and teachers to do. These practices do not only show teachers' autonomy, but they also show that teachers have their own perspectives on what students bring to the learning process as individuals, what is being learned in the classroom and other factors that affect this learning and which they need to consider when guiding students through the activities prescribed in textbooks.

The analysis of the classroom observations identified several techniques that teachers employed to explain the meaning of the new words. These techniques were '*Using synonyms*', '*Defining new words in English*', '*Using Arabic*', '*Using the new word in a sentence*', and '*Using gestures, drawings, pictures and antonyms*', where the first three were most preferred. These techniques have also been identified by Nation and Gu (2007:52) to be used by teachers when introducing the meaning of the new words through reading. As most new words being explained by teachers appeared in sentences, the '*Using the new word in a sentence*' technique was not frequently employed. Gestures, drawings and pictures can be helpful to explain the meaning of a new word, but they can only be employed with particular words. Also, pictures need to be prepared in advance and may not be suitable for all types of words, such as certain abstract concepts. According to the analysis of the textbooks, they also used similar techniques to clarify the meaning of new words. Teachers occasionally used more than one technique to explain the meaning of new vocabulary. It is clear thus that teachers thought that the techniques suggested by textbooks for explaining the new vocabulary were not enough, as their students could not fully understand the meaning of the new words. This shows how teachers provided the students with scaffolded help in order to assist the students understand the meaning by using more than one teaching technique simultaneously. However, the scaffolding provided by some teachers was unhelpful when defining the meaning of new words in English. Teachers' observed practice in relation to vocabulary teaching resonates with the principles of sociocultural theory. Employing diverse teaching techniques implies that symbolic tools are used to direct students' attention to crucial things in their learning and help them to use language more effectively. The fact that the students could not always explain the meaning of new words when teachers asked them indicates that they were still in ZPD stage and needed assistance from teachers to fully learn these words.

The analysis of the textbooks revealed that a large number of new words was introduced in each lesson. Also, several words, which were explained in the classroom, were not identified by the textbooks as new vocabulary. Some of the new words introduced in the "Vocabulary in use" textbook reflected informal or colloquial English, which made it more difficult for students to guess the meaning from context and led teachers to use more than one teaching technique. As this was a regular aspect of the classrooms observed, it can be argued that the current prescribed textbooks do not seem entirely suitable for the students' level of English, as also claimed by most teachers in the study. Teachers often had to clarify the meanings of

words that were not introduced as ‘new’ by the textbooks, since the students did not understand them. The fact that the students were unable to understand the meaning of other words than the ones identified by textbooks as ‘new’ pointed to the scaffolded help they needed from their teachers and shows also the influence of learners’ level of competence in vocabulary learning.

An important finding is that Arabic was often used between teachers and students, as well as between students themselves throughout the classes observed. In some cases, even teachers who were non-native speakers of Arabic introduced new words either by using the words that they knew in Arabic or by asking students to provide the meaning in Arabic. This indicates that using students’ native language in teaching English is not restricted to the teachers who share the students’ native language and highlights once more the social aspect of the classroom interaction. This is in line with Abu-Ghararah’s (1986; 1990) findings that using Arabic in teaching English is one of the main teaching techniques used in Saudi Arabia. Clearly, teachers and students need to engage in social exchanges that are not often possible in the new language and L1 can act then as a medium of communication. Similarly, Al-Seghayer (2011:56) also claimed that teachers of English in Saudi Arabia tended to use Arabic ‘more than needed’ and used it more than English when ‘giving instructions’, ‘providing explanations of language items’ and ‘conducting class activities’. From a theoretical perspective, learners normally use L1 to regulate their mental activities, as is supported by empirical research (Anton & DiCamilla, 1999; Centeno-Cortes & Jimenez-Jimenez, 2004; Choi & Lantolf, 2008). Hence, it was not surprising to see that L1 significantly impacted the interaction in the classrooms observed. What was surprising is the teachers’ own use of Arabic, even when they were non-native Arabic speakers.

Three reasons were reported by teachers in the interviews for using Arabic in teaching vocabulary: the students’ low level of English, the anticipated difficulty of the new word and wanting to save time. Students’ perceived level of competence appears to be important when teachers decide whether or not to use L1. As suggested by other researchers (Nation, 2001; Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Atkinson, 1987; Tang, 2002; Auerbach, 1993; Mattioli, 2004), using L1 in class may be useful for low level learners, as it can support them in understanding new vocabulary. “The anticipated difficulty of the new word” also has a role in teachers’ decisions on the use of Arabic, as some words might be too difficult for teachers to explain in English and introducing them in Arabic may be easier for students to understand. This was obvious in

the classes observed; teachers often resorted to Arabic after the students appeared to fail to understand the meaning of a new word in English. Similar reasons were given by teachers of English who participated in Al-Nofaie's (2010) study; they justified using Arabic to explain the difficult items for students whose English proficiency was perceived as low. In another study by Alshammari's (2011), teachers also said they used Arabic when teaching English in order to save time. Explaining unknown words in Arabic may save time, but using L1 extensively could impede learning L2 (Hunt & Beglar, 2002:260).

The analysis of the prescribed textbooks showed that the use of L1 in teaching and learning vocabulary was not referred to, implicitly encouraging the exclusive use of English in teaching vocabulary. Nevertheless, Arabic as L1 was often employed between teachers and students, as well as between students themselves throughout the classes observed. Teachers used L1 as a teaching technique, as discussed above, arguably showing that they were autonomous in how they introduced the new words. This shows that teachers and students hold different assumptions on using the L1 than the assumptions made in the textbook activities. This also revealed how teachers' and students' views on certain vocabulary teaching techniques influenced their teaching and learning. This finding points to vocabulary learning as a social practice, where different factors influence learning, such as the teaching techniques used by teachers in introducing new vocabulary and teachers' and students' views on using these techniques and the prescribed textbooks. This view on vocabulary learning as a social practice is in agreement with literacy learning research (e.g. Heath, Street) and findings from EFL research (Breen, 1985; Lantolf, 2006), who view the classroom as a social community with rules of social interaction, which often reflect out-of-class principles.

The decision to employ a specific teaching technique independently of the prescribed approach in the textbook shows one of the aspects of teacher autonomy (Shen, 2011). This suggests that teachers believed that employing L1 to teach new words is effective when other techniques fail and the data from the interviews confirmed teachers' view of the use of L1 as useful. When L1 was used after other techniques had been tried, students who got the meaning successfully through the initial techniques seemed to benefit more, since hearing the meaning in Arabic confirmed their understanding. This approach can be helpful in consolidating new words (Knight, 1994; Fraser, 1999); when learners guess the meaning of a word successfully and then confirm their guess by consulting a dictionary, vocabulary retention is more likely. The finding on the use of L1 by teachers involved in this research provides new insight into the use of L1 in the classroom, whereby L1 can be an effective

technique if used effectively by the teacher, despite some approaches which discourage the use of L1 in teaching L2.

It was thought that since the students in the present study were mainly learning vocabulary in a classroom context, it would be helpful to examine their views on the teaching approach used in classes and the vocabulary teaching techniques employed by their teachers. Their views discussed above highlighted some of the constraints that they encountered in their vocabulary learning in the classroom. Both teachers and students were satisfied with the teaching techniques used and believed that they were helpful for vocabulary learning. Some students, although a minority, expressed negative views on the techniques used by their teachers and they provided reasons for holding these views. The first reason was that certain techniques were not helpful, for example, when the teacher used a synonym to explain a word, but this synonym was also unknown to the students. This view on using synonyms as a technique to teach vocabulary resonates with Webb's (2007) finding, which suggests that using synonyms makes learning vocabulary easier when synonyms are known to learners. Another reason was related to the topics of the reading passages in the textbook, which were not always interesting, motivating or relevant to the students' cultural background. The analysis of the textbooks supports the latter reason since it was found that the cultural values presented in the textbooks were often substantially different from the students' own. This supports several researchers, who argue that textbooks present cultural values which can often be alien to the students (Hinkel, 1999; Modiano, 2001; Modiano, 2005; Taki, 2008; Thomas, 2008). The "Vocabulary in use" textbook includes various examples, which reflect Western, mainly British, cultural values. This requires learners using the textbook to be familiar with the culture of another country in order to understand some of the new vocabulary introduced. As both teachers and students made references to the cultural values that the textbooks introduced, the role of cultural values in the practice of vocabulary learning needs to be examined when considering a good environment for learning. Certain aspects, such as students' own cultural beliefs, values and understanding, play a key role in vocabulary learning as a social practice. Aspects from outside the class, such as students' beliefs, are beyond the practices occurring in the classroom, but nevertheless important and with a direct impact on learning.

Classroom observations revealed that when students read a word incorrectly, the teachers tended to correct them and ask for an explanation of the meaning, to check on students' understanding. Teachers' emphasis on pronunciation was in response to one of the linguistic assumptions that the textbooks made, as mentioned earlier. This focus on form, however, may negatively impact learners' confidence in using the language fluently. Having challenges in pronunciation was to be anticipated, since the vocabulary used in the textbooks was difficult for the students as suggested previously. Also, the age at which the students began to learn English might have played a role in whether they experienced difficulties in pronunciation, as they were initially taught English at intermediate school. The age at which the learners started learning English is often linked to erroneous pronunciation later on (e.g. Brown, 2007, Piske *et al.*, 2001). Other factors are attributed to erroneous pronunciation, such as L1 impact (e.g. Altaha, 1995) and intralexical factors (Laufer, 1997). Reading aloud helps students to identify and correct their mistakes in pronunciation, as well as being helpful for their comprehension, as Amer (1997) and Alshumaimeri (2011) found. When the teacher reads the text aloud or uses a tape, both reading and listening are simultaneously taking place. In Webb and C-S Chang's (2012) study, reading and listening simultaneously led to greater vocabulary learning than reading alone.

The reading passages in the "Interaction 2" reading textbook were focussed on "improving the ability to read" and "improving reading comprehension", as the analysis revealed (see Section 4.2). However, students were not given the opportunity to listen to the reading passage, read aloud on a tape or by the teacher and were not asked to answer the main question that checks their comprehension, as the textbook instructed. This is another example of teachers exercising their autonomy, showing the contradiction between what the textbooks assumed teachers and students would do in the classroom and what they actually did. It was not clear whether the teachers perceived listening to the passage or answering the comprehension question as less useful to students' reading and comprehension. The assumptions that the teachers hold, which were different from the assumptions made by the instructions in the textbooks, show that teachers were autonomous in their teaching, to a certain extent. They could employ their own techniques to regulate their teaching when challenges were encountered. This strengthens the view of vocabulary teaching and learning as a social practice, where different decisions made by the individuals involved influence learning. Learning in a social context is affected by a range of factors, apart from promoting technical skills about reading and writing (Street, 1995:15).

Finally, it was noticed through the classroom observations that some of the classrooms were equipped with electronic facilities such as computers and data show projectors; however, none of the teachers made use of these facilities, again demonstrating the significant aspect of their autonomy in their classroom. One of the teachers thought that using this equipment was time-consuming because he could only finish about one page from a story he brought to the class if he was to use a projector and this interrupted him from progressing with the textbook. Nevertheless, using technology in the class needs not necessarily be limited to materials other than the textbook.

After discussing the findings on teaching techniques employed by teachers to introduce new vocabulary, the findings regarding the VLSs used by the students in the research will be discussed in the next section. It is thought that discussing both the vocabulary teaching techniques used by the teachers and VLSs employed by the students will provide a better understanding on how vocabulary teaching and learning take place and how they influence each other. Investigating both teaching and learning vocabulary shows that these two processes are linked, as students learn the language in a classroom context and are influenced by their teachers' input and approach to teaching. Therefore, examining vocabulary teaching and learning reveals the challenges that are encountered by both teachers and students, which is helpful in understanding better the processes of vocabulary learning and for identifying suggestions for making vocabulary teaching and learning more effective. It also shows how students deal with the constraints they encounter in both the textbooks and as generated by the teaching techniques used by their teachers, in order to become autonomous. This section has discussed assumptions made by teachers and the authors of the textbooks. It showed that teachers aligned their practice with the linguistic and pedagogical assumptions that the textbooks underlined, in relation to providing the students with the correct pronunciation and providing them with additional information about new words apart from their meaning, as well as promoting learning as a communicative activity. Teachers employed similar vocabulary teaching techniques that were prescribed in the textbooks, but they occasionally used more than one technique at the same time to explain certain words. Nevertheless, teachers employed the L1 in their teaching, and occasionally encouraged students to use different VLSs from the ones promoted in the textbooks. They often dealt with the reading passages in different ways than the "Interactions 2" reading textbook expected them to do. These contradictions show teachers' autonomy in teaching vocabulary and how teachers' own beliefs and the level of competence of their students reflect on their teaching.

8.6. The VLSs which participants said they were most likely to use

Finding 2: The students said they were most likely to use VLSs that they believed were fast and easy to use. They said they used certain VLSs more than others. Complex strategies that require active mental processes were unlikely to be used by the students, in their view. The students showed autonomy through their vocabulary learning, as they did not always follow the teachers' instructions or the textbook.

The results on using VLSs revealed that the students in this study said they tended to deploy certain VLSs more than others. Some of the strategies reported by the students as commonly used were also referred to by the participants in studies by Al-Fuhaid (2004), Al-Qahtani (2005), and Schmitt (1997). These included, for example, *'Appealing for assistance from others'*, *'Using an electronic dictionary'*, *'Guessing the meaning from context'*, *'Using a bilingual dictionary'* and *'Guessing the meaning from pictures, if available'*. The students focused on two strategies throughout the interviews: *'Guessing the meaning from context'* and *'Using a dictionary'*. The justifications for this will be examined throughout this section, based on findings from the interviews with the students.

When these strategies were compared to the strategies that were introduced in the prescribed textbooks, the comparison revealed that the prescribed textbooks promoted only certain VLSs to help students learn new words, as well as to promote their autonomy. The "Interactions 2" reading textbook aimed to increase students' ability to use the *'Guessing the meaning from context'* strategy. While this textbook discouraged the students from employing dictionaries when reading new text, instructions on how to use the monolingual dictionary were given in some of the chapters. Similarly, the "Vocabulary in use" textbook focused mainly on *'Guessing the meaning from context'* and *'Using a monolingual dictionary'*. This textbook also referred to an additional consolidation strategy, *'Using a notebook'*. Both textbooks assumed that the students would deploy these strategies; however, the students focused mainly on one of the strategies advised, *'Guessing the meaning from context'*, but they also used other strategies, such as accessing their mobile phones or asking each other about the meaning of new words.

Since the students employed some strategies that were different from the strategies introduced in the textbooks, it can be argued that they were, to a certain extent, autonomous in their vocabulary learning. Despite the strict structure of the textbooks, which asked them

explicitly not to use dictionaries while reading the passage, they accessed dictionaries in class and online. Both teachers and students were engaged in different practices than the ones the textbooks anticipated them to engage in, in relation to the type of VLSs they would use.

When comparing the assumptions made in the textbooks and teachers' and students' practices, it showed practices did not always followed prescribed instructions. Another important aspect revealed from the comparison is that the focus of textbooks was on the discovery strategies rather than the consolidation strategies. The discussion above shows the role of both textbooks and VLSs in vocabulary learning as a social practice. The shared and differing assumptions between the textbooks, teachers and students also show how teachers' and students' own perspectives on certain VLSs affect their practices in the classroom. Similarly, Barton & Hamilton (2000) showed how literacy practices offer a powerful way of conceptualising the link between the activities of reading and writing and the social structures in which they are embedded and which they help shape.

A surprising finding was that *'Appealing for assistance from others'* was seen in the questionnaire as the most employed strategy by the students in the current research; it was assumed that students would try and find the meaning of new words by themselves first, before asking others for help. The students reported in the questionnaire that they used this strategy in order to obtain the meaning of a new word more easily and quickly. This is in contrast to findings from previous studies (Chamot, 1987; Schmitt, 1997; Gu and Johnson, 1996; Nakamura, 2000), which suggested that L2 learners prefer to employ more independent strategies first, rather than appealing for assistance from a classmate or a teacher. Students' declared preference for *'Appealing for assistance from others'* reflects again the important role of social interaction in learning. This strategy allows students to scaffold each other's learning, as it is expected that students will ask for help from other students who believe are more competent or will ask their teachers. Jang and Jiménez (2011) also discussed the key role that the social context plays in L2 learners' use of learning strategies. Once students ask one another for assistance in understanding new vocabulary, they operate in the ZPD stage and get the scaffolding needed to achieve progress in their learning.

“Simplicity” and “quickness” led students, as they reported, to focus on deploying *'Appealing for assistance from others'* and *'Using an electronic dictionary'*. As students said that simplicity and quickness play an important role in their decisions when choosing a strategy, the strategies that do not have these features seem less likely be deployed by learners.

One of the strategies that is highly relevant to reading is ignoring the unknown words in the text. This strategy appeared in the list of the ten most employed strategies by the students in this study. When detailing the participants' justifications for deploying this strategy, they referred to the following: "I like reading without interruption", "the anticipated difficulty of the unknown word in terms of length and pronunciation" and "want to save time". Some of the students believed that looking up every new word whilst reading could impede on their reading and be too distracting. Also, if students tried to find out the meaning of every unknown word, they might lose the motivation to read that text or to read in English in general. This strategy appeared to be important for the students who took part in this research because they were students majoring in English, who were likely to be exposed to a large number of specialist texts in English during the course of their degree. This result differs from Al-Fuhaid's (2004) study, who suggested that the subjects in his study tended to look up the meaning of every word. He explained that the participants in his study may have wanted to develop their vocabulary learning constantly and as a result they did not ignore any of the new words while reading. However, tackling the meaning of every unknown word has disadvantages as mentioned earlier, which may not provide the vocabulary development that the students require. The second reason that the students in the present study provided for skipping new words while reading was "the perceived difficulty of the unknown word" and they gave two main factors that they thought might make the word harder to learn. These factors were "the length" and "the difficult pronunciation" of the word, which influence the learnability of a word (Laufer, 1997:142). This supports Saigh and Schmitt's (2012) findings, which found that Arab learners of English have more difficulties with certain types of words, especially the words that include short vowels.

Some of the strategies practised through private speech, a concept suggested by Vygotsky, were perceived by the participants in this study as frequently used. These strategies were '*Repeating the word silently in my mind*', '*Listening to the word repeatedly*' and '*Practising using the new word by talking to myself*'. This type of repetition is seen, from a sociocultural perspective, as useful for the development of the "linguistic" and "sociocultural" competence of learners (Moore, 2011:209).

The present research revealed that the students were more aware of some strategies than others, which is similar to Al-Qahtani's (2005) and Al-Fuhaid's (2004) findings, although the order in which students ranked the strategies was slightly different in all these studies. The

potential reason for this slight difference might be due to the design of the questionnaire and the different samples used. Combining evidence from studies done with different groups may confirm previous findings that learners may change their strategy usage over time, as they ‘mature’ or ‘become more proficient in the target language’ (Schmitt, 1997:223).

It was found in this thesis that ‘*Using bilingual and electronic dictionaries*’ and ‘*Guessing the meaning from the context*’ strategies appeared to be the most frequently used strategies as ranked by students in the present study. This finding agrees with Al-Fuhaid’s (2004) and Al-Qahtani’s (2005) studies and Schmitt’s (1997) study on Japanese students. This indicates the importance of these two strategies for students, who often used the two jointly. However, as before, ‘*Using bilingual and electronic dictionaries*’ was not introduced by the textbooks, showing students’ autonomy in relation to the activities and tasks included in the textbooks. Teachers supported the use of dictionaries, as discussed in the previous section, by asking students to use a dictionary rather than guess the meaning from context while reading. Many students reported in the interviews that they first tried to guess the meaning of a new word from context and if they could not guess, then they would use a dictionary. This shows that the students may use an alternative strategy when one fails. However, a more successful technique for long-term retention would involve using both strategies, checking the dictionary even when guessing the meaning of the new word correctly, as reported in Knight’s (1994) and Fraser’s (1999) studies. The need to employ more than one strategy in dealing with new vocabulary indicates the level of difficulty of the vocabulary introduced by the textbooks, as the analysis of the textbooks has revealed (see section 3.11). This shows the students’ endeavours to cope with the vocabulary presented in the textbooks and their autonomy in learning. Teachers also employed more than one technique in teaching the new vocabulary, as discussed in section 8.5.

When it comes to types of dictionaries, most students said that they did not prefer a paper dictionary. A small number of students mentioned this in interviews, and explained that due to the widespread use of technology and the weight of the paper dictionary, they usually chose to use the dictionary on their mobiles. This was also noticed through classroom observations. Nevertheless, the quality of online dictionaries is questionable for they might be unreliable and they may not provide the same level of detail that the paper dictionary provides. Similarly, ‘*Consulting an English only dictionary*’ was the respondents’ least used strategy, according to the questionnaire data. In the interviews, only a few students mentioned

using a monolingual English dictionary. This may be because checking dictionaries is time consuming when compared to other strategies, such as *'Appealing for assistance from others'* and *'Guessing the meaning from context'*. In addition, the learner needs to be skilful in using dictionaries in order to take full advantage of them. Students can also encounter new words when using monolingual dictionaries, in the definitions of the words they are searching for (Al-Fuhaid, 2004:176), which can be a barrier in itself. Despite the fact that students saw *'Using monolingual dictionary'* as the least used strategy, this was introduced and explained to them and students were expected to use it with certain tasks. This result supports the finding discussed earlier in this section on the students' autonomy in vocabulary learning. Likewise, the "Vocabulary in use" textbook assumed that the students would use a notebook; however, no student or teacher referred to this strategy during the interviews. Also, during the classroom observed, no students used a notebook to write new words and teachers did not ask students to do so. This confirms what was suggested earlier that both teachers and students had focused on discovering the meaning of new vocabulary rather than consolidating it.

'The keyword method' strategy was the second least used strategy and this is possibly due to students' lack of familiarity with the strategy and its complexity. Complex strategies are not commonly used by learners, as reported by previous research findings (e.g. Schmitt, 1997; O'Malley *et al.*, 1985; Chamot, 1987; Nakamura, 2000; Al-Fuhaid, 2004). Al-Fuhaid (2004:185) also says this strategy is not widely used because it cannot be employed with all new words.

These findings show that the students may not have the knowledge on how to use certain strategies, which in turn makes them less preferred. The learning environment might also play a role in making some strategies less available. For instance, the *'Self-testing or asking others to listen and correct mistakes'* strategy could have received low responses because the participants are EFL learners and they do not have many opportunities to interact with native speakers of English in class or outside the class. It might also be difficult for students to always ask the teacher to correct mistakes. Even if the students listen and correct each other, their level in English is often too low to allow them to do corrections. Educational Testing Services reported that Saudi university students obtained the lowest scores in TOEFL among the students from Asian and other Middle Eastern countries (Al-Seghayer, 2011:82).

Another important finding is that the participants tended to look for specific information when they used VLSs, since vocabulary knowledge involves knowing different aspects of a word (Nation, 2001). In the current study, participants sought the ‘meaning of a new word in Arabic’, ‘its pronunciation’ and ‘spelling’, more than other aspects of the word. Similarly, Al-Qahtani’s (2005) study found that asking for the ‘meaning in Arabic’ and ‘writing down this information’ were the most VLSs that the participants believed they used. The current research findings indicate the type of information that students think is the most important for them. It was expected that specific information on a new word, such as confirming what ‘part of speech’ the word represents and learning its ‘synonyms / antonyms’, would be used less frequently because these often require additional effort and more advanced skills.

Furthermore, it appears that different VLSs provide students with different types of information on a new word. For example, while dictionaries could provide a wide range of information on an unknown word, ‘*Appealing for assistance from others*’ does not and the quality of the information received depends on whom the learner asks. A factor that will affect students’ focus on specific kinds of information about the new word is the receptive and productive use of the new word. If students want to find information about an unknown word in a text, they may concentrate more on looking for certain aspects more than others, such as the equivalent meaning of the new word in L1. In contrast, if they use the new word in writing, they may focus on seeking how the word can be spelt correctly.

8.7. The VLSs that were seen by the participants as most useful

Finding 3: Students believed that most of the VLSs that they used were helpful to them and their preferences did not always align with the VLSs promoted by teachers or the textbooks used. They perceived certain VLSs as very useful, mainly in terms of providing them with accurate and diverse information on the new words and in helping them memorise these words.

This finding suggest that the students felt that most VLSs that they thought they used frequently were useful for them. As a result, strategies such as ‘*Using a bilingual and an electronic dictionary*’ and ‘*Guessing the meaning from pictures or from context*’ were seen by students as both commonly used and helpful. However, these strategies might not always

be beneficial in developing students' vocabulary learning, as Schmitt (1997) argues that the VLSs that are always used by the students might not necessarily be the ones most useful for them. Also, learners may deploy certain strategies just because they are familiar with them, not because they are necessarily the most useful. Moreover, the students involved in this study seemed to be unaware of the drawbacks of the VLSs that they thought useful, since their focus was on reporting the advantages of these strategies rather than pointing out the disadvantages. The students only referred to the disadvantages of the VLSs when they believed these were not beneficial to their learning. Although three repetition strategies were on the top of their list of preferred strategies, there was no justification provided by the participants for considering these strategies beneficial. Students seemed to focus on two of the strategies, namely '*Guessing in context*' and '*Using dictionaries*'. This might also be an effect of the topic of the present study, which explored learning vocabulary through reading, as '*Inferring from context*' and '*Using dictionaries*' are strategies highly associated with this type of learning. Repetition strategies were also reported as useful in other research. Al-Qarni (2003) found them to have a positive effect on the vocabulary retention for Saudi students majoring in English.

'*Guessing the meaning from context*' was one of the main strategies emphasised in the textbooks analysed. This implies that the textbooks believed this strategy to be helpful for students, which resonates with students' views of the usefulness of the strategy. Teachers also asked students to use this strategy, as will be discussed in section 8.8 below. The "Vocabulary in use" textbook introduced '*Using a notebook*' as a strategy. Although the students did not refer to this strategy in the interviews, in the questionnaire data, the '*Writing the new words in a word list*' strategy was among the strategies which came up as most useful for students. This suggests that the students agreed with the textbook on the usefulness of writing down new words. In another example, '*Using a monolingual dictionary*' was introduced and explained in the textbooks, which means that the authors consider this a useful strategy. However, '*Using a monolingual dictionary*' was not in the list of strategies that the students thought were useful during the interviews and the questionnaire. They referred to other types of dictionaries as most useful for learning (e.g. '*Using a bilingual and an electronic dictionary*'). Students often used electronic dictionaries on their mobile phones, as noticed during the classroom observations and teachers allowed them to do so. Teachers asked students to use their online dictionaries while reading, which suggests that both teachers and students found using dictionaries in certain situations more helpful than

'Guessing the meaning from context' strategy. It should be mentioned that *'Using a bilingual and an electronic dictionary'* was not identified as a strategy by the two textbooks analysed. This shows that the students held different views than the authors of the textbooks on the type of dictionaries that are useful for learning. This result provides another example of the students' autonomy in learning, as they preferred to deploy the strategies that they believed were most useful rather than the strategies suggested by the textbooks.

The comparison between VLSs that the participants thought were most useful and the VLSs, which they believed were the most frequently used revealed many strategies in both categories. This finding is similar to Schmitt's (1997) results on Japanese students. The possible interpretation for having similar results may be due to the similar level of competence in English of the students in the present study and in Schmitt's (1997) study, as he did not conduct a proficiency test for his subjects. However, this finding is inconsistent with Al-Fuhaid's (2004) findings, who surveyed advanced learners. For example, *'Using an electronic or computer dictionary'* was perceived by the participants in Al-Fuhaid's (2004) study as a commonly used strategy although they did not see it as a useful strategy. This also confirms findings of other studies (Bensoussan *et al.*, 1984 & Knight, 1994), which revealed that more proficient learners, as in Al-Fuhaid's (2004) study, showed little or no gain when using dictionaries. Schmitt's (1997:202) argument is that the learners' level in the target language may play a key role in evaluating the usefulness of VLSs. Therefore, what beginner learners believe are beneficial VLSs may be different from the advanced learners' preferences.

An important finding is that many students in the current study believed that *'Guessing the meaning from context'* helped them memorise new words more easily. This supports Nassaji's (2003) suggestion that guessing the meaning of unknown words is helpful for retaining new words, if they were guessed correctly. It is also in line with other studies, Hulstijn (1992) and Hu and Nassaji (2012), who found that *'Guessing the meaning from context'* had a positive impact on consolidating the new vocabulary. However, this strategy has its own limitations, as texts may not always include helpful clues for students to infer the meaning correctly or students might guess the meaning incorrectly and retain the wrong meaning, if they have not confirmed the meaning with a dictionary. The students' perspectives on the usefulness of guessing as a strategy in vocabulary consolidation supports the belief that *'the more one engages with a word (deeper processing), the more likely the*

word will be remembered for later use' (Schmitt, 2000:120). However, it should be mentioned that employing a specific strategy seems to not always be enough to retain the new words as these words should be used when practising the language. Otherwise, these words could be lost or what is called 'attrition' (Kersten, 2010:58). In addition, the students provided benefits of using dictionaries, mainly '*Using a bilingual and an electronic dictionary*', due to the fact that dictionaries provide them with accurate and diverse information about the new vocabulary, such as its meaning and how to use it correctly. This benefit appears to be a good justification for seeing the strategy as useful, but when used while reading, it could interrupt reading and distract the students' attention (Summers 1988; Luppescu & Day, 1993). However, when there might be words which are essential to understanding the text, learners may be unable to guess their meaning from context and consulting a dictionary becomes necessary. Hence, learners could be taught to be selective when using the dictionary whilst reading, by using it only for the words that are crucial in the understanding of the text. The beliefs held by authors of the "Interactions 2" reading textbook on using a dictionary while reading are similar to Summers' (1988) and Luppescu & Day's (1993) views that employing a dictionary while reading might distract students. In this textbook, students were explicitly asked not to use the dictionary when reading the passage. Nevertheless, the students used their mobile phones to find the meaning of new words, as revealed by the classroom observations and their teachers asked them to do so while reading. This supports the result above that the students in this study saw certain benefits in using a dictionary. Moreover, this result shows that the teachers' and students' beliefs in relation to using a dictionary while reading were different from the beliefs held by the authors of "Interactions 2" reading textbook. Students practised what they thought was useful for vocabulary learning rather than what the textbooks thought they would do. Students held their own perspectives on the usefulness of using certain VLSs and their teachers had their own. This shows how teachers' and students' perspectives affect their practices in the classroom and emphasises the social aspect of vocabulary learning, which is a social practice influenced by a range of factors.

A further key finding that deserves consideration is that most of the VLSs that the participants rated as the least beneficial were complex strategies and ignoring strategies. This supports Schmitt's (1997) previously mentioned suggestion that learners tend to avoid using complicated strategies. One of these strategies was using '*the keyword method*', which was reported as useful for vocabulary development and retention of Saudi intermediate school

students by Alzahrani's research (2011). A possible explanation for the participants' viewing the ignoring strategies as less useful might be due to the fact that these strategies do not enrich students' lexical knowledge with new information. While the bilingual dictionary received high responses in terms of usage and evaluation, the reverse occurred with the English only dictionary. This differs from Al-Fuhaid's (2004) and Schmitt's (1997) studies, who found that using the monolingual dictionaries was seen as the most useful strategy by their respondents. One of the benefits of using a paper dictionary suggested by students in the current research was that it helped them retain the new word because it required effort to look up the information. This is in line with Scholfield's (1997) suggestion that using paper dictionaries positively impacts the retention of new vocabulary, since it involves deep processes of learning. Nevertheless, other studies (e.g. Hayati & Fattahzadeh, 2006; Al-Kahtani, 2008 & Chen, 2010) found that paper dictionaries do not have a significant role in retaining new vocabulary.

8.8. The VLSs in which the participants felt most competent

Finding 4: Students considered themselves skilled in using most of the VLSs that they employed regularly and found most useful. They made a link between the strategies they used most often and their level of competence in employing these strategies and teachers did not explain how to use VLSs effectively.

The analysis of the questionnaire showed that the VLSs, which the participants felt most competent in employing were also among the strategies that were perceived as mostly deployed and valued. Thus, students said that the VLSs that they thought they used more frequently were also the most useful and felt they employed them adequately. Despite the fact that '*Guessing the meaning from context*' was seen by the participants as frequently used and helpful, it was, surprisingly, among the strategies that the students felt least competent in using. Therefore, it can be argued that the students may use a certain strategy frequently although they may not use it properly.

The analysis of textbooks and the classroom observations on the use of the '*Guessing the meaning from context*' strategy provided the potential interpretation of seeing this strategy in the list of the least competent strategies. One of the pedagogical assumptions in the textbooks

was that students and teachers will use the particular VLSs prescribed while working on tasks. *'Guessing the meaning from context'* was one of these strategies and the reading passages in the "Interactions 2" reading textbook regularly asked students to use this strategy. Although these textbooks asked students to use this strategy, information on how to employ it was limited. The "Vocabulary in use" textbook provided guidance on this strategy in only one lesson whilst the "Interactions 2" reading textbook referred to it in two lessons. As the strategy was suggested regularly, it is clear that the students in this study needed more information on how to use the strategy effectively and how to improve its use over time.

In addition, although students referred to this strategy in the interviews, they did not see themselves as fully competent in deploying it. Similarly, teachers often asked students to guess the meaning from the context, without explaining how they could do this successfully. On other occasions, teachers asked students to use their dictionaries to get the meaning of the new words rather than guess from context, as the textbook required them to do. This undermined one of the purposes of the reading passages in the textbook, which aimed to develop students' ability to guess the meaning of a new word from context. The combination of these factors might have led the students to see themselves as less competent when guessing the meaning from context. The discussion above in this section has established that vocabulary learning is a social practice. As shown earlier, teachers had not explained how certain VLSs could be deployed effectively and the textbooks did not provide elaborated explanations on using VLSs. These aspects seemed to have affected negatively students' use these strategies. Vocabulary learning as a social practice involves thus different aspects, which impact on what students learn and do in the classroom, including: teachers' and students' beliefs about the usefulness of certain VLSs, the teaching techniques used and the content of the prescribed textbooks.

Laufer (1989) and Hu & Nation (2000) referred to other factors that make learners encounter difficulties in guessing the meaning. They argued that this might be because this strategy requires students to be familiar with most of the words in the text before they are able to grasp the meaning successfully. This strategy is also highly associated with the vocabulary knowledge that the learner has (Nassaji, 2006). Hence, additional potential explanations may be given here for participants feeling less competent in *'Inferring the meaning from context'*. First, the type of texts that the students read may be too advanced for them or they may not have background knowledge (schemata), which is key in understanding (Nunan, 1993; Al-

Shumaimeri, 2006; Pulido, 2007) and this reflects negatively on their self-perceived competence. As Krashen argued, it is unhelpful for acquisition to receive an unreasonably difficult input; language development will not occur if learners deal with activities beyond their capabilities. A second possible explanation is that students might not have been taught how to use this strategy effectively. Guessing the meaning from context is also a solitary activity, which learners are expected to do on their own, contradicting the view of learning as a mainly social activity.

An important result emerging from the data was that the participants saw themselves as most skilful in using the strategies that they most commonly employed. They associated being proficient in deploying a strategy with using it often. The same result was found with the strategies that the students felt themselves to be the least competent in, since they were the strategies that were perceived as least used. The complexity of these strategies, a reason mentioned before, made students think of themselves as less competent in using them, as most of these were complex strategies, such as “*Guessing the meaning from the part of speech*” or “*from the word structure*” and using ‘*The keyword method*’. It appears to be easier for students to be more competent in using strategies other than guessing, which require different skills, as Nation (2001) and Nassaji (2003) also claimed.

These findings seem to indicate that if students were to be taught how to use a wider range of strategies effectively, they might show increased competence and confidence in employing them. The potential interpretation that led the participants to think that they were not competent enough in using these strategies can be related to data from classroom observations and interviews. These data suggest that teachers did not teach students how to employ VLSs and just asked students to use them, mainly in relation to ‘*Guessing the meaning from context*’ or ‘*Using dictionaries*’. Although ‘*Inferring the meaning from context*’ was referred to by teachers in class, students perceived themselves as less competent in using it. This means that the students need scaffolded help from their teachers to use this strategy. Also, the students could be more confident if they had been taught how to deploy this strategy and as a result, show ‘increasingly less reliance on externally provided mediation’ (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006:266). Asking students to practise certain strategies underpins the main concept of Anderson’s skill acquisition theory, which emphasises that new knowledge should be effectively practised. The fact that students perceived themselves as less skilful in deploying ‘*Guessing the meaning from context*’ resonates with Anderson’s

theory. According to this theory, the ability of learners' cognition depends on the amount of knowledge 'encoded' and the use of this encoded knowledge (Anderson, 1996:355). Therefore, this result is not surprising, as the students did have sufficient knowledge about how to use this strategy and their teachers did not explain this strategy in the class.

Although examples of explicit teaching of these strategies were not observed, some participants reported that they were taught the strategies, especially '*Guessing the meaning from context*' and '*Using dictionaries*', but they did not clarify how they were taught. Asking students to use certain VLSs without explaining how these strategies could be used does not always allow students to employ them effectively. Students may not know the skills involved in using these strategies. For example, '*Guessing the meaning from context*' involves different skills, such as "repeating, verifying, analysing, monitoring, self-inquiry and analogy" (Nassaji, 2003:655), techniques, which need to be introduced and revised at regular intervals. Similarly, using dictionaries requires skills which students need to be trained in (Nation, 2001:284). Through explicit training of VLSs, students might also become more familiar and more competent in more diverse VLSs, including those requiring more complex cognitive processes. When teachers engage the students in discussing these strategies, students will not only be more likely to become more skilful in using them, but they will also become more independent learners. This also will help the students to be self-regulated, where they can manage their learning by themselves and become less reliant on their teachers. Self-regulation can be achieved, as the sociocultural theory suggests, through the internalisation process, where the students try to develop their competence in deploying the learning strategies. Also, teaching VLSs will provide the students with the knowledge about how to use these strategies, which will make their learning process easier and faster, as Anderson's skill acquisition theory suggests. Another important aspect according to Anderson's theory is that the skill should be practised in order to be retained. This means that practising the use of strategies is helpful for the students in terms of improving their competence.

A number of factors, however, play a role when determining which strategies to be taught and used in class, including "students' proficiency level, task, text, language modality, background knowledge, context of learning, target language and learner characteristics" (Chamot & Rubin, 1994:772). Other research also highlights the importance of training students in deploying a wider range of VLSs to help them rely on themselves when learning

new vocabulary, as teachers might not have the time to always explain new words in class (Ghazal, 2007:87). This finding on dealing with VLSs in the class shows how exploring both teaching and learning vocabulary is useful in the present study. Learning concerns both teachers and learners, as it highlights the students' competence in deploying the VLSs, which indicates their ability to be autonomous in vocabulary learning and the teachers' role in supporting students' use of VLSs. This also reveals the key role of teachers in promoting the students' autonomy, by creating the opportunities for them to practise VLSs in class and outside class.

Finally, the textbooks referred to *'Using a monolingual dictionary'* and assumed that the students would do this. However, *'Using a monolingual dictionary'* was rated by students as a strategy they used infrequently, saw as less beneficial and felt less competent in using. Teachers did not refer to it in the class although the textbooks assumed they would, which might have also influenced students' views of this strategy. As both teachers and students were practising something different from what the textbooks had asked them to do, this is further evidence of teachers' and students' autonomy. Also, the use of English only dictionaries requires a high level of competence in English, as Scholfield (1997) and Nation (2001) suggest, which the students in this study did not seem to have reached yet. The finding that students perceived themselves to be less competent in using this strategy supports Alhaysony's (2011) finding that students at a high proficiency level are more likely to employ monolingual dictionaries than students of lower proficiency. This explains why this strategy received high levels of support in Al-Fuhaid's (2004) study, whose participants were advanced learners, whilst the opposite occurred in the present research, where the participants were pre-intermediate and intermediate learners.

8.9. Teachers' and students' attitudes towards learning vocabulary through reading

Finding 5: All of the teachers involved in this study perceived reading as a useful strategy in learning vocabulary and the majority of the students shared this view. They saw reading as an important source of new words; it helps to use the new words in a context and has advantages for vocabulary retention. However, they did not always agree that the prescribed textbooks were suitable in terms of content, type of reading activities or appropriateness for students' cultural values and level of competence.

All teachers and students in this study agreed that vocabulary learning is an essential and vital part of learning English and the participants identified several reasons to explain this. The first one was that language is formed of words and, as a result, having a well-developed vocabulary is the foundation of being competent in English. The participants also made a link between learning vocabulary and one's potential to improve their competence in English. They believed that vocabulary was related to all other skills, whether receptive skills (reading and listening) or productive ones (writing and speaking). This is in agreement with Alderson (2005), who found a strong relationship between vocabulary and language skills.

The participants also emphasised the role that vocabulary plays in the ability to communicate successfully in English. Learners need a wide vocabulary to be able to communicate well and their vocabulary range depends on their learning aims (Schmitt, 2010:6). Students and teachers seemed to believe that the wider a learner's vocabulary was, the more likely they would be able to communicate well in English. This result indicates that teachers and students are aware of the importance of learning vocabulary. This is confirmed by Simon and Taverniers's (2011) findings, which also revealed that students perceived vocabulary to be more important in communication than other aspects of learning English, such as grammar, and also thought errors in vocabulary could lead to a 'communication breakdown'.

The teachers in this study considered learning vocabulary through reading to be an important strategy in learning vocabulary in general and a useful strategy for their students' learning. The majority of the students agreed with teachers' views. Teachers and students reported in the interviews the benefits that could be gained when learning vocabulary through reading. Reading was seen as a crucial source for learning new words. Al-Nujaidi (2004) found that reading had a key role in vocabulary development. Reading can help learners increase their vocabulary, as the nature of vocabulary learning is "incremental" (Schmitt, 2010:19).

Reading of texts in English is also a useful strategy for EFL learners in particular, since their contact with native speakers can be limited and ‘the use of reading and other input sources may be the only practical options for out of class language development for some learners’ (Nation, 2001:155). Another perceived benefit by the participants was that texts give them a context for using the new word, which helps the students know how to use this word correctly and remember it. Seeing the word in written format also helps with learning the spelling of the new word. Learning the correct spelling in particular might be difficult when learning vocabulary through other strategies, like listening.

Reading was also seen by the participants as useful in improving pronunciation, especially when performed aloud. However, teachers did not read out the reading passages and did not use any CDs as the “Interactions 2” reading textbook had expected them to do. As the teachers were not following the instructions in the textbook and did not do what this textbook expected them to do, students were implicitly taught that teachers’ beliefs and teaching actions are not always aligned with the assumptions made by the textbook. Nevertheless, teachers’ actions were aligned with one of the linguistic assumptions in the “Interactions 2” reading textbook by correcting students when they mispronounced words in the reading passage. The students’ perception on the value of reading to develop the pronunciation also resonates with this linguistic assumption. This shows that both teachers and students share the same view on the importance of developing pronunciation although they may differ in how they approach this. A similar attitude was expressed by the participants in Gibson’s (2008) study, who reported that one of the main aims of using reading aloud as an activity was to develop pronunciation. Studies have also reported on how reading aloud improves reading comprehension (Amer, 1997; Alshumaimeri, 2011). These findings show the importance of using reading as a context to learn vocabulary. The teachers’ and students’ perspectives on the role of reading in increasing the vocabulary knowledge indicate their agreement with researchers’ views (e.g. Henriksen 1999; Schmitt & Carter, 2000; Schmitt, 2010) on the accumulative nature of vocabulary learning. This finding also indicates the importance of considering both teachers’ and students’ attitudes towards learning vocabulary through reading as a strategy. Holding positive attitudes refers to teachers’ and students’ awareness of the key role of reading in developing vocabulary, which appears to reflect positively on teaching and learning vocabulary in the classroom. Considering both teachers’ and students’ attitudes is also important from a theoretical perspective. The culture of the classroom is “differentiated” and “collective” since it includes various views of language, preferences for

learning and learning aims and involves continuous interaction of the individual values and attitudes, despite the fact that the class appears to be one social unit (Breen, 1985:143).

Another finding from the current research was that teachers' perspectives on the prescribed textbooks varied. While some of the teachers viewed the prescribed textbooks as adequate for their students in terms of providing appropriate new vocabulary and being well set out, other teachers found them too difficult for their students' level of competence, or repetitive in structure. The teachers in Al-sowat's (2012) study had similar views on the textbooks used in Saudi intermediate schools; they found them too difficult for their students' level of competence and saw the vocabulary load as high. The teachers in the current study also felt that the textbooks lacked interesting exercises that could motivate students to use their thinking skills and had content irrelevant to the students' interests because they reflected different cultural contexts. The analysis of the textbooks revealed that the vocabulary introduced was often too difficult for students. Students were regularly confronted with a high number of new words, rarely repeated in text, another factor which made retention more difficult. The analysis of the textbooks supports the views of some of the teachers interviewed, who thought that the textbooks were too advanced for the students' level of competence. In relation to the cultural values presented in the textbooks, the analysis of textbooks showed that the cultural values presented in the textbooks were mainly different to the students' own culture, as they reflected mainly Western cultures. This resonates with Gray's (2002:151) description for the textbooks used in teaching English as a 'global course book'. He defined it as 'that genre of English language textbook which is produced in English-speaking countries and is designed for use as the core text in language classrooms around the world'. The cultural values promoted by the prescribed textbooks were commented on in the teachers' and students' interviews, which suggest that compatibility between students' own culture and the cultures they have to learn about is a key aspect in vocabulary learning. Based on the findings of the current research, it could be concluded that, the social practice of vocabulary learning is influenced by different aspects, such as teaching techniques, VLSs, the textbook, participants' beliefs and attitudes, learners' interests, cultural values and learners' level of competence. Findings discussed earlier revealed the role of each of these aspects in the social practice of vocabulary learning; this means that all of these aspects should be considered carefully in vocabulary learning in order to create a positive and effective vocabulary learning environment.

When asked what types of text they preferred to read, most students expressed a preference for literary and sports texts. Teachers' and students' views of the prescribed textbooks and expressed preferences in relation to particular types of texts revealed that their beliefs and attitudes towards vocabulary learning play a key role in the social practice of vocabulary learning, which supports Breen's (1985) suggestion above. This also agrees with Street (1984), who suggests that literacy is ideological and derives from the people's own practices and purposes. Students prefer to read certain types of texts to meet their personal interests. These preferences suggest that there are aspects which affect the social practice of vocabulary learning beyond the practices taking place in the classroom, since the students could not choose the texts or materials they used in the class. The students provided the reasons that made them prefer reading literary texts outside the class, whether they were stories or novels. One of the reasons was that reading these texts could benefit their knowledge more broadly and add to their life experience. Other reasons were the features of these texts, for example, the presence of a theme, which encourages the reader to keep reading, the manageable length of the stories and the fact that texts were interesting and enhanced vocabulary learning. This shows the important role of motivation in selecting certain types of texts for independent reading activities. It is also clear evidence of learner autonomy, which is an important factor in language learning, as indicated by a variety of studies (e.g. Benson & Voller, 1997 & Lee; 1998), as the students said they were practising reading outside the classroom. An important aspect to highlight here is that the teachers did not play any role in the reading that was carried out outside the classroom and students were reading different types of texts outside the classroom, in line with their hobbies and interests. As the teaching approach used in their classes was textbook-centralised as discussed earlier, this might have led students to find other sources for practising their reading, more in line with their interests. One of the problems with the textbooks is that learners may not be interested in the topics covered in them (Lee, 1997). When the students in this study were practising reading outside the class, they were trying to overcome some of the limitations of the teaching approach employed in their classes and showing thus increased autonomy in their learning outside class.

A considerable number of the participants in this study said they did not read English newspapers although most of them believed that newspaper reading in English would be helpful to their learning. It is assumed that some students may not even try to read English newspapers or might read as one-off articles, which are too difficult for them, as based on the responses from the questionnaires. It can be therefore suggested that students may not read

certain types of texts although they know they are useful for their learning because of the perceived difficulty. As previous research shows, ‘vocabulary knowledge is fundamental to reading comprehension; one cannot understand text without knowing what most of the words mean’ (Nagy, 1988:1). As mentioned earlier, the learner needs to know between 95% (Laufer, 1989) and 98% (Hu & Nation, 2000) of the words in a text in order to understand it fully (Schmitt *et al.*, 2011). Several studies (e.g. Golkar & Yamini, 2007, Zhang & Anual, 2008, Al-Homoud & Schmitt, 2009, Brown, 2010) showed that the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension is mutual. As a result, reading a text where most of the words are unfamiliar will not lead learners to comprehend it fully. This resonates with Krashen input hypothesis where he claims that if the input is too easy or too difficult, language acquisition will not take place. This means that students should be supported to identify texts that are suitable for their level of proficiency in order to achieve vocabulary development.

8.10. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the findings of the current research and also linking them to previous research. In relation to the findings, the chapter has examined different areas related to the teaching and learning of vocabulary through reading. The techniques used in teaching vocabulary were reviewed and the factors that made teachers textbook-centralised were also discussed. Three aspects on VLSs were considered: students’ perceived usage, the perceived usefulness of the VLSs and students’ perceived competence in using these strategies. Students’ interpretations and reasons given for considering a strategy as often used or helpful, as well as their perceptions of their own competence in using these strategies, were explained. Finally, the teachers’ and students’ attitudes towards learning vocabulary through reading were presented.

An important theoretical finding based on the empirical data suggests that vocabulary learning is a social practice rather than an individual process. Vocabulary learning as a social practice is influenced by a range of aspects: teaching techniques used, VLSs, the textbook, teachers’ and students’ beliefs and attitudes to learning, learners’ interests, cultural values and learners’ level of competence. The thesis argues that all of these aspects should be considered when identifying the best environment for vocabulary learning in the social context of the

classroom. A clear understanding of how these factors interact is important not only for informing vocabulary learning and teaching in a Saudi context, but also in the wider global context. The following chapter concludes the study by discussing the theoretical contribution that the study makes to the existing research on vocabulary learning. It also outlines recommendations for further research and draws some implications for teaching vocabulary at Saudi universities.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

9.1. Introduction

This chapter begins by giving an overview of the present study in terms of its importance and the significance of its main findings. It highlights the theoretical contribution the study aims to make, on the basis of the findings presented in Chapter 5-7 and discussed in Chapter 8. Next, the limitations of the study are discussed, before offering recommendations for practice and future research.

9.2. Overview of the study

Several Saudi researchers (Al-Nafisah, 2001; Al-Motairi, 2005) have reported the challenges that Saudi learners are faced with when learning English at schools. Al-Akloby (2001) identified the reasons behind students' perceived failure to learn a wide range of English vocabulary in Saudi schools. Since existing research was mainly conducted in schools, the present study explored teaching and learning vocabulary through reading at Saudi universities. Investigating the learning and teaching of vocabulary in this context was thought as useful in informing teachers and students in English departments at Saudi universities.

Most existing vocabulary research is quantitative and focuses on examining the effectiveness of a particular teaching technique by relying on pre-tests and immediate post-tests. This research was non-experimental and conducted in a natural environment, as explained in Chapter Three. The study explored issues on the teaching and learning of vocabulary in a Saudi context, a context less explored by vocabulary studies in general. Both the research environment and the type of participants used in the current study were different from other research, since previous studies in Saudi Arabia were carried out in schools. The present study explored vocabulary teaching techniques used in Saudi universities to teach vocabulary

through reading. Therefore, the study is considered unique in that it investigates English vocabulary teaching at Saudi universities. A few vocabulary studies have involved teachers as participants, but the focus in this research was on learners while teachers also contributed to the study.

Most of the previous vocabulary studies on VLSs focused mainly on how frequently these were used by students (Schmitt, 2010:93). By contrast, the study presented here focused on other aspects of VLSs rather than the frequency of deploying these strategies, by examining the strategies that were identified by students as useful in learning vocabulary through reading. The sample consisted of 150 students from six colleges in three different cities, while the few existing studies that explored the use of VLSs at Saudi universities employed between 47 and 80 students usually from the same college. It was thought that a more diverse sample will increase the validity of the findings. Furthermore, previous studies have examined the learning of vocabulary in general, while the current study has concentrated on learning vocabulary through reading.

The present study has investigated different aspects of teaching and learning vocabulary through reading at Saudi universities. It examined the vocabulary teaching techniques used by teachers at these universities when introducing new vocabulary, as well as the VLSs deployed by their students. Also, teachers' and students' attitudes towards learning vocabulary through reading were explored. A mixed method approach was used in this investigation, by employing various research tools, classroom observations, a semi-structured questionnaire and interviews. The participants consisted of 9 teachers and 150 all male students from six colleges in four universities, from three different cities in Saudi Arabia. Most of the teachers involved were reading teachers, while two were vocabulary teachers. These teachers were observed in their classes, in order to collect data on the techniques they used in teaching new words. These observations were followed by individual interviews with all teachers observed. The students were first-year university students majoring in English and they were invited to complete a questionnaire to identify the most used VLSs, as well as their attitudes on learning vocabulary via reading followed by individual interviews with 22 students.

The study revealed that teachers were "textbook-centralised", since they did not make use of any other texts than those in the prescribed textbook. Teachers used a range of teaching techniques in teaching new vocabulary, but they tended to concentrate on specific techniques,

such as using synonyms, defining new words in English, and using Arabic. Students identified certain VLSs as most frequently used. The students deployed the strategies that they believed were “fast” and “easy” to use and tended to avoid using the complex strategies that needed deep mental processes. Most of the VLSs that the students believed they most commonly employed were also seen to be the most useful to them. Some benefits that the students reported from using certain VLSs were that they provided them with accurate and different information on the new words and played an important role in helping them remember these words. The participants felt competent in deploying most of the VLSs that they employed frequently and saw them as most helpful. They made a link between the strategies they employed most often and their perceived level of competence in using these strategies. All of the teachers involved in this study perceived learning vocabulary through reading as a beneficial strategy in learning vocabulary and most of the students shared this view. The thesis examined vocabulary learning as a social practice and discussed the aspects that influence this learning.

9.3. Original contribution to knowledge

The research presented in this thesis has aimed to contribute new knowledge to the field of vocabulary learning and teaching in EFL/ESL. This section outlines the theoretical contribution the study aims to make, as well as the contribution to vocabulary research and the scope for further research in this area.

9.3.1. The theoretical contribution

This section discusses the theoretical contribution that the thesis makes, based on the findings emerging from the current research, as presented in Chapter 4-7 and discussed in Chapter 8. These theoretical insights were made possible by combining different aspects of vocabulary learning and by examining these from a range of perspectives, as discussed in the previous chapter. Although the findings were generated based on data collected in the Saudi context, conceptual ideas on vocabulary learning were revealed, which are applicable to a wider global context when they are discussed from a sociocultural perspective.

Findings revealed that the social context of learning had a powerful influence on what students learn, as both teachers and students negotiated their autonomy on an ongoing basis. It has been argued that literacy learning in a social context is affected by different factors, apart from teachers passing on technical skills about reading and writing to learners (Street, 1995:15). Other researchers (e.g. Heath, Street) refer to viewing the classroom in the social context of literacy learning as a community (Smith, 2010:61). As EFL/ESL learning involves learning new skills about language, as in literacy learning, the thesis argues that vocabulary learning should not be focusing only on one particular element, such as VLSs used by learners or teaching techniques employed by teachers.

The theoretical view on vocabulary learning that the thesis provides challenges the implicit theoretical view that most vocabulary research holds, which restricts vocabulary learning to the teaching techniques used and VLSs employed by learners. Studies that have discussed vocabulary learning from a theoretical perspective by arguing, for example, that vocabulary learning is an ‘incremental process’ (Schmitt & Carter, 2000; Schmitt, 2010) or by focusing on the role of memory in vocabulary learning (e.g. Baddeley, 1997; Thornbury, 2002; Kersten, 2010), have centred their arguments on the role of the individual rather than on a sociocultural perspective, which focuses more widely on the learning as a social interaction. The social context of vocabulary learning in the classroom involves multiple aspects which play a key role in learning. Aspects, such as teaching techniques, VLSs employed by students, the textbooks used, teachers’ and learners’ beliefs influence each other and work together. For example, when learners were not told how VLSs could be used, their competence in deploying these strategies was reduced. This shows the importance of the interaction between these aspects in order to provide a good environment for vocabulary learning.

Literacy practices offer a powerful way of conceptualising the link between the activities of reading and writing and the social structures in which they are embedded and which they help shape (Barton & Hamilton, 2000:7). In the current study, exploring each one of the aforementioned aspects (teaching techniques, VLSs and the textbooks) was helpful in conceptualising the link between them. Therefore, the application of sociocultural theory to the current research context suggests that vocabulary learning, which takes place in the broad social context of the classroom, is largely influenced by different factors in the classroom context. This means that there are different aspects, which form the social context and which

interact in complex ways and these interactions are significant to explaining vocabulary learning, rather than focussing on the participants' individual activities only.

It is also apparent that the majority of the empirical vocabulary research, as shown in the literature review chapter, seems to conceptualise vocabulary learning as a set of teaching techniques and VLSs. Most of the existing studies (see Chapter 2) examine the effectiveness of particular teaching techniques or VLSs and provide implications based on the outcome of these studies. Nevertheless, vocabulary learning in the classroom, as the thesis argues, is a social practice involving a set of aspects, which interact in complex ways and influence the learning.

In addition to the important role of teaching techniques, VLSs and the prescribed textbooks, the beliefs, attitudes and motivations that learners hold towards what they learn and how they learn also play a key role in learning. Although the classroom looks as a one social unit, the culture of the classroom includes different views of language, preferences for learning and learning purposes (Breen, 1985). Street (1984) suggests that literacy is ideological and derives from the practices and purposes of the people. As the current research has shown, both teachers and students hold their own beliefs about the importance of learning vocabulary in L2 development and also showed a range of attitudes towards the role of reading and the usefulness of certain VLSs in vocabulary development. Furthermore, teachers and students had various views on the content of the textbooks used, the value of the teaching techniques used in the classroom, as well as VLSs. Some participants referred to the cultural values used in the textbooks, which were often very different to theirs. Learners' own interests also had a role in their vocabulary learning, as the findings revealed. Based on these findings, the thesis argues that the beliefs and attitudes that the participants hold, as well as their own cultural values, motivations and interests, play a key role in the social practice of vocabulary learning in the classroom. Vocabulary learning includes thus aspects beyond the practices occurring in the classroom, which must be considered when conducting research.

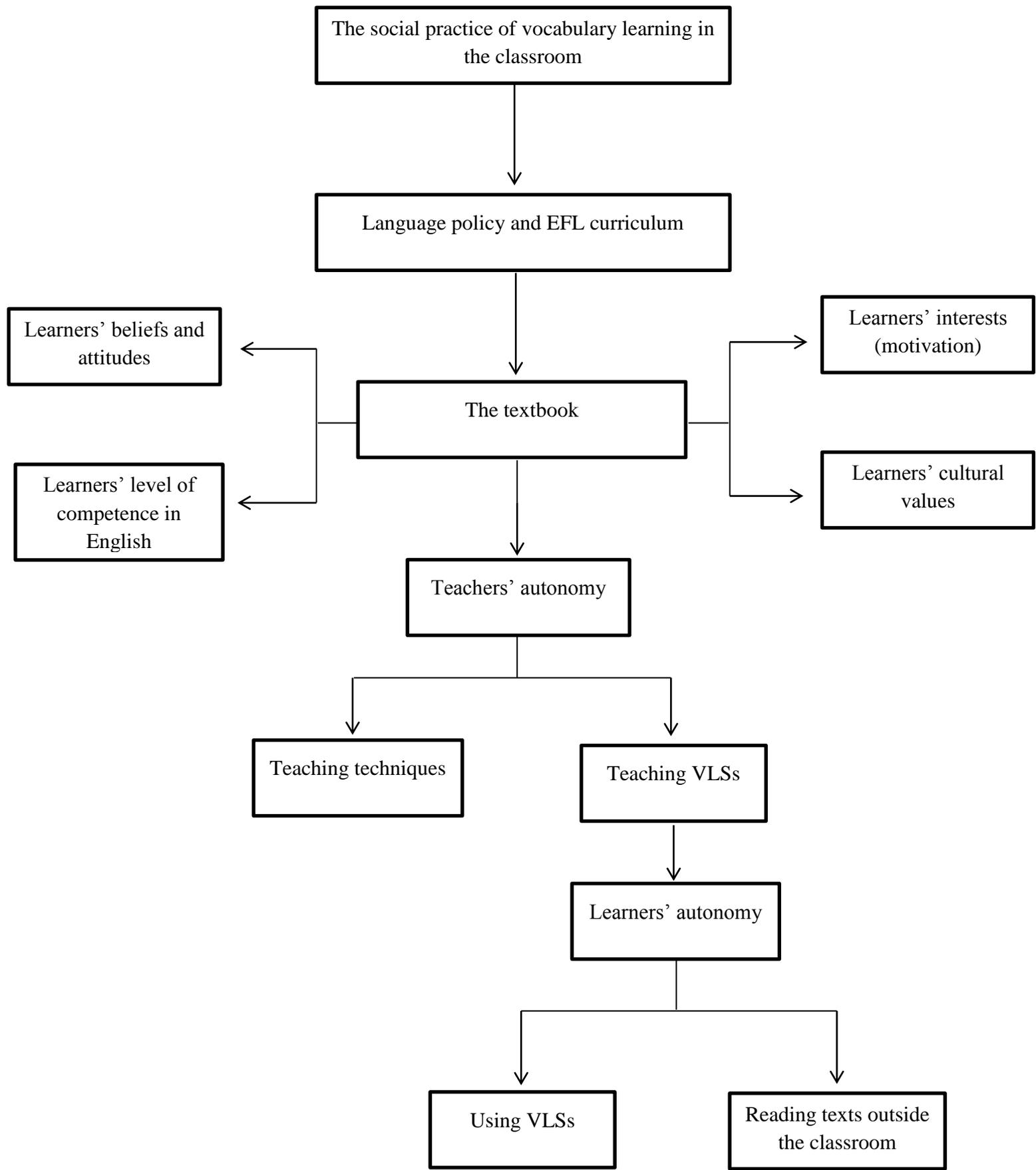
The social interaction between teachers and learners in the classroom influence what they learn (Street, 2001:8). This was noticed in the findings of the present study, where teachers and students displayed autonomy in teaching and learning vocabulary by doing things differently from what the textbooks assumed they would do. These actions were often adopted in order to overcome the constraints they encountered in using the textbooks, constraints not always anticipated by the textbooks, such as the incompatibility in cultural

values. Teachers and learners employed thus their own techniques and strategies to regulate their teaching and learning when challenges were encountered. Learners' level of competence was another factor, which significantly affected students' vocabulary learning in the present study. They often encountered challenges in the prescribed textbooks which were beyond their level of competence. This shows the importance of determining learners' level of competence in order to determine the type of scaffolded help that would benefit them most in their learning.

After discussing the aspects that influence vocabulary learning as a social practice, the various aspects which impact on students' vocabulary learning and how these factors interact in the social of context of the classroom becomes clearer. In order to conceptualise the interrelationship between these aspects and the role of each in the classroom interaction, the ideal vocabulary learning environment is illustrated diagrammatically in Figure 9.1.

Figure 9.1 shows that there are certain aspects that are more influential in the social practice of vocabulary learning than others. Language policy and EFL curriculum play the key role in the social practice of vocabulary learning in the classroom. In addition to the objectives that language policy and EFL curriculum aim to achieve, they prescribe a specific textbook to be used in the classroom. The prescribed textbook considers learners' level of competence in English, their beliefs and attitudes, motivation and cultural values. When the textbook used in the classroom is too challenging for learners' level of competence or incompatible with their beliefs, interests or cultural values, this creates constraints for both teachers and students and becomes counterproductive for learning. Teachers are mainly responsible to introduce the content of the textbook to learners by employing their own teaching techniques. Teaching techniques include teaching VLSs in order to promote learners' autonomy. Learners' autonomy is represented in two main forms: using certain VLSs and reading texts outside the classroom.

Figure 9.1. An illustration of a good vocabulary learning environment in the classroom



Based on the findings of the current research, which focuses on the Saudi context, it could be concluded that a good environment for vocabulary learning should consider the following: teaching techniques, VLSs, the textbook, participants' beliefs and attitudes, learners' interests, cultural values and learners' level of competence in English. The thesis argues that considering vocabulary learning as a social practice and the factors which contribute to creating a good learning environment is key to teaching and learning vocabulary to the wider global context. This makes some of the recommendations suggested below in section 9.6 relevant to the wider global context.

9.3.2. The contribution the study makes to vocabulary research

To the best of the author's knowledge, this study is unique in that it examines the range of vocabulary teaching techniques employed by teachers, since most existing studies (see Chapter 2) focused on examining the use and effectiveness of specific techniques. The study also covered new ground by exploring the teaching of vocabulary in a university setting as none of the existing studies, including those that were conducted in a Saudi context, have investigated teaching vocabulary through reading in a university context. Also, most vocabulary studies examined one institution, whereas the current study dealt with six colleges in three different cities in Saudi Arabia, in order to ensure a more diverse sample and explore the research topic in more depth. This is one of the few studies that has considered teachers as the focus, as most vocabulary research has placed the focus on students only.

The present research has also adopted a unique approach to the way in which it explored different aspects of students' VLSs, as it was thought that students might deploy strategies that they believe are not useful or feel themselves less competent in using. Most existing VLSs studies have concentrated on only one aspect, usually the frequency with which students used a particular strategy (Schmitt, 2010:93). Examining different aspects of VLSs was beneficial, as it allowed the author to identify the challenges that students encountered in deploying these strategies. While previous studies concentrated on vocabulary learning issues only, the current research highlights the importance of examining teaching and learning vocabulary jointly by providing a better understanding of how they work together and in the social context of the classroom. Several researchers referred to the importance of learner autonomy (e.g. James, 2006; Smith, 2008) and teacher autonomy (e.g. Benson, 2008; Shen, 2011); therefore, the investigation of how teachers deal with new vocabulary in the classroom

in the present study has also shed light on their students' efforts to be autonomous, in order to overcome the constraints of the teaching techniques used. Likewise, the investigation of the vocabulary teaching techniques allowed insight into teachers' autonomy manifested when introducing the new vocabulary, especially in relation to employing L1. This provides insight into the value of L1, whereby L1 can be a helpful technique in explaining the more difficult words when used alongside other techniques. The current research revealed the autonomy shown by teachers while teaching vocabulary. Therefore, this thesis makes a contribution to knowledge on teacher autonomy by suggesting that even teachers who are textbook-centralised could be autonomous in their teaching, in order to overcome any constraints in the prescribed textbooks.

In terms of contribution to methodology, this research employed a triangulated approach in the investigation by using different research tools and collecting data from different sources. Previous studies have mostly relied on one or two research tools (commonly an experiment followed by a questionnaire) used mainly with students. This approach, however, has enhanced the quality of the evidence and the findings provided and has also covered new ground in terms of successful methodologies, which can be employed by future research.

Finally, the findings of this research have led to new insights in the vocabulary teaching techniques employed by teachers, and this was helpful as it allowed the author to examine their effectiveness, as well as the limitations in the current techniques to teaching vocabulary in Saudi universities. Based on the findings, a number of recommendations were suggested, which were thought to be useful for both teachers and students, as well as institutions of higher education in Saudi Arabia in further afield, as these recommendations are likely to be helpful in improving teaching and learning vocabulary generally in the EFL/ESL context.

9.4. Limitations of the study

Education in Saudi Arabia is segregated on gender, with separate colleges for males and for females. This study was only conducted in male colleges, due to easiness of access of the author, as a male researcher. Only two research tools (a semi-structured questionnaire and interviews) were used to explore the VLSs, while other research tools, such as 'think aloud' protocols and diaries could have been used. Also, the data generated by using these two tools (the questionnaire and interviews) were based on self-reports and hence could not control for

overestimated or underestimated reported strategy use. Likewise, these research tools do not reveal accurately students' competence in employing VLSs, because they rely on self-assessment. Classroom observations were used rather than filmed classes, which did not allow to observe clearly or study in depth the interaction between teachers and students in order to assess the effectiveness of the vocabulary teaching techniques used by teachers.

A further limitation is that the number of teachers who took part in the study was relatively small, because the study also considered the students' views. Moreover, most teachers were only observed for an average of two classes, while four teachers were observed only once. Because teachers will not use all vocabulary teaching techniques in one or two classes, the study had limited evidence on their vocabulary teaching techniques overall; however, observing these classes has provided the researcher with the general approach that teachers follow in their teaching of vocabulary.

9.5. Recommendations for future research

The findings from the study have revealed that many areas of teaching and learning vocabulary in Saudi Arabia need further research. The results of the study highlighted several areas worthy of further investigation.

A similar study to the current one could be carried out in female colleges, to find out if there are any differences in vocabulary teaching techniques and VLSs used between male and female colleges. Different research tools rather than the ones used in the current study could be employed, such as 'think aloud' protocols and diaries. Although several studies have looked at the use of '*Guessing the meaning of a word from the context*' and '*Using dictionaries*' by EFL learners in other contexts, few studies were conducted on using these strategies by Saudi learners. The effect of teaching VLSs in a Saudi context can be investigated further, in order to establish if that could improve the competence of Saudi learners in using VLSs. Using Arabic has a key role in teaching and learning vocabulary, thus this issue needs further investigation. Other VLSs and their use by students could also be explored, such as learning vocabulary through listening. The university teacher education at Saudi universities can also be investigated since this area has not been examined so far and has direct implications for teachers' approaches to teaching vocabulary.

Due to the widespread use of technology, the importance of using new technology in teaching EFL has increased. The effectiveness of using technology in teaching and learning vocabulary in a Saudi context could also be considered by future research. A number of studies have investigated the use of extensive reading in order to develop EFL learners' vocabulary, whilst little research exists on using this type of reading with Saudi learners. Most of the teachers who participated in the study were native speakers of Arabic and few were native speakers of English; it is thus helpful in the future research to compare these teachers' classes in terms of teaching vocabulary. Research on teaching and learning English in general and vocabulary teaching and learning in particular at Saudi universities is still limited and needs further investigation.

Since English has only recently begun to be taught in primary schools in Saudi Arabia, teaching and learning vocabulary in primaries is an area that has not been explored widely. Most of the studies on the teaching and learning vocabulary in Saudi Arabia were conducted in public schools; it therefore seems feasible to expand the research on vocabulary teaching and learning in private schools and universities. Finally, despite the fact that the current study has involved a reasonable number of colleges in Saudi Arabia, there are other institutions which have not been involved in any research so far.

9.6. Recommendations for improvement in language teaching policy and practice

Based on the findings from this study, a number of recommendations are put forward, which may improve the delivery of English vocabulary teaching in Saudi universities.

1. Teachers participating in the study relied mainly on prescribed textbooks, as this was a requirement of the prescribed curriculum. They should be encouraged to use other texts in addition to the prescribed textbooks and encouraged to use their autonomy more to identify appropriate materials to suit students' level of competence in English, cultural values and interests.

2. In addition to being textbook centralised, teachers were focusing on particular vocabulary teaching techniques, not always in line with current research-based approaches to promoting vocabulary learning. This highlights the importance of providing teachers with in-service education courses and opportunities to engage with the latest research through reading research and attending conferences on language teaching in order to expose them to recent developments in EFL methodologies.
3. The thesis showed that vocabulary learning is a social practice influenced by different factors, which contribute to creating a good learning environment. The role that factors, such as teaching techniques, VLSs, the textbook, participants' beliefs and attitudes, learners' interests, cultural values and learners' level of competence play in the classroom should be considered in order to create a good vocabulary learning environment.
4. Although the use of L1 was not indicated in the prescribed textbooks, teachers showed autonomy when they used the L1 as a teaching technique. They believed that the use of L1 seemed to be helpful in teaching new words, especially those that were difficult to teach by using other techniques. Therefore, it could be suggested that L1 might be a helpful teaching technique to deal with difficult new words, especially when other techniques fail.
5. The classroom observation data revealed that the new vocabulary was not recycled, since teachers did not refer back to words that had been introduced in previous classes. As opportunities for repeated use of a new word in diverse contexts is key to vocabulary learning, especially for consolidating it, teachers should be encouraged to create opportunities for students to use recently learned vocabulary regularly in the classroom.
6. The analysis of textbooks showed that a large volume of new vocabulary introduced was too difficult for the students. Language policy should ensure that the prescribed textbooks are suitable for students' level of competence in English, with flexibility for teachers and students to identify more suitable materials if the textbooks fail to cater for their needs.

7. Although learning about other cultures is important, it needs to be relevant to learners. Therefore, language policy makers need to examine the content of the prescribed textbooks to assess their relevance in relation to the cultural values of the country in which they are used.
8. The study showed that the students varied in terms of the types of reading texts they wanted to read in English. Their preferences in terms of types of texts used should be taken into consideration when deciding what other texts to use in class by allowing them a more active role in choosing the texts they read.
9. Some students in the study reported the texts they were made to read were too difficult for them. Hence, teachers should have the time and autonomy to encourage students to find their own texts and help them identify texts suitable for their level of competence in English in order to help them practise reading outside the class.
10. Extensive reading is an important aspect of teaching reading and vocabulary. Graded readers can be used to practise this type of reading, as books are classified into levels and written on a range of topics which can help meet students' needs and interests.
11. Listening can be combined with reading in order to have a greater effect on students' vocabulary development. This can be achieved by using the CDs accompanying the graded readers or the textbook or online audio materials.
12. Although the teachers in the study provided their students with the opportunity to read texts aloud, the teachers themselves did not read the text aloud first. Teachers' reading or using the CDs accompanying the textbook may help students improve their pronunciation and, as a result, errors and interruptions while reading could be reduced. Furthermore, a strict emphasis on 'correct' pronunciation which may affect learners' confidence in speaking should be discouraged.

13. VLSs should be taught explicitly to students through more communicative methods to reflect the social nature of learning. Students need time to learn how to use the strategies and practice their use, especially in relation to strategies that are most relevant to learning vocabulary through reading, for instance, guessing strategies and using dictionaries. The complex VLSs, such as the keyword method, also need to be introduced to students before they can use them confidently.
14. Students reported that they read English texts outside the classroom, especially literary texts, which shows they were striving to be autonomous learners. In addition to meeting their interests and developing their vocabulary knowledge by practising this activity, it seems that the use of other texts was helpful for them to deal with the challenges posed by their teachers' teaching approach and the textbooks used in class.
15. The use of technology in teaching can be expanded in classes, given the recent explosion of media and accessibility; for example, the use of the hypermedia in teaching vocabulary through reading could be increased, with limited added costs to schools and colleges. In addition, students should be encouraged to make use of technology outside the classroom to access a wider range of texts in English.
16. The use of textbooks appears to limit teachers' opportunities to focus on learners' needs and makes them textbook centralised. EFL language policy and departments should consider providing teachers with a syllabus emphasising the skills that students need to develop rather than a specific content and allow the teachers to practise their autonomy by choosing materials independently.
17. Using a standardised English proficiency test for students will help English departments decide on the complexity of the materials, which would be suitable for the students' level of English. It would also be beneficial for teachers when they plan to use texts other than the textbook.

18. Funding of English as a subject is key to allow better facilities and enhance learners' learning experience, since many of the classes observed lacked modern facilities, such as internet access. Having better facilities would assist teachers in implementing the recommendations suggested above (points 7, 8 and 10) and be more creative in their teaching with more real-life uses of English.

This study has explored the teaching and learning of vocabulary through reading at Saudi universities. It is hoped that findings make a new contribution to the EFL research in Saudi Arabia, to benefit the teaching and learning of vocabulary through reading in universities across the country. In addition, the above recommendations aim to be helpful to language policy makers, English departments, teachers and students in Saudi universities. Research in vocabulary learning needs to continue and, in this sense, further research areas were also identified for others interested in conducting studies on learning of vocabulary via reading in the EFL context.

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Appendix 1: Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy

Strategy

group

Strategy

Strategies for the discovery of a new word's meaning

- | | |
|-----|--|
| DET | Analyze part of speech |
| DET | Analyze affixes and roots |
| DET | Check for L1 cognate |
| DET | Analyze any available pictures or gestures |
| DET | Guess meaning from textual context |
| DET | Use a dictionary (bilingual or monolingual) |
| SOC | Ask teacher for a synonym, paraphrase, or L1 translation of new word |
| SOC | Ask classmates for meaning |

Strategies for consolidating a word once it has been encountered

- | | |
|-----|--|
| SOC | Study and practice meaning in a group |
| SOC | Interact with native speakers |
| MEM | Connect word to a previous personal experience |
| MEM | Associate the word with its coordinates |
| MEM | connect the word to its synonyms and antonyms |
| MEM | Use semantic maps |
| MEM | Image word form |
| MEM | Image word's meaning |
| MEM | Use Keyword Method |
| MEM | Group words together to study them |
| MEM | Study the spelling of a word |
| MEM | Say new word aloud when studying |

MEM	Use physical action when learning a word
COG	Verbal repetition
COG	Written repetition
COG	Word lists
COG	Put English labels on physical objects
COG	Keep a vocabulary notebook
MET	Use English-language media (songs, movies, newscasts, etc.)
MET	Use spaced word practice (expanding rehearsal)
MET	Test oneself with word tests
MET	Skip or pass new word
MET	Continue to study word over time

Appendix 2: Nation's (2001) taxonomy

General class of strategies	Types of strategies
Planning: choosing what to focus on and when to focus on it	Choosing words Choosing the aspects of word knowledge Choosing strategies Planning repetition
Sources: finding information about words	Analysing the word Using context Consulting a reference source in L1 or L2 Using parallels in L1 and L2
Processes: establishing knowledge	Noticing Retrieving Generating

Appendix 3: The observation schedule

Observation Schedule

Date of observation:

University:

College:

Number of students:

Time	Teaching techniques, type of information, teaching VLSs, texts out of the textbook	Coding notes

Appendix 4: The questionnaire

Instructions for Completing the Questionnaire

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study and to complete the questionnaire, your contribution is very valuable to this research. These are some guidelines to help you fill in the questionnaire.

- Please read first all the questions of the questionnaire and answer *all* questions, if possible.
- Some questions ask you to simply circle the answers that apply to you while other questions ask you to write about your experience as a learner and opinions. If you need more space to write, you can continue writing on the back of the page, just mark clearly the question your writing relates to.
- Please remember that there are no right or wrong answers in this questionnaire, they are all about your experience, so please complete it depending on what you *actually do* in learning vocabulary, not what you ‘should’ do.
- If you do not use a strategy mentioned, please circle the word “never”.
- If you would like to help me further with this research, I am looking for volunteers to speak to about vocabulary learning in a short interview of about 15 minutes. If you would like to take part, please leave your name at the end of the questionnaire.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Sultan Altalhab

Section one: Discovery Strategies

* *The next part is about what you do when you guess the meaning of the new word. Take few seconds to think about that, and then complete this part.*

When I encounter unknown vocabulary while reading I guess the meaning from (see items 1-4)

1. The context (e.g. surrounding sentences).

1.a. How often do you use this strategy?

always often sometimes rarely never I don't know

1.b. This strategy is for me:

very useful useful quite useful not useful I don't know

1.c. In using this strategy, I believe that I am:

very competent competent quite competent not competent I don't know

2. The part of speech of the word from the sentence in which the word appears.

2.a. always often sometimes rarely never I don't know

2.b. very useful useful quite useful not useful I don't know

2.c. very competent competent quite competent not competent I don't know

3. The word structure (i.e. prefixes *unhappy* and suffixes *comfortable*).

3.a. always often sometimes rarely never I don't know

3.b. very useful useful quite useful not useful I don't know

3.c. very competent competent quite competent not competent I don't know

4. Pictures, if available.

4.a. always often sometimes rarely never I don't know

4.b. very useful useful quite useful not useful I don't know

Do you have any other ways of guessing the meaning of a word when reading? Please write here what those ways are and how you do it.

Can you tell me in what circumstances do you choose to try and guess an answer rather than check the dictionary or ask the teacher?

**** The next part is about the situations that you ignore the unknown word in. Take few seconds to think about these situations, and then complete this part.***

I ignore the unknown word while reading when (see items 5 to 7)

5. The unknown word is not important and I can understand the sentence without its meaning.

5.a. always often sometimes rarely never I don't know

5.b. very useful useful quite useful not useful I don't know

6. I partially understand the meaning of the unknown word.

6.a. always often sometimes rarely never I don't know

6.b. very useful useful quite useful not useful I don't know

7. I want to read without interruption since the meaning might be revealed later on in the text.

7.a. always often sometimes rarely never I don't know

7.b. very useful useful quite useful not useful I don't know

Do you have any other reasons for ignoring unknown words, please explain here:

** The next part is about the strategies that you use to find out the meaning of the unknown words rather than guessing. Take few seconds to think about these strategies, and then complete this part.*

Appealing for assistance: when I look for information about an unknown word in a text, I (see items 8 to 11)

8. I ask someone (a friend, a classmate, a teacher).

8.a. always often sometimes rarely never I don't know

8.b. very useful useful quite useful not useful I don't know

Can you please say what makes you choose to ask rather than use any other solution / reason for asking.

9. I use a bilingual dictionary to look up the unknown words.

9.a. always often sometimes rarely never I don't know

9.b. very useful useful quite useful not useful I don't know

9.c. very competent competent quite competent not competent I don't know

10. I use an English only dictionary to look up unknown words.

10.a. always often sometimes rarely never I don't know

10.b. very useful useful quite useful not useful I don't know

10.c. very competent competent quite competent not competent I don't know

11. I use an electronic or computer dictionary.

11.a. always often sometimes rarely never I don't know

11.b. very useful useful quite useful not useful I don't know

11.c. very competent competent quite competent not competent I don't know

What makes you choose to use a dictionary rather than guess / ask / ignore a new word?
When do you prefer a dictionary?

Section two: Consolidation Strategies

** The next part is about the strategies that you use to retain the meaning of the unknown words. Take few seconds to think about these strategies, and then complete this part.*

After recognising the meaning of the unknown word, (see items 12-25)

12. I say the word aloud several times.

12.a. How often do you use this strategy?

always often sometimes rarely never I don't know

12.b. This strategy is ***for me***:

very useful useful quite useful not useful I don't know

13. I repeat the word silently in my mind.

13.a. always often sometimes rarely never I don't know

13.b. very useful useful quite useful not useful I don't know

14. I write the word several times.

14.a. always often sometimes rarely never I don't know

14.b. very useful useful quite useful not useful I don't know

15. I listen to the word repeatedly.

15.a. always often sometimes rarely never I don't know

15.b. very useful useful quite useful not useful I don't know

Any other ways you repeat the new words, please say.

16. I associate the new words and the words that I already know.

16.a. always often sometimes rarely never I don't know

16.b. very useful useful quite useful not useful I don't know

16.c. very competent competent quite competent not competent I don't know

17. I associate the sound of new words with the sound of familiar word (e.g. link, ink).

17.a. always often sometimes rarely never I don't know

17.b. very useful useful quite useful not useful I don't know

17.c. very competent competent quite competent not competent I don't know

18. I associate the new words to their synonyms or antonyms (e.g. big - huge and short - tall).

18.a. always often sometimes rarely never I don't know

18.b. very useful useful quite useful not useful I don't know

18.c. very competent competent quite competent not competent I don't know

19. I associate the new word with the text in which it appeared.

19.a. always often sometimes rarely never I don't know

19.b. very useful useful quite useful not useful I don't know

19.c. very competent competent quite competent not competent I don't know

20. I use the keyword method (e.g. If I want to memorise the English word "fine", I may think of an Arabic word that is similar in pronunciation "fayen" which means "tissue", then I create a mental image of a person who uses tissue and looks fine.)

20.a. always often sometimes rarely never I don't know

20.b. very useful useful quite useful not useful I don't know

20.c. very competent competent quite competent not competent I don't know

21. I practise using the new words by talking to myself in English.

21.a. always often sometimes rarely never I don't know

21.b. very useful useful quite useful not useful I don't know

21.c. very competent competent quite competent not competent I don't know

22. I practise using the new words as many times as possible in my daily conversation or writing.

22.a. always often sometimes rarely never I don't know

22.b. very useful useful quite useful not useful I don't know

22.c. very competent competent quite competent not competent I don't know

23. I go back to refresh my memory of words that I learned earlier.

23.a. always often sometimes rarely never I don't know

23.b. very useful useful quite useful not useful I don't know

23.c. very competent competent quite competent not competent I don't know

24. I test myself or ask others listen to me and correct my mistakes.

24.a. always often sometimes rarely never I don't know

24.b. very useful useful quite useful not useful I don't know

24.c. very competent competent quite competent not competent I don't know

25. I write the new words in a word list.

25.a. always often sometimes rarely never I don't know

25.b. very useful useful quite useful not useful I don't know

25.c. very competent competent quite competent not competent I don't know

Any other ways you make notes? Please say.

Section three: Aspects of knowing a word

** The next part is about the information that you seek about the unknown word. Think for few seconds about this information, and then complete this part.*

When I encounter an unknown word, the information that I look for is

	always	often	sometimes	rarely	never	I don't know
26. Its Arabic meaning.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
27. Its English definition by paraphrase.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
28. Its English synonyms / antonyms.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
29. One of its meanings.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
30. All meanings.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
31. Its pronunciation.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
32. Its spelling.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
33. Parts of speech.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
34. Its usage.	<input type="checkbox"/>					

Is there any other information about new words you look for? Please write them below.

Section four: Attitudes toward learning vocabulary through reading

35. I read English newspapers to develop my English vocabulary.

35.a. always often sometimes rarely never I don't know

34.b. very useful useful quite useful not useful I don't know

What are these newspapers?

36. What type of text that do you prefer to read in English?

Literary texts (novels, short stories and poems) sport arts

scientific others please specify

37. I am satisfied with the passages that are used in reading courses.

strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree I don't know

38. The passages that are used in reading courses are suitable for my English level.

strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree I don't know

39. I am not satisfied with the methods that teachers use to explain the new vocabulary in reading courses.

strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree I don't know

40. Teachers in general are very helpful in clarifying the meaning of a word that I don't know when I read.

strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree I don't know

Anything else you would like to mention about vocabulary learning in English and you think would be important for my study:

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

I am also looking for participants for a follow-up interview on the same topic. This would be short interviews, of around 20 minutes each, carried out in your school or on the phone. If you would like to take part, please give your contact details below and I'll be in touch:

Name:

College:

Phone number:

Appendix 5: Arabic version of the questionnaire

تعليمات لإكمال الاستبيان

شكرا لموافقتك على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة و إكمال هذا الاستبيان. هذه بعض الإرشادات لمساعدتك في إكمال

الاستبيان.

اقرأ جميع أسئلة الاستبيان و أجب عليها جميعا قدر الإمكان.

تتطلب بعض الأسئلة أن تضع دائرة على الإجابات التي تنطبق عليك بينما أسئلة أخرى تتطلب منك أن تكتب عن خبراتك و آرائك كمتعلم. يمكنك استخدام ظهر الورقة إذا رغبت في إضافة المزيد من التعليق على أي سؤال مع مراعاة كتابة رقم السؤال المعني.

تذكر أنه لا يوجد إجابات صحيحة أو خاطئة في هذا الاستبيان لذلك أرجو إكماله بناء على ما تقوم به فعلا في تعلم الكلمات و ليس ما "ينبغي" أن تقوم به.

يتطلب هذا البحث مشاركين لإجراء مقابلات قصيرة معهم تستغرق 20 دقيقة تقريبا حول تعلم الكلمات. الرجاء كتابة اسمك في آخر هذا الاستبيان إذا كنت ترغب في المشاركة.

شكرا جزيلًا لتعاونك

سلطان آل طلحاب

القسم الأول استراتيجيات اكتشاف المعلومات

* يهدف هذا الجزء لمعرفة ما تقوم به لتخمين معنى الكلمة الجديدة. فكر لبضع ثواني عن هذا الموضوع ثم أكمل هذا الجزء.

عندما أقابل كلمة جديدة أثناء القراءة أأخذ المعنى من (الجمل من 1 - 4)

1. السياق (الجمل المحيطة بالكلمة الجديدة).

- 1.أ. ما مدى استخدامك لهذه الإستراتيجية دائما غالبا أحيانا نادرا لا أستخدامها لا أعرف
- 1.ب. أرى أن هذه الإستراتيجية مفيدة جدا مفيدة مفيدة نوعا ما ليست مفيدة لا أعرف
- 1.ج. أرى أنني أستخدم هذه الإستراتيجية بشكل متقن جدا متقن متقن نوعا ما لست متقن لا أعرف

2. أأخذ المعنى من الناحية الإعرابية للكلمة (اسم/فعل/صفة) في نفس الجملة التي وردت فيها.

- 2.أ. ما مدى استخدامك لهذه الإستراتيجية دائما غالبا أحيانا نادرا لا أستخدامها لا أعرف
- 2.ب. أرى أن هذه الإستراتيجية مفيدة جدا مفيدة مفيدة نوعا ما ليست مفيدة لا أعرف
- 2.ج. أرى أنني أستخدم هذه الإستراتيجية بشكل متقن جدا متقن متقن نوعا ما لست متقن لا أعرف

3. أأخذ المعنى من الجزء الأول للكلمة (unhappy) و الجزء الأخير (comfortable)

- 3.أ. ما مدى استخدامك لهذه الإستراتيجية دائما غالبا أحيانا نادرا لا أستخدامها لا أعرف
- 3.ب. أرى أن هذه الإستراتيجية مفيدة جدا مفيدة مفيدة نوعا ما ليست مفيدة لا أعرف
- 3.ج. أرى أنني أستخدم هذه الإستراتيجية بشكل متقن جدا متقن متقن نوعا ما لست متقن لا أعرف

4. أأخذ المعنى من الصورة المصاحبة عندما تتوفر.

- 4.أ. ما مدى استخدامك لهذه الإستراتيجية دائما غالبا أحيانا نادرا لا أستخدامها لا أعرف
- 4.ب. أرى أن هذه الإستراتيجية مفيدة جدا مفيدة مفيدة نوعا ما ليست مفيدة لا أعرف

هل تستخدم طرق أخرى لتخمين معنى الكلمة الجديدة أثناء القراءة خلاف ما ذكر؟ اذكرها.

ما هي الأسباب التي تدعوك لاستخدام التخمين؟

* يهدف هذا الجزء لمعرفة المواضيع التي تتجاهل فيها الكلمة الجديدة. فكر لبضع ثواني عن هذه المواضيع ثم أكمل هذا الجزء.

أتجاهل الكلمات الجديدة أثناء القراءة عندما (الجمل من 5 – 7)

5. عندما تكون الكلمة غير مهمة و أستطيع فهم معنى الجملة دون الحاجة لمعرفة معناها.

- أ. ما مدى استخدامك لهذه الإستراتيجية دائما غالبا أحيانا نادرا لا أستخدامها لا أعرف
- ب. أرى أن هذه الإستراتيجية مفيدة جدا مفيدة مفيدة نوعا ما ليست مفيدة لا أعرف

6. عندما أعرف جزء من معناها.

- أ. ما مدى استخدامك لهذه الإستراتيجية دائما غالبا أحيانا نادرا لا أستخدامها لا أعرف
- ب. أرى أن هذه الإستراتيجية مفيدة جدا مفيدة مفيدة نوعا ما ليست مفيدة لا أعرف

7. عندما أريد الاستمرار في القراءة دون توقف لأن المعنى قد يتضح لاحقا في النص.

- أ. ما مدى استخدامك لهذه الإستراتيجية دائما غالبا أحيانا نادرا لا أستخدامها لا أعرف
- ب. أرى أن هذه الإستراتيجية مفيدة جدا مفيدة مفيدة نوعا ما ليست مفيدة لا أعرف

الرجاء التكرم بكتابة أي سبب يدعوك لتجاهل معنى الكلمة الجديدة و لم يتم الإشارة إليه في الطرق المذكورة أعلاه.

* يهدف هذا الجزء لمعرفة الإستراتيجيات (الطرق) التي تستخدمها لمعرفة معنى الكلمة الجديدة خلاف إستراتيجية التخمين. فكر لبضع ثواني عن هذه الإستراتيجيات (الطرق) ثم أكمل هذا الجزء.

أطلب المساعدة عندما أبحث عن معنى كلمة جديدة في نص (الجمل من 8 – 11)

8. أطلب المساعدة من (صديق، زميل، المدرس).

- أ. ما مدى استخدامك لهذه الإستراتيجية دائما غالبا أحيانا نادرا لا أستخدامها لا أعرف
- ب. أرى أن هذه الإستراتيجية مفيدة جدا مفيدة مفيدة نوعا ما ليست مفيدة لا أعرف

الرجاء كتابة الأسباب التي تدفعك لسؤال الآخرين بدلا من استخدام الإستراتيجيات (الطرق) التي تم ذكرها.

9. أستخدم القاموس الثنائي اللغة (إنجليزي – عربي أو عربي – إنجليزي) للبحث عن معنى الكلمات الجديدة.

- 9.أ. ما مدى استخدامك لهذه الإستراتيجية دائما غالبا أحيانا نادرا لا أستخدمها لا أعرف
- 9.ب. أرى أن هذه الإستراتيجية مفيدة جدا مفيدة مفيدة نوعا ما ليست مفيدة لا أعرف
- 9.ج. أرى أنني أستخدم هذه الإستراتيجية بشكل متقن جدا متقن متقن نوعا ما لست متقن لا أعرف

10. أستخدم القاموس الأحادي اللغة (إنجليزي – إنجليزي) للبحث عن معنى الكلمات الجديدة.

- 10.أ. ما مدى استخدامك لهذه الإستراتيجية دائما غالبا أحيانا نادرا لا أستخدمها لا أعرف
- 10.ب. أرى أن هذه الإستراتيجية مفيدة جدا مفيدة مفيدة نوعا ما ليست مفيدة لا أعرف
- 10.ج. أرى أنني أستخدم هذه الإستراتيجية بشكل متقن جدا متقن متقن نوعا ما لست متقن لا أعرف

11. أستخدم القاموس الإلكتروني أو الكمبيوتر للبحث عن معنى الكلمات الجديدة.

- 11.أ. ما مدى استخدامك لهذه الإستراتيجية دائما غالبا أحيانا نادرا لا أستخدمها لا أعرف
- 11.ب. أرى أن هذه الإستراتيجية مفيدة جدا مفيدة مفيدة نوعا ما ليست مفيدة لا أعرف
- 11.ج. أرى أنني أستخدم هذه الإستراتيجية بشكل متقن جدا متقن متقن نوعا ما لست متقن لا أعرف

الرجاء كتابة الأسباب التي تدفعك لاستخدام القاموس بدلا من استخدام الإستراتيجيات (الطرق) التي تم ذكرها.

القسم الثاني استراتيجيات الحفظ

* يهدف هذا الجزء لمعرفة الإستراتيجيات (الطرق) التي تستخدمها لحفظ معنى الكلمات الجديدة. فكر لبضع ثواني عن هذه الإستراتيجيات (الطرق) ثم أكمل هذا الجزء.

بعد معرفة معنى الكلمة الجديدة (الجزء من 12 – 25)

12. أردد الكلمة بصوت مرتفع عدة مرات.

- 12.أ. ما مدى استخدامك لهذه الإستراتيجية دائما غالبا أحيانا نادرا لا أستخدمها لا أعرف
- 12.ب. أرى أن هذه الإستراتيجية مفيدة جدا مفيدة مفيدة نوعا ما ليست مفيدة لا أعرف

13. أكرر الكلمة بشكل صامت.

- 13.أ. ما مدى استخدامك لهذه الإستراتيجية دائما غالبا أحيانا نادرا لا أستخدمها لا أعرف
- 13.ب. أرى أن هذه الإستراتيجية مفيدة جدا مفيدة مفيدة نوعا ما ليست مفيدة لا أعرف

14. أكتب الكلمة مرات عديدة.

14. أ. ما مدى استخدامك لهذه الإستراتيجية دائما غالبا أحيانا نادرا لا أستخدامها لا أعرف
14. ب. أرى أن هذه الإستراتيجية مفيدة جدا مفيدة مفيدة نوعا ما ليست مفيدة لا أعرف

15. أستمع إلى الكلمة عدة مرات.

15. أ. ما مدى استخدامك لهذه الإستراتيجية دائما غالبا أحيانا نادرا لا أستخدامها لا أعرف
15. ب. أرى أن هذه الإستراتيجية مفيدة جدا مفيدة مفيدة نوعا ما ليست مفيدة لا أعرف

الرجاء كتابة أي طريقة أخرى لتكرار الكلمات لم يتم ذكرها.

16. أربط الكلمات الجديدة مع الكلمات التي تم تعلمها سابقا.

16. أ. ما مدى استخدامك لهذه الإستراتيجية دائما غالبا أحيانا نادرا لا أستخدامها لا أعرف
16. ب. أرى أن هذه الإستراتيجية مفيدة جدا مفيدة مفيدة نوعا ما ليست مفيدة لا أعرف
16. ج. أرى أنني أستخدم هذه الإستراتيجية بشكل متقن جدا متقن متقن نوعا ما لست متقن لا أعرف

17. أربط بين أصوات الكلمات الجديدة و الكلمات التي تشبهها صوتيا مثل (link -ink).

17. أ. ما مدى استخدامك لهذه الإستراتيجية دائما غالبا أحيانا نادرا لا أستخدامها لا أعرف
17. ب. أرى أن هذه الإستراتيجية مفيدة جدا مفيدة مفيدة نوعا ما ليست مفيدة لا أعرف
17. ج. أرى أنني أستخدم هذه الإستراتيجية بشكل متقن جدا متقن متقن نوعا ما لست متقن لا أعرف

18. أربط الكلمات الجديدة مع مترادفاتهما أو أضدادها مثلا (big -short huge and -tall).

18. أ. ما مدى استخدامك لهذه الإستراتيجية دائما غالبا أحيانا نادرا لا أستخدامها لا أعرف
18. ب. أرى أن هذه الإستراتيجية مفيدة جدا مفيدة مفيدة نوعا ما ليست مفيدة لا أعرف
18. ج. أرى أنني أستخدم هذه الإستراتيجية بشكل متقن جدا متقن متقن نوعا ما لست متقن لا أعرف

19. أربط الكلمات الجديدة مع النص الذي ظهرت فيه.

19. أ. ما مدى استخدامك لهذه الإستراتيجية دائما غالبا أحيانا نادرا لا أستخدامها لا أعرف
19. ب. أرى أن هذه الإستراتيجية مفيدة جدا مفيدة مفيدة نوعا ما ليست مفيدة لا أعرف
19. ج. أرى أنني أستخدم هذه الإستراتيجية بشكل متقن جدا متقن متقن نوعا ما لست متقن لا أعرف

20. استخدم طريقة "الكلمة المفتاح" وهي (إذا أردت حفظ كلمة إنجليزية جديدة أفكر في كلمة تشبهها في الصوت و تختلف عنها في المعنى في اللغة العربية مثلا كلمة "فاين" و "fine" التي تعني مندبل بالعربية أرسم في ذهني صورة شخص يستخدم مندبلا و يبدو بصحة جيدة)

- 20.أ. ما مدى استخدامك لهذه الإستراتيجية دائما غالبا أحيانا نادرا لا أستخدامها لا أعرف
- 20.ب. أرى أن هذه الإستراتيجية مفيدة جدا مفيدة مفيدة نوعا ما ليست مفيدة لا أعرف
- 20.ج. أرى أنني استخدم هذه الإستراتيجية بشكل متقن جدا متقن متقن نوعا ما لست متقن لا أعرف

21. أمارس التحدث مع نفسي مستخدما الكلمات الجديدة.

- 21.أ. ما مدى استخدامك لهذه الإستراتيجية دائما غالبا أحيانا نادرا لا أستخدامها لا أعرف
- 21.ب. أرى أن هذه الإستراتيجية مفيدة جدا مفيدة مفيدة نوعا ما ليست مفيدة لا أعرف
- 21.ج. أرى أنني استخدم هذه الإستراتيجية بشكل متقن جدا متقن متقن نوعا ما لست متقن لا أعرف

22. استخدم الكلمات الجديدة قدر المستطاع في كتاباتي أو محادثاتي اليومية.

- 22.أ. ما مدى استخدامك لهذه الإستراتيجية دائما غالبا أحيانا نادرا لا أستخدامها لا أعرف
- 22.ب. أرى أن هذه الإستراتيجية مفيدة جدا مفيدة مفيدة نوعا ما ليست مفيدة لا أعرف
- 22.ج. أرى أنني استخدم هذه الإستراتيجية بشكل متقن جدا متقن متقن نوعا ما لست متقن لا أعرف

23. أراجع الكلمات التي سبق أن تعلمتها.

- 23.أ. ما مدى استخدامك لهذه الإستراتيجية دائما غالبا أحيانا نادرا لا أستخدامها لا أعرف
- 23.ب. أرى أن هذه الإستراتيجية مفيدة جدا مفيدة مفيدة نوعا ما ليست مفيدة لا أعرف
- 23.ج. أرى أنني استخدم هذه الإستراتيجية بشكل متقن جدا متقن متقن نوعا ما لست متقن لا أعرف

24. أختبر نفسي أو أطلب من الآخرين الاستماع إلي و تصحيح أخطائي.

- 24.أ. ما مدى استخدامك لهذه الإستراتيجية دائما غالبا أحيانا نادرا لا أستخدامها لا أعرف
- 24.ب. أرى أن هذه الإستراتيجية مفيدة جدا مفيدة مفيدة نوعا ما ليست مفيدة لا أعرف
- 24.ج. أرى أنني استخدم هذه الإستراتيجية بشكل متقن جدا متقن متقن نوعا ما لست متقن لا أعرف

25. أكتب الكلمات الجديدة في قائمة مفردات.

- 25.أ. ما مدى استخدامك لهذه الإستراتيجية دائما غالبا أحيانا نادرا لا أستخدامها لا أعرف
- 25.ب. أرى أن هذه الإستراتيجية مفيدة جدا مفيدة مفيدة نوعا ما ليست مفيدة لا أعرف
- 25.ج. أرى أنني استخدم هذه الإستراتيجية بشكل متقن جدا متقن متقن نوعا ما لست متقن لا أعرف

الرجاء كتابة أي طريقة أخرى لكتابة الكلمات لم يتم ذكرها.

القسم الثالث جوانب معرفة الكلمة

* يهدف هذا الجزء لمعرفة المعلومات التي تبحث عنها للكلمة الجديدة. فكر لبضع ثواني عن هذه المعلومات ثم أكمل هذا الجزء.

المعلومات التي أبحث عنها عندما أقابل كلمة جديدة هي

دائماً	غالباً	أحياناً	نادراً	لا أستخدامها	لا أعرف	
<input type="checkbox"/>	26. معنى الكلمة الجديدة باللغة العربية.					
<input type="checkbox"/>	27. شرح الكلمة الجديدة باللغة الإنجليزية.					
<input type="checkbox"/>	28. مرادفات أو أضداد الكلمة الجديدة.					
<input type="checkbox"/>	29. أحد معاني الكلمة الجديدة.					
<input type="checkbox"/>	30. جميع معاني الكلمة الجديدة.					
<input type="checkbox"/>	31. نطق الكلمة الجديدة.					
<input type="checkbox"/>	32. تهجئة الكلمة الجديدة.					
<input type="checkbox"/>	33. أجزاء الكلمة (اسم/فعل/صفة)					
<input type="checkbox"/>	34. استخدام الكلمة الجديدة.					

الرجاء كتابة أي معلومات أخرى تبحث عنها عن الكلمات الجديدة.

القسم الرابع أرايك حول تعلم كلمات اللغة الإنجليزية من خلال القراءة

35. أقرأ الصحف الإنجليزية لتطوير مفرداتي في اللغة الإنجليزية.

<input type="checkbox"/>	35. أ. ما مدى استخدامك لهذه الإستراتيجية دائماً							
<input type="checkbox"/>	35. ب. أرى أن هذه الإستراتيجية							
<input type="checkbox"/>	مفيدة جداً							
<input type="checkbox"/>	مفيدة نوعاً ما							
<input type="checkbox"/>	ليست مفيدة							
<input type="checkbox"/>	لا أعرف							

ما هي هذه الصحف؟

36. ما هي النصوص التي تفضل قرائتها باللغة الإنجليزية؟

- فنية رياضية نصوص أدبية (روايات, قصص قصيرة, قصائد) علمية أخرى الرجاء ذكرها

37. أنا راض عن النصوص المستخدمة في مادة القراءة.

- أوافق بشدة أوافق لا أوافق لا أوافق بشدة لا أعرف

38. النصوص المستخدمة في مادة القراءة مناسبة لمستواي في اللغة الإنجليزية.

- أوافق بشدة أوافق لا أوافق لا أوافق بشدة لا أعرف

39. أنا غير راض عن الطرق التي يستخدمها المدرس لشرح الكلمات الجديدة في مادة القراءة.

- أوافق بشدة أوافق لا أوافق لا أوافق بشدة لا أعرف

40. المدرسون بشكل عام يساعدون في توضيح معنى الكلمة الجديدة أثناء القراءة.

- أوافق بشدة أوافق لا أوافق لا أوافق بشدة لا أعرف

هل هناك أي معلومات أخرى ترغب في ذكرها حول تعلم الكلمات في اللغة الإنجليزية و ترى أنها مهمة لهذا البحث.

شكرا جزيلاً لإكمال هذا الاستبيان.

يتطلب إتمام هذا البحث إجراء مقابلات تستغرق 20 دقيقة تقريبا مع بعض الطلاب حول موضوع البحث. إذا كنت ترغب في المشاركة الرجاء كتابة معلومات الاتصال بك.

الاسم:

الكلية:

رقم الهاتف:

الوقت المناسب للاتصال بك:

Appendix 6: The interview schedule for teachers

Interview Schedule for Teachers

Experience and beliefs about teaching vocabulary

1. Tell me a bit about your experience in teaching.
2. What would you say in your approach in teaching vocabulary?
3. How important do you think is teaching vocabulary in EFL?

Techniques in teaching vocabulary

4. What are the techniques that you use in teaching vocabulary?
5. Which of these techniques you feel that students interact with more?
6. What do you do when a student asks you about the meaning of a new word?
7. What type of information do you provide students with about new words?
8. Do you use texts out of the reading textbook? If so, what type of these texts?

Teaching vocabulary learning strategies

9. Do you teach students how to deal with unknown words in a text? If so, what are the strategies that you teach them? Which one you think is more useful? Why?

Attitudes towards learning vocabulary through reading

10. What do you think about learning vocabulary through reading? Why?
11. What do you think about the reading textbooks that are used in terms of meeting the students' needs in learning vocabulary and their suitability for students' English level?
12. What could make teaching vocabulary in reading courses more effective? Do you have any suggestions?
13. Are there anything else you want to tell me about teaching vocabulary?

Thank you for your time.

Appendix 7: The interview schedule for students

Interview Schedule for Students

Experience and beliefs about learning vocabulary

1. Tell me a bit about your experience in learning English.
2. What would you say in your approach to learning vocabulary?
3. How important is learning vocabulary in your English learning? Why is that?

Perspectives on vocabulary teaching techniques

4. What do you think about the methods used in your school in teaching vocabulary? Why?
(prompt: Are there any specific method of teaching you prefer? Why?)

Attitudes towards learning vocabulary through reading

5. Where do you mostly meet new English words?
(prompt: Do you mostly encounter them in reading courses or more in texts out of class?)
6. What types of things do you prefer to read? Why is that?
7. What do you think about learning vocabulary through reading? Why?
8. What could make teaching vocabulary in reading courses more effective? Do you have any suggestions?

Vocabulary learning strategies

9. When you encounter new words, how do you get their meaning or information about their meaning?
10. What do you do when you meet a new word in a text? Can you give me an example of that? (prompt: Do you guess its meaning from the context, ignore it or using a dictionary? Or maybe you do something else?)
11. Which strategies are more useful for you and competent? Why?

12. Have been taught or trained on how to deal with unknown words in text? (prompt: How do you use these strategies in your case?)

13. What type of information you seek when you look for a new word?

14. Are there anything else you want to tell me about learning vocabulary?

Thank you for your time.

Appendix 8: The observation schedule used in the pilot study

Observation Schedule

Date of observation:

University:

Number of students:

Time	The approaches that the teacher used in teaching vocabulary.	Coding notes
Time	What does the teacher do when a student asks him about the meaning of a new word?	Coding notes
Time	What type of information does she provide the students with when introducing new words?	Coding notes

Time	Does the teacher teach students how to deal with unknown words in a text? If so, what are the strategies that he teaches them?	Coding notes
Time	Does the teacher bring texts out of the reading textbook? If so, what type of texts?	Coding notes

Changing Career Trends

A **A** hundred years ago in most of the world, people didn't have much choice about the work that they would do, where they would do it, or how they would do it. If their parents were farmers, they became farmers. The society—and tradition—determined their profession. Twenty years ago in many countries, people could choose their **livelihood**. They also had the certainty of a job for life, but they usually couldn't choose to change from one employer to another or from one profession to another. Today, this is not always the case. **Career counselors** tell us that the world of work is already changing fast and will change dramatically in the next 25 years.

Job Security

B The situation **varies** from country to country, but in today's economy, there is generally less job security worldwide. Even in Japan, where people traditionally had a very **secure** job for life, there is now no promise of a lifetime job with the same company. One reason for the lack of job security is the worldwide decrease in **manufacturing jobs**. Another reason is employers' need to hold down costs. This has resulted in two enormous changes for the **workforce**.

Decrease in Manufacturing Jobs, 1995–2002

Brazil	↓20%
China	↓15%
Japan	↓16%
U.S.A.	↓11%
worldwide	↓11%

First, employers are creating more and more temporary jobs because they don't need to pay health insurance or other benefits to employees in these positions, as they would to people in permanent **posts**. Second, more and more companies are **outsourcing**. In other words, they are closing offices and factories and sending work to other areas of the country or to other countries where labor is cheaper. This happens with factory work and computer programming. Also, the call center industry is on the move—mostly to India. Increasingly, when customers in Canada, the United States, England,

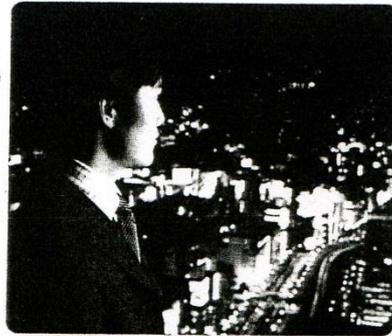


▲ A busy call center in India

and Australia call a company to order a product or ask for help with their computer, they actually speak with someone in India, although they might not know it. India is popular with companies because there is a well educated workforce, salaries are much lower than in other countries, and educated people are already fluent in English. New call center employees in India spend months in training. They learn to use the *accent* of their customers—Australian or American, for example.

The Effect of Insecurity

c On the surface, it may seem that lack of job security is something undesirable. Indeed, pessimists point out that it is certainly a cause of stress. Many people find an identity—a sense of self—through their work. When they lose their job (or are afraid of losing it), they also lose their self-confidence, or belief in their own ability. This causes worry and depression. In Japan, for example, the daily newspaper *Asahi* reports a sudden rise in the number of businessmen who need psychological help for their clinical depression. However, this decrease in job security may not necessarily be something bad. It is true that these days, workers must be more flexible—able to change to fit new situations. But optimists claim that flexible people are essentially happier, more creative, and more energetic than people who are rigid.



▲ Japanese workers have far less job security than in the past.

Job Hopping

d Jumping from job to job (or “**job hopping**”) has always been more common in some professions, such as building **construction**, and not very common in other professions like medicine and teaching. Today, job hopping is increasingly common in many fields because of **globalization**, technology, and a movement from manufacturing to services in developed countries. For example, people with factory jobs in industrial nations lose their jobs when factories move to countries where the pay is lower. The workers then need to **upgrade** their skills to find a new job. This is stressful, but the new job is usually better than the old one. Because technology changes fast, workers need continuing education if they want to **keep up** with the field. Clearly, technology provides both challenges and opportunities.

Telecommuting

E In many ways, technology is changing the way people work. There are advantages and disadvantages to this. In some professions, for instance, **telecommuting** is now possible. People can work 80 at home for some—or all—of the week and communicate by computer, telephone, and fax. An advantage of this is that it saves them from the stress of 85 commuting to the workplace. It also allows them to plan their own time. On the other hand, it is difficult for some people to focus on work when they 90 are at home. The refrigerator, TV, and their children often **distract** them. Telecommuters



▲ Do cell phones make life easier or more stressful?

must have enormous discipline and organizational skills. Technology is changing the way people work in another way—in the use of **cell phones**. There is an advantage: customers and clients have access to businesspeople at any time, anywhere. However, there is also a **drawback**: many businesspeople don't *want* to be available day and night. They prefer to have a break from their work life. 95

Workaholism

F In the 21st century, **workaholism** will continue to be a fact of life for 100 many workers. Workaholics are as addicted to their work as other people are to drugs. This sounds like a problem, but it isn't always. Some people **overwork** but don't enjoy their work. They don't have time for their family, friends, or **leisure** activities such as hobbies, sports, and movies. These 105 people become tired, angry, and depressed. The tension and stress often cause physical symptoms such as headaches. However, other people love their work and receive great **pleasure** from it. These people appear to be overworking but are actually very happy. Psychologists tell us that the most successful people in the changing world of work are flexible, creative, disciplined, and **passionate** about their work. But they are also people 110 who make time for relaxing activities and for other people. They enjoy their work and enjoy time away from it, too.

After You Read

7 Finding the Main Idea Read the sentences below and select the one main idea of the whole reading selection.

- (A) Workaholism can lead to serious problems, but it can also create a happy life.
- (B) Job hopping is a new trend that causes stress but can also lead people into good work experiences if they learn new job skills.
- (C) It is important for people to be flexible in this changing world of work and to continue their education because they may need to change jobs several times in their lifetime.
- (D) The world economy, globalization, and technology are causing many changes in the way people work today.
- (E) In the workplace today, new technology is making it possible for people to work in different locations, even from home.

8 Comprehension Check: Finding Important Details Which statements are true about work today, according to the reading? Check (✓) them.

1. _____ People probably need to be prepared to change jobs several times in their lifetimes.
2. _____ Decreasing manufacturing jobs and increasing use of outsourcing are leading to less job security today than in the past.
3. _____ Lack of job security is always a bad thing.
4. _____ People who can change to fit a new situation are usually happier than people who can't.
5. _____ Many people find a sense of self through their work.
6. _____ People in some professions move from job to job more often than people in other professions.
7. _____ Technology is making work life better for everyone.
8. _____ Telecommuters don't need to drive to the office every day.
9. _____ All workaholics have problems with stress.
10. _____ The most successful people are workaholics.

9 Checking Vocabulary Find a word or expression in the reading for each definition below.

1. people who give advice about professions and careers = _____
2. the feeling that a worker will never lose his or her job = _____
3. the movement of jobs to places with lower salaries = _____
4. changing from one job to another = _____
5. disadvantage = _____

Appendix 10: Sample from vocabulary textbook

17

New words in English

No language stands still. New words and expressions are always being created, sometimes just for fun or usually because something new is invented. Below are some relatively new words and expressions and new uses of old words. Note that all these new words had been in use for at least a few years before the publication of this book.

A Science, technology and medicine

cyberspace: the realm where electronic data are sorted or transmitted by computers
junk e-mail: unsolicited material, such as adverts, sent by e-mail
keypal: a kind of penfriend that you exchange e-mails with rather than letters
surfing the net: exploring the world-wide web
e-commerce: business based on the Internet
mouse potato: someone who spends a lot of time in front of a computer, especially on-line
information fatigue syndrome: a condition of psychological stress induced by trying to cope with too much information
eating disorder: a serious disturbance in eating habits often caused by emotional problems
GM foods: genetically-modified food, i.e. food adapted by use of biotechnology

B Entertainment

snowboarding: gliding on snow, upright on a large single ski
in-line skating: roller-skating or roller-blading with rubber wheels in a straight line
video jockey (VJ): a TV presenter of music videos



audio book: an audio recording of a book read aloud – sometimes in shortened form
drop-dead gorgeous: inspiring admiration for someone's attractiveness
bad hair day: a day when everything goes wrong and you feel unattractive

C Social trends

docusoap: a television genre showing people going about their ordinary lives
cybercafé: café where customers can eat and drink and also use the Internet
road rage: extreme anger experienced by drivers in stressful conditions, resulting in dangerous driving or attacks on other drivers
singleton: an unmarried man or woman
spin doctor: someone whose job it is to manipulate popular opinion in favour of politicians or other public figures
decluttering: the art of discarding unnecessary items
off-message: departing from the official party line
grey vote, grey pound: the voting or purchasing power of older people

D Employment

down-sizing: reducing the size of a company or organisation, usually by sacking people
outsourcing: employing outside workers to do work away from the company site
hot-desking: the practice of sharing desks or workstations between workers (rather than individuals having their own desks)
waitperson: waiter or waitress

Exercises

17.1 Here are some more new words and expressions. Match them with their definitions.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1 shopaholic | buying things by phone or computer |
| 2 wannabe (informal) | a teenager highly skilled at using computers |
| 3 snail mail | someone who is addicted to shopping |
| 4 intermercial | disagreeably crude male behaviour |
| 5 laddish | someone who aspires to be something or someone else |
| 6 screenager | ordinary post rather than e-mail |
| 7 to channel hop | a TV programme in which a hidden camera has filmed ordinary people going about their everyday lives |
| 8 fly-on-the wall programme | to switch TV stations frequently, usually by using a remote control |
| 9 tele-shopping | an advert distributed via the Internet |

17.2 Choose a word from those defined opposite or in exercise 17.1 to fit into the following sentences.

- Let's go to that You can send your e-mails while I have a coffee.
- I've hardly ever used since I got my e-mail connection.
- Most of my married friends think there's a lot to be said for being a
- I like skiing but sounds too dangerous to me.
- As people are tending to live longer these days, all political parties are trying to attract the
- I hate the idea of as I want to keep my own photos and my personal stationery on my desk.
- He's such a His only activity is surfing the net.
- He lost the job he'd had for 20 years when the company began
- The party was full of actors, all competing for the attention of the director.
- I like to listen to an while I'm driving. It's as good as reading!

17.3 If you meet a new word it is often possible to work out its meaning from its context. Try and explain what the underlined words must mean.

- I was driving too fast and, although there was no-one around, I was caught by a speed camera and had to pay a fine.
- Telebanking is so much more convenient than having to find the time to go to the bank in their opening hours.
- Wet-biking, increasingly popular with the braver water-sportsperson, is becoming a bit of a nuisance for swimmers.
- Everyone posting to the list is requested to add a sig to the end of their e-mail.
- He is writing an article on the horrific recent practice of granny dumping.
- After the Princess's death in a car crash, the whole country was swept by Dianamania.
- Many large shops now have their own loyalty cards.
- There was so much sickness when the office moved that we began to wonder whether our new premises were affected by sick building syndrome.
- She has cyberphobia; she refuses to go near a computer.
- The area attracts quite a few eco-tourists who come to watch the wildlife.

Appendix 11: An example of the process of analysing the “Vocabulary in use” textbook

Category	Example	Subcategory
The underlying assumptions the textbook makes (exercises make)	Exercise 18.6: Underline the stressed syllable in each of the words below. arithmetic arithmetical arithmetician	Linguistic
	Follow-up: Are there words which you know you personally have particular problems pronouncing? You might like ask a teacher to help you answer this question. Note any such words down with their phonetic transcription beside them.	Pedagogical
New vocabulary introduced	Chapter3, Lesson 19: clip, crash, smash, spray, whip, whistle	Among the 2000 most frequent
	click, clash, dash, spit, splash, giggle, groan, growl, grunt, sprinkle, trickle	Among the 3000 – 5000 most frequent
	grumble, grumpy, clang, clank, clink, splutter, spurt, whirr, whizz, wheeze, bash, mash, gash, crackle, tinkle, wriggle, sizzle, drizzle	Among over the 5000 most frequent
Techniques used in introducing the new vocabulary	C: Other compound adjectives describe a person’s character. Melissa was <u>absent-minded</u> (forgetful), <u>easy-going</u> (relaxed), <u>good-tempered</u> (cheerful)	Using synonyms
	B: Entertainment drop-dead gorgeous: inspiring admiration for someone’s attractiveness.	Defining new words in English
	B: Certain combinations of letters have particular sound associations in English. Horses go <u>clip-clop</u> on the road.	Using the new word in a sentence
	In the picture we can see a row of cottages near a clump of trees with a range of hills in the background. Out on the lake there is a small group of islands.	Using picture
The cultural context	A: The words, <u>city</u> and <u>town</u> , are sometimes used interchangeably but a city is generally large with a wider range of facilities. This is a description of Cork, one of Ireland’s main cities.	Different to the students’ culture

Appendix 12: The information sheet for the head of department

Information Sheet for the Head of Department

Name of department: Education



Title of the study: Learning Vocabulary more Effectively Through Reading

Dear Sir (name of the head of department),

My name is Sultan Altalhab. I am a PhD student in the Faculty of Education at University of Strathclyde in Scotland, United Kingdom. I am writing to ask if you would be interested in participating in the above research project.

The purpose of the research

The purpose of this research is to find out the approaches that are used to teach vocabulary in Saudi universities and teachers' perspectives on how they teach vocabulary through reading. Also, it aims to investigate the learning strategies that are identified by Saudi students as useful in learning vocabulary through reading and explore their attitudes towards learning vocabulary through reading. As you know, vocabulary teaching is a key to successful language acquisition and I am hoping to use my study to inform teaching and research in Saudi Arabia.

Right to withdraw

Although I would find your contribution immensely helpful, you have the right to decide for your department not to take part in this research at any time.

Data Collection

The data collection in this research will be conducted through classroom observations, questionnaires and interviews. If they agree, teachers will be observed while they are teaching for two hours in two reading/vocabulary classes per teacher. Also, there will be a questionnaire completed by volunteering students, which takes about 20 minutes. A sample of this questionnaire is attached with this letter for your information. In addition, I would like to gain teachers' and students' views in short interviews of about 15 minutes each, if they agree to this.

Why have you been invited to take part?

As this research deals with only Saudi universities and English Departments particularly, your department has been chosen to take part in this research. I consider your Department as representative of good English Language Teaching in Saudi Arabia and would very much appreciate the opportunity to include you in the study.

Confidentiality

A few issues about confidentiality. Any information that will be provided by the participants will not be shared with anyone else other than my research supervisors in Scotland. All responses will be treated confidentially, no real names of Departments or people will be used and every effort will be taken to protect teachers' and students' anonymity at all times. When writing my thesis or in any publications, I will use pseudonyms when citing any extracts from their answers to protect their identity.

Thank you for reading this information sheet, I hope you find the study interesting and worthwhile doing and you agree to enrol your Department in the project. If you would like to discuss any other aspects of the research before you decide to take part, please contact me and we can arrange to meet.

Like mentioned above, after your permission is given, only teachers and students who volunteer to take part will be involved and visits to the classes and interviews will be arranged flexibly, with minimum disruption to the school timetable.

If have any questions at any point during the study, please do not hesitate to contact me:

Sultan Altalhab

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

University of Strathclyde

Jordanhill Campus

Glasgow, G13 1PP

Email: sultan.altalhab@strath.ac.uk Tel. 0553434134

or you can contact my supervisor

Dr. Daniela Sime

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

University of Strathclyde

Jordanhill Campus

Glasgow, G13 1PP

Email: daniela.sime@strath.ac.uk Tel. +44 (0)141 950 3155

If you understand the information presented above and agree for your department to become involved in this research, please sign the Consent Form on the following page. This is standard requirement for all institutions participating in research with the University of Strathclyde to grant permission for the research to proceed.

Thank you very much for your time and I hope to hear from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Sultan Altalhab

Consent Form

Name of department: Education



Title of the study: Learning Vocabulary more Effectively Through Reading

- I agree to allow Sultan Altalhab to conduct his research in the English Department at University.
- I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for this research and the researcher has answered any queries to my satisfaction.
- I understand that all the information that will be provided by teachers and students will be dealt with confidentially and every effort will be taken to protect their anonymity at all times.
- I also understand that I have the right to withdraw the participation of our department at any time, without giving a reason and can request any data that have been provided to be destroyed.

I, the Head of English Department at University,	Hereby agree to allow the above research to be conducted in our department.
Signature	Date

Appendix 13: The information sheet for teachers

Information Sheet for Teachers

Name of department: Education



Title of the study: Learning Vocabulary more Effectively Through Reading

Dear teacher,

My name is Sultan Altalhab. I am a PhD student in the Faculty of Education at University of Strathclyde in Scotland, United Kingdom. I am writing to ask if you would be interested in participating in the above research project.

The purpose of the research

The purpose of this research is to find out the approaches that are used to teach vocabulary in Saudi universities and teachers' perspectives on how they teach vocabulary through reading. Also, it aims to investigate the learning strategies that are identified by Saudi students as useful in learning vocabulary through reading and explore their attitudes towards learning vocabulary through reading. As you know, vocabulary teaching is a key to successful language acquisition and I am hoping to use my study to inform teaching and research in Saudi Arabia.

Right to withdraw

You have the right to decide not to take part in this study at any point. During the observation and the interview, you have the right to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and ask for the recording to be destroyed.

Your participation

With your permission, I would like to come to your class and observe how you teach vocabulary for two hours in two sessions. Also, after the class, I would like to ask you a few questions about your teaching strategies in a short interview which takes about 15 minutes. I would like to record these interviews so that I don't have to take notes and miss things you said, but no one else apart from me will have access to these recordings.

Why have you been invited to take part?

As this research deals with only Saudi universities and English Departments particularly and focuses on learning vocabulary, you have been invited to take part in this research because of the reputation of your Department and your own lengthy experience as a teacher. I do hope I will learn a lot from you in terms of your approach to vocabulary teaching and your ideas about how to do this effectively.

Confidentiality

The information that will be recorded will not be shared with anyone in your school or local authority/area management. All responses will be treated confidentially and every effort will be taken to protect your anonymity at all times. When writing my thesis or in any publications, I will use pseudonyms when citing any extracts from your answers to protect your identity.

If have any questions before you decide to take part or later on, at any point during the study, please do not hesitate to contact me,

Sultan Altalhab

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

**University of Strathclyde
Jordanhill Campus
Glasgow, G13 1PP**

Email: sultan.altalhab@strath.ac.uk Tel. 0553434134

or you can contact my supervisor

Dr. Daniela Sime

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

**University of Strathclyde
Jordanhill Campus
Glasgow, G13 1PP**

Email: daniela.sime@strath.ac.uk Tel. +44 (0)141 950 3155

If you understand the information presented above and agree for your department to become involved in this research, please sign the Consent Form on the following page. This is standard requirement for all institutions participating in research with the University of Strathclyde, to grant permission for the research to proceed.

Thank you very much for your time and I hope to hear from you soon.

Best wishes,

Sultan Altalhab

Consent Form

Name of department: Education



Title of the study: Learning Vocabulary more Effectively Through Reading

- I agree to participate in this research which aims to investigate learning vocabulary through reading.
- I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for this research and the researcher has answered any queries to my satisfaction.
- I understand that all the information I provide will be dealt with confidentially and every effort will be taken to protect my anonymity at all times.
- I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and can request any data have been provided to be destroyed.
- I consent to being audio recorded as part of the research, and I know the recordings will be confidential to the researcher.

I (PRINT NAME)	Hereby agree to take part in the above research
Signature	Date

Appendix 14: The information sheet for students

Information Sheet for Students

Name of department: Education



Title of the study: Learning Vocabulary more Effectively Through Reading

Dear student,

My name is Sultan Altalhab. I am a PhD student at University of Strathclyde in the UK. I would like to invite you to participate in this research.

The purpose of the research

The purpose of this research is to find out the learning strategies that are identified by Saudi students as useful in learning vocabulary through reading. Also, it aims to explore their attitudes toward learning vocabulary through reading. Your contribution is very valuable because as a language learner, you are in the best position to tell me what works and what does not in vocabulary learning. I would be very grateful if you could get involved.

Your participation

If you volunteer, you will complete a questionnaire which takes about 20 minutes about your experiences of learning vocabulary in English classes. If you would like to help further in this research, you could also volunteer for an interview which takes about 15 minutes and will be conducted at time agreed with you after the questionnaire. These interviews will be recorded on tape, to save me time in writing things down, but no one else apart from me will listen to these interviews.

Why have you been invited to take part?

As this research deals with only Saudi students majoring English, you have been invited to take part in this research. Your experience of taking part in English classes is very valuable and I would find your input very valuable.

Confidentiality

The information that you will provide will not be shared with anyone else, including your teachers or the school management. No one else apart from me will have access to the questionnaires or the interview. All responses will be treated confidentially and every effort will be taken to protect your anonymity at all times. When writing my thesis or in any publications, I will use pseudonyms when citing any extracts from your answers to protect your identity.

Right to withdraw

Although I would value your participation very much, you have the right to decide not to take part in this study at any point. During the interviews, you have the right to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and ask for the questionnaire and any recordings to be destroyed and I will do this immediately.

If have any questions at any point during the study, please do not hesitate to contact me,

Sultan Altalhab

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

University of Strathclyde

Jordanhill Campus

Glasgow, G13 1PP

Email: sultan.altalhab@strath.ac.uk Tel. 0553434134

or you can contact my supervisor

Dr. Daniela Sime

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

University of Strathclyde

Jordanhill Campus

Glasgow, G13 1PP

Email: daniela.sime@strath.ac.uk Tel. +44 (0)141 950 3155

If you understand the information presented above and wish to become involved in the study, please sign the Consent Form on the following page. This is standard requirement for all institutions participating in research with the University of Strathclyde, to grant permission for the research to proceed.

Thank you very much for your time and hope you decide to participate.

Best wishes,

Sultan Altalhab

Consent Form

Name of department: Education

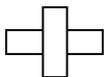
Title of the study: Learning Vocabulary more Effectively Through Reading



- I agree to participate in this research which aims to investigate learning vocabulary through reading.
- I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for this research and the researcher has answered any queries to my satisfaction.
- I understand that all the information I provide will be dealt with confidentially and every effort will be taken to protect my anonymity at all times.
- I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and can request any data have been provided to be destroyed.
- I consent to being audio recorded as part of the research.

I <p style="text-align: center;">(PRINT NAME)</p>	Hereby agree to take part in the above research
Signature	Date

Appendix 15: An example of analysing the field notes

Theme	Category	Example	Subcategory
Teaching vocabulary	Teaching techniques	The teacher wrote on the board “focus = concentrate” and read this aloud.	Using synonyms
		The teacher interrupted the student and asked the students about the meaning of the word “crime”, which was the last word in the sentence that was just read. The students did not answer and the teacher then said, “It’s doing something that breaks the law”.	Defining new words in English
		The teacher asked the students for the meaning of “tourism”. Some students shouted the meaning in Arabic “سياحة”. The teacher then gave the meaning of “ecotourism” in Arabic “سياحة بيئية”.	Using Arabic
		The teacher wrote “Man is the architect of his life” on the board and asked the student to guess the meaning of “architect”. The student said, “A person who design buildings,” and the teacher said, “Yes, exactly, a person who designs buildings”.	Using the new word in a sentence
		The teacher drew on the board  and said “it’s always in red”. He asked the students “where do you see it?”. Some students said “on the ambulance”. The teacher said “yes, it’s called the red cross”.	Using drawings
		The teacher was opening and closing his hand to explain the word “handy”.	Using gestures
		The teacher asked the students to look at a picture in the textbook to understand the meaning of “pollution”. The picture showed a factory with smoke around it.	Using pictures
	Type of information	The student read the word “beaten” and the teacher said “the verb of this word is beat”.	Providing parts of speech
		The student read the word “growth” wrongly. The teacher interrupted him to correct his pronunciation and the student then reread the word using the correct pronunciation.	Providing the correct pronunciation
		The student missed one of the letters, which was an “f”. The teacher wrote “difficulty” on the board and said, “With a double f”.	Providing the spelling

Vocabulary learning strategies	Guessing from context	The teacher wrote “I’m sorry for being late. My tyre <u>blew out</u> ” and asked students to guess the meaning of the underlined word.	
	Using dictionary	The teacher asked the students to check their monolingual dictionaries to look for the verb of “difference”. Two students had dictionaries and one did not. The teacher asked him to share one with a classmate. The teacher also looked at his dictionary.	

Appendix 16: An example of analysing the teachers' interviews

Theme	Category	Example	Subcategory
Teaching vocabulary	Beliefs	I think teacher should have a large number of words. It is a second language, so if he doesn't have a sufficient number of words to conduct a lesson, he will not be able to teach the lesson easily. Vocabulary is important for both the student and the teacher of a second language.	
	Teaching techniques	I always try to explain a new word by using another word, if it has a synonym.	Using synonyms
		Translation is the last solution. If I use all other methods and find that the student still doesn't understand, I translate the word.	Using Arabic
		Sometimes, I draw pictures to explain the new words.	Using drawings
		However, if none of the students know the new word, then I explain the word in English by using simple words	Defining new words in English
		or by putting it in a sentence to convey its meaning.	Using the new word in a sentence
		Sometimes I use body language to explain the meaning of a new word.	Using gestures
		Sometimes, I use antonyms.	Using antonyms
		Sometimes, I use pictures.	Using pictures
	The most successful teaching techniques	These are the techniques which I have used since I started teaching. I feel they are good and have not had anybody complain about using them. Of course, there are a few students who do complain; however, when I explain to them that they are students majoring in English and it is better for them to be taught in this way, they are convinced.	
	Type of information	I explain the pronunciation of the new word if I feel the pronunciation is strange.	Pronunciation
		I give sometimes the meaning in Arabic.	Meaning in Arabic
		Also, I focus on the meaning in English.	Meaning in English
		I provide them with parts of speech of the new word.	Parts of speech
		I try to use the word in different contexts	Usage

	Using texts outside the textbook	I had during this term and the previous one audio and PDF files of some short stories. I gave these to the students on a flash memory drive so that they could listen to the correct pronunciation used by native speakers while they read the stories.	Sources
		I have to finish at least half of the textbook. If I use the data show, and I did try it actually, I will run out of the time we have in class.	Barriers
	Perspectives on the textbook	I think most of the textbooks, irrespective of their author, are good. All of them contain new vocabulary and the student has to learn vocabulary from context.	Advantages
		It is a little bit above the students' level, especially Reading 1 and 2. The textbook follows the same pattern, from the first chapter to the last chapter. It lacks entertaining games that could motivate the student to use his ability to think for example, crossword puzzles which are important because they make the student guess the meaning.	Disadvantages
Vocabulary learning strategies	Teaching VLSs	I give them two texts and ask, "So this word here in this phrase, what do you think it means?" and then I try to let them use the word in another context.	Guessing from context
		I always tell the students, "when you come across a new word, don't use an English Arabic dictionary. Always use a monolingual dictionary", because a monolingual dictionary illustrates the meaning of a word through its context and gives them examples to explain the meaning of words.	Using dictionary
	The most useful strategy	The best way is guessing, especially in class, because not every student has a dictionary.	Guessing from context
		At home, they can use an English-English dictionary because sometimes guessing doesn't help. The problem with using a dictionary is that it gives you different meanings and the students always take the first meaning without looking at the other meanings, especially with bilingual dictionaries. This is what I've noticed as a teacher of translation, so I prefer monolingual dictionaries.	Using dictionary
	Attitudes towards learning vocabulary through reading	It is better than learning words in isolation because learning each word separately will not help the student to use the word in a sentence.	

Appendix 17: An example of analysing the students' interviews

Theme	Category	Example	Subcategory
Teaching vocabulary	Beliefs	Vocabulary is very important for communication. I think the more you learn vocabulary the more you become able to communicate.	
	Perspectives on vocabulary teaching techniques	The teaching techniques of our teacher were very good because he explained the new words by giving examples which helped to recognise the meaning.	Positive
		I feel there is no interaction between the teacher and the students. For example, the topic of today is about banks, you feel the students don't interact with the teacher but they have to attend the class. However, if he gives us a story or a newspaper to read about an event like what happened in Japan, the students might be more active.	Negative
Vocabulary learning strategies	Using VLSs	First, I try to get the meaning of the word from the context,	Guessing from context
		then if I feel that I could understand the passage without knowing the meaning of this word, I skip it.	Ignoring the new word
		But if it is important and I failed to guess its meaning from the context, I use the dictionary on my mobile.	Using dictionary
		I ask a friend about the meaning of this word.	Appealing for assistance
	The most useful strategy	I think guessing the meaning from the context is better than other strategies because if you guess the meaning correctly, you will not forget the meaning. However, if you use the dictionary to find the meaning of the new word, you will forget the meaning quickly.	Guessing from context
		Using dictionary might be the most useful strategy because guessing from context could be wrong.	Using dictionary
	The most competent strategy	I feel that I am competent in guessing the meaning of the new words from context but that depends on the topic of the text that I am reading whether it is familiar to me or not.	Guessing from context
		I feel that I am skilled in using the dictionary than using other strategies because it is the most strategy that I use.	Using dictionary

	Teaching VLSs	The teacher asks us to read and look for the meaning from the context.	Guessing from context
		and advises us to use the dictionary if we could not find out the meaning from the context.	Using dictionary
	Type of information	I look for the meaning of the new word in Arabic first	Meaning in Arabic
		then in English	Meaning in English
		and also how to use it.	Usage
		I look for the parts of speech.	Parts of speech
		How to pronounce the word correctly.	Pronunciation
		I always look for spelling	Spelling
	Attitudes towards learning vocabulary through reading	I learned vocabulary from the texts of the textbook and learned also vocabulary from reading some stories. The more you read the more you come across new words. This method is useful but you should have a dictionary because I think you will come across many new words for the first time when you read stories.	
	Type of texts	I read short stories for example, a story called Amistad and I am reading now a story called Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.	Sources
		I read them because they are short, interesting and enrich me with more vocabulary and entertaining.	Motivation

