

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
MOHAMED KHEIDER UNIVERSITY-BISKRA
DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE AND ENGLISH LITERATURE



**The Role of Play-Based Approach in
Improving EFL Pupils' Vocabulary
Acquisition
The Case of Fourth-Year Pupils at Gharib
Kouider Primary School, Biskra**

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a
Master's Degree in Sciences of Language

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Declaration

I hereby solemnly declare that the work I am going to present in this thesis:

The Role of Play-Based Approach in Improving EFL Pupils' Vocabulary Acquisition

The Case of Fourth-Year Primary School

It is my own to the limits of our knowledge, has not been submitted before to any other institution or university or degree, and all sources that I have used and quoted from have been indicated using complete references. This work was completed at the University of Biskra.

Date:

Signature:

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Dedication

As always, first thanks to ALLAH for giving me the chance for better education.

We would like to dedicate this modest work to:

my sunshine, unlimited source of love; my beloved mother

my father; for his permanent encouragement and support

my brothers and sisters

my respected husband Hakim

my three angels: Soudjoud, Halima Ayat and Sami

my step family; especially my dear Salima for her support

Finally, I would like to dedicate this work to my dear supervisor: **Dr. Leila LOUCIF** and all

my teachers at Biskra university especially professor Hoadjli.

To all who love me.

Acknowledgments

I sincerely thank my supervisor, **Dr. Leila LOUCIF**, for her invaluable support and guidance throughout my research. Her patience, consideration, and provision of evidence have greatly facilitated my academic endeavours, allowing me the freedom to explore and contribute.

I am grateful to the esteemed board of examiners who kindly agreed to evaluate this research work, **Pr. Ramdane MEHIRI** and **Mrs. Lamia BENTAHAR**, their expertise, critical insights and valuable feedback will undoubtedly contribute to the refinement and advancement of this study. I also express my heartfelt recognition to the Department of English at the University of Biskra.

My deepest gratitude goes to my family, whose unwavering support and belief in my abilities have been instrumental in my academic journey. I appreciate their constant encouragement and understanding. I also thank my friends for their valuable suggestions, which have enriched my work. Their input and perspectives have shaped the outcome of this research.

Finally, my appreciations go to all EFL teachers at primary schools, Biskra, for their help and cooperation in answering the questionnaire, and I would like to thank fourth-year pupils at Gharib Kouider Primary School, Biskra for their help and seriousness during the classroom observation.

Abstract

The current study investigated the role of a play-based approach in improving EFL pupils' vocabulary acquisition. It aims to achieve three main objectives. First, it attempts to identify the most effective types of play-based activities in enhancing vocabulary acquisition among Fourth-Year pupils at primary school. Second, it aims to determine the most common challenges that teachers face when using the play-based approach in teaching vocabulary. Third, it assesses how a play-based approach, such as games, role-play, and storytelling, can help pupils improve their vocabulary knowledge. To meet these objectives, the mixed method approach was adopted; hence, quantitative and qualitative data were collected from a questionnaire directed to teachers of English at different primary schools in Biskra, and a classroom observation was conducted with fourth-year primary school pupils. The findings displayed the positive role of play-based approaches in enhancing vocabulary learning. They showed that these methods boost pupils' engagement and contextual understanding, though time constraints and confidence pose challenges. Teachers recommended more varied resources, designed activities, and alternative assessments to improve implementation and impact.

Keywords: Play-Based Approach, Vocabulary Acquisition, Fourth-Year Pupils, Teaching Strategies.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

LMD: License Master Doctorate

PBA: Play-Based Approach

QCA: Qualitative Content Analysis

Q: Question

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

%: Percentage

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ملخص الدراسة

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

General Introduction

Learning any language in the world demands enough exposure to it; the first factor is to acquire an adequate number of words of that language. Accordingly, the importance of integrating a play-based approach is acknowledged by students and teachers in vocabulary acquisition achievement, especially in the case of learning English as a foreign/second language in the early stages. Many studies confirmed the unbreakable relationship between a play-based approach and vocabulary acquisition.

There is no doubt that the play-based approach and the vocabulary acquisition of EFL learners are directly related to each other. Indeed, a play-based approach may be effective in encouraging pupils to develop their strengths and provide them with the opportunities to learn and assist them in mastering the skills needed to enhance the foreign language. Consequently, the play-based approach has become a practical component that allows students to interact with foreign languages more naturally, making it an invaluable tool for improving vocabulary. This initial study tries to shed light on the role of a play-based approach on vocabulary advancement in learning a second language for primary school students in the Algerian context.

1. Statement of the Problem

Recently, students face many problems to learn a foreign language, specifically students who cannot express their thoughts and ideas because of the lack of vocabulary. More specifically, in learning English as a foreign language, vocabulary acquisition is seen as challenging for students, especially the primary school pupils. However, this part of language learning can be improved by integrating a play-based approach into the learning process.

This may be due to the traditional methods of teaching used. In other words, a play-based approach can make a huge change in the learning process; it is considered an effective

component that helps pupils at an early stage of learning a foreign language to enhance their vocabulary acquisition. Additionally, there is a growing need for using a play-based approach that provides pupils with better creative thinking and problem-solving skills. “Early childhood educators are recognising more importance in teaching young children in natural environments within the context of play”. (Hanline, 2001, p. 10 cited in Molly, 2019, p.4). As a result, EFL teachers have started implementing a play-based approach to facilitate learning the target language easily.

2. Research Questions

To reach the aforementioned research objectives, the following research questions are raised:

1. To what extent can a play-based approach help to develop fourth-year Primary school pupils’ English vocabulary?
2. What is the teachers’ attitude toward using the play-based approach in the EFL classroom?
3. What challenges do EFL teachers face in using the play-based approach for teaching vocabulary?

3. Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated as possible answers for the above-asked research questions:

- H1. The play-based approach positive roles, helps to develop fourth-year Primary school pupils’ English vocabulary.
- H2. EFL teachers support the use of a play-based approach in the EFL classroom.
- H3. EFL teachers face various challenges when using the play-based approach to teach vocabulary, such as classroom management, having enough time, difficulty in assessing pupils’ progress, and a large class size.

4. Research Objective and Significance

The present study investigates the role of a play-based approach in improving EFL pupils' vocabulary acquisition. To be more precise, the study aims to achieve three main objectives. First, it attempts to identify the most effective types of play-based activities in enhancing vocabulary acquisition among fourth-year pupils at primary school. Second, it aims to determine the most common challenges that teachers face when using the play-based approach in teaching vocabulary. Third, it strives to assess how a play-based approach, such as games, role-play, and storytelling, can help EFL pupils to improve their vocabulary knowledge.

This study is important in the academic field and beneficial to researchers interested in enhancing vocabulary acquisition methods through the play-based approach in EFL learning. By demonstrating how a play-based approach can enhance vocabulary acquisition, it offers valuable insights about effective and practical strategies that simplify the process of teaching vocabulary. This research can also provide a clearer understanding of how to enhance pupils' motivation and learning proficiency through the play-based approach. In addition, this study aims to raise the awareness of students and teachers towards learning and teaching vocabulary effectively.

5. Literature Review

Today, the English language is considered a linguistic tool for everyone. It is the only medium of communication that every learner desires to acquire. This is because English is the language of the world, which has a significant impact in various fields of life, including business, politics, culture, and education. For this reason, EFL teachers should focus on teaching vocabulary because it is an important component of language acquisition.

Moreover, integrating a play-based approach in the teaching process contributes to the

improvement and facilitation of vocabulary acquisition because playing games is a key to enriching the vocabulary stock and motivating learners to engage more with the learning process. As a result, pupils acquire rich vocabulary only when experiencing them, additionally, it provides a dynamic way to introduce and understand new words.

The important point that teachers must focus on is using a play-based approach as an appropriate material for teaching vocabulary to obtain the desired results and goals for effective learning outcomes. Indeed, acquiring vocabulary in the English language has a prominent and considerable interest among many researchers and practitioners. The play-based approach has been the subject of several investigations. In each research study, researchers attempted to integrate a play-based approach as an effective teaching material for enhancing vocabulary or other language skills.

Primarily, at an international level, Sheridan and Markslag (2017), who conducted a study on effective strategies for teaching vocabulary, claimed that cooperative vocabulary learning strategies outlined in this paper are designed to engage students in vocabulary learning and to keep them actively in the learning process.

Shejbalova (2006) studied methods and approaches in vocabulary teaching and their influence on students' acquisition. She reports that vocabulary is an important part of the English teaching process. It is supposed to be a very effective communication device as it carries the highest level of importance within people's verbal interaction. In addition, she compared students' attitudes towards language teaching methodology, which are used in current conditions: the grammar-translation method and communicative approach. The findings showed that the methods used are beneficial for students' development. Also, she stated that the main goal of this study is to assess the relationship between teaching approach and students' final knowledge, focusing on vocabulary load.

Another study by Molly (2019) examined preschool students learning from play-based

learning and small group instruction. He reported, “Play is often understood as one of the primary ways to learn in early childhood education, but this is not always the case in every setting’ (p. 5). The result revealed that play-based learning is a relatively newer concept that not all educators are familiar with; however, this concept is something students seem to enjoy.

Blyth’s (2023) study explores play-based learning: playing the way to rich learning. She claimed that

Play-based learning is a combination of rich play and curricular outcomes. When implemented in a classroom, play-based learning has many positive effects on the students, both academically and social-emotionally. As leaders of a play-based learning classroom, educators must understand the different types of play, how to create an inclusive environment, and how to use their expertise to enhance the play and learning of their students. When used effectively, play-based learning can enrich and extend the learning of all students. (Blyth, 2023, p.22)

In Saudi Arabia, Alhebshi and Gamlo (2022) investigated the effects of mobile game-based learning on Saudi EFL foundation year students’ vocabulary acquisition. They confirmed that mastering vocabulary can be a challenge, as a great deal of information is delivered in intensive English courses. Therefore, EFL teachers recommended integrating mobile game-based learning into their vocabulary lessons.

On this account, a play-based approach is essential for pupils’ learning and improvement. Thereon, using play such as games, classroom discussion, role play, and information gap activities helps the pupils to build a strong base in learning, and it enhances pupils’ deeper learning interests and abilities.

At a national level, Chahli (2015) at the University of Biskra studied the effects of teaching vocabulary on improving reading comprehension. The study investigates the

importance of teaching vocabulary to improve reading comprehension for 1st year LMD students of the English division. The results reveal that reading comprehension may be improved through effective vocabulary. She stated that the development of individual vocabulary through teaching enhances the development of reading comprehension, which means that exposure to words enhances students' ability to read. Words are defined as the tools used for reading, and most of them come from reading many books, newspapers, and other materials.

Unlike the previous studies, which emphasised vocabulary or play-based approach, this study is different because it specifically focuses on shedding light on the relationship between play-based approach and vocabulary acquisition. That means that we investigate the role of integrating the play-based approach in teaching vocabulary to EFL pupils. It is also different from the other studies mentioned above in that it focuses on the main challenges that EFL teachers encounter while using a play-based approach. Additionally, this study examines vocabulary acquisition using a play-based approach within fourth-year primary school pupils at Biskra.

6. Research Methodology

The current research investigates the role of a play-based approach in improving EFL pupils' vocabulary acquisition. For this, we consider that the mixed method, which combines both quantitative and qualitative data collection and data analysis methods, is the most adequate to carry out this research as an objective and systematic process to describe, explain and interpret the results obtained from the data gathering tools. Venkatesh et al. (2013) claim that mixed methods refers to a technique that blends quantitative and qualitative research methodologies in the same study enquiry. This means that the research will use qualitative and quantitative research methods for the collection and analysis of data.

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected from an online questionnaire designed using Google Forms sent to EFL Primary school teachers in the Biskra Facebook group during the academic year 2024/2025. Classroom observation makes the research more original. Quantitative data are analysed in terms of percentages and displayed in tables and diagrams. Qualitative data categorises textual data into symbols and issues, elicits meaning, and reaches conclusions.

6.1. Population

In this study, the target population is EFL primary school teachers at Biskra from different schools. The participants are randomly chosen to answer the open-ended and closed-ended questions of the questionnaire to understand their views about the effectiveness of using the play-based approach for teaching vocabulary. In addition, classroom observation was done with fourth-year pupils at Gharib Kouider Primary School, Biskra, who are expected to have different sessions of English. As a sample for this study, a class of students is selected randomly.

6.2. Sampling

In this study, the sample consists of (N=12) English teachers who were chosen for the questionnaire from different schools for better results. Additionally, a fourth-year primary school class consisting of 25 pupils is selected from Gharib Kouider Primary School in Biskra to do the classroom observation.

6.3. Data Collection Tools

-Teachers' Questionnaire: The questionnaire is in two forms, open-ended and closed-ended. Close-ended questions are mainly used to produce quantitative data, and open-ended questions are used to produce qualitative data, allowing EFL teachers at primary school to

clarify their opinions about using the play-based approach in improving fourth-year primary school pupils' vocabulary acquisition.

-Classroom Observation: an efficient method that could reveal some information that could be missing through the use of the questionnaire in this research. It aims to observe and explore the extent to which using a play-based approach improves pupils' vocabulary acquisition and how they react to that teaching method.

7. Structure of the Thesis

The present dissertation contains three chapters in addition to a general introduction and a general conclusion. The general introduction gives a brief account of the scope of the study and some important information concerning the research process. It presents the research objectives, states the significance of the study, highlights the research questions and hypotheses, and briefly explains the research techniques and methodology. The first chapter covers the main concepts related to the play-based approach. Additionally, the previously conducted studies are laid out, and an overview of the theoretical framework is provided, which sheds light on using the play-based approach in the EFL classroom.

The second chapter sheds light on vocabulary definition, the importance of vocabulary, assessing vocabulary, approaches to vocabulary instruction, principles for teaching vocabulary, techniques for teaching vocabulary, and strategies to support vocabulary development. The last chapter is devoted to the field work, the methodology procedures of data collection, data analysis and discussion of the obtained findings through the teachers' questionnaire and classroom observation about the theoretical framework, answers the pre-asked questions, and confirms or refutes the research hypotheses. Finally, a general conclusion sums up the research by highlighting all the main points and findings, pinpointing the limitations of the study, and offering instances for further research

CHAPTER ONE:

Literature Review on Play-Based Approach

CHAPTER ONE: Literature Review on Play–Based Approach

Introduction

This chapter includes the main theoretical aspects of the current study. It begins with exploring the teaching of English in the Algerian context and defining the play-based approach. Then, it highlights the various play-based approaches and their importance in language acquisition. It also sheds light on play-based activities used in language learning. In addition, it further covers key theories that support play-based learning. Moreover, the benefits of this approach for EFL students are highlighted, along with a discussion of the challenges and criticisms of implementing play-based learning in EFL contexts. Finally, the integration of technology into play-based learning is explored.

1.1. Teaching of English and Play-Based Approach

1.1.1 Teaching English as a Foreign Language in the Algerian Context

The popularity of the English language as a means of international communication is constantly expanding, used in various fields and domains of international business, trade, travel, cross-cultural communication, and the field of education. English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is used in contexts for communication and instruction. Algeria is among the countries where English is taught as a foreign language, coming after Arabic, which is the first language, and French as the second language, deductively. English is taught either as part of the elementary and high school curriculum or in private schools and other educational settings.

EFL, often overlapping with ESL, typically involves structured classroom learning with minimal real-world English use, as seen in countries like China, Japan, and Korea, where

English plays no role in international communication (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). However, Nunan (2001) provides a more comprehensive explanation, stating that:

EFL is a term used in contexts where English is neither widely used for communication nor as the medium of instruction. Brazil, Japan, Korea, Thailand, and Mexico are countries where English is taught as a foreign language, either as part of the elementary and high school curriculum or in private schools and other educational settings. (p.2)

In other words, the distinction between ESL/EFL is crucial in language pedagogy due to the diverse teaching and learning contexts. In EFL settings, teachers often have limited exposure to the language outside the classroom, requiring careful syllabus structure and cultural dimension. Teaching is also complicated by non-native speakers of English who may lack opportunities or confidence in using the language. The distinction is increasingly problematic due to the growth of English as a universal language, which has led to greater diversification in contexts and situations, leading to an increasingly diverse resource for global communication (Nunan, 2001).

Taking forward the importance of English as a language of global communication, the Algerian educational system has long incorporated English as a foreign language, taught in equal to French, which stands as the second language in Algeria for English to be taught in national and educational programs, encompassing elementary, high, and tertiary educational settings. More recently, curriculum developers and policymakers have suggested incorporating English as a foreign language in primary school, promoting children's understanding, comprehension, and communication skills. In this regard, extensive research has investigated the crucial role of teaching English as a foreign language in Algerian primary

schools, including the identification of key steps, obstacles, and teaching strategies and practices.

Regarding this, Slimani (2016) investigates the role of English in Algerian education, focusing on its impact on students' cognitive skills. The study highlights issues like insufficient teaching time and poor scheduling, which hinder language comprehension and communication. However, some students show a strong willingness to master English and develop critical thinking. He recommended focusing on reading skills and motivation in language learning and urged curriculum developers to consider learners' socio-cultural contexts.

Saoudi (2022) examined teachers' attitudes toward introducing English as a foreign language in primary schools. The study finds that teachers are generally supportive of this change, believing it to be more effective than French. It suggests that English should be prioritised in primary education, with a focus on implementing effective strategies and reconsidering its status in Algeria's education system.

Imerzoukene (2023) explored parents' attitudes toward teaching both French and English in Algerian primary schools. While most parents support the idea, they highlight challenges such as inadequate teacher training and resources. The study suggests focusing on specific classroom challenges in teacher training to better integrate English into the curriculum.

To conclude, teaching a new language to young learners is not an easy task because pupils have certain characteristics and need certain treatment. As a result, EFL teachers may encounter various challenges to hinder basic skills that facilitate acquiring English. Therefore, the teacher must be creative in devising new ways and methods to teach the foreign language.

A play-based approach should be taken into account as an educational strategy that helps students with opportunities to build a strong base in English.

1.1.2 Play-Based Approach Definition

The increased focus on school readiness has led early childhood programs to prioritise structured activities and testing, often at the cost of physical and play-based learning. However, this traditional approach has not been effective, as it has been found to decrease children's motivation to learn and negatively affect their attention and behaviour. Since children learn best when mentally engaged and interact meaningfully with materials, play-based learning should be a core part of their school experience. Additionally, play has long been an essential component of early childhood education, providing both physical and emotional benefits. Morrison (2007) emphasised that a child's education should foster happiness and help children develop their strengths.

According to Webster's Desk Dictionary of the English Language, the word play has many different meanings. In terms of young children and play, it is:

- Light, brisk, or changing movement (e.g., to pretend you're a butterfly)
- To act or imitate the part of a person or character (e.g., to play house)
- To employ a piece of equipment (e.g., to play blocks)
- Exercise or activity for amusement or recreation (e.g., to play tag)
- Fun or jest, as opposed to seriousness (e.g., to play peek-a-boo or sing a silly song)
- The action of a game (e.g., to play duck-duck-goose) (Griswold, 2018, p. 7)

From this statement, it is clear that young children should be given opportunities for play. Play allows children to experience happiness and joy, which is essential for their

development. As an instructional tool, play enables children to learn from each other, build on their existing knowledge, and develop skills necessary for lifelong learning.

Moreover, the play-based approach has emerged over the past decade as a motivational approach to encouraging desired behaviours across a wide range of contexts. While the play-based approach is closely related to serious play, game design, and game-based learning, it resists a singular definition.

Additionally, with the booming digital gaming industry, numerous researchers have placed the focus on the use of play-based approaches in English language teaching and learning. According to Werbach and Hunter (2012), the integration of play-based learning into education is relatively new and thus can deliver the theoretical bases of learning into imaginative experiences. Similarly, play-based learning is considered a crucial pedagogical approach for promoting both academic and social outcomes (Weisberg, Hirsh-Pasek, & Golinkoff, 2013).

This implies that a play-based approach design allows the chance to surmount a particular obstacle or challenge, after which the player is usually granted rewards for their accomplishments. In the same vein, “play-based learning can be an effective method for teaching students while also encouraging their creativity; it provides students with the opportunity to explore, experiment, and build on their knowledge” (Edwards, 2017, p. 4).

Play is crucial for children's learning and development, helping them make sense of the world and build on previous knowledge. Play-based learning integrates play with educational goals, providing a strategy where children learn while playing. This approach combines child-centred play with a teacher-driven curriculum, expanding on children's interests and abilities. As a result, it offers a deeper learning experience than direct instruction

or free play alone. To fully understand its effectiveness, educators must recognise the benefits of play-based learning, its role in inclusion, and the types of play involved (Blyth, 2023).

That is to say, this approach encourages students to tap into their creativity while experimenting with constructing things. Moreover, the amount of knowledge children can gain through play is truly impressive. At this early stage, there is no better time to embrace play-based learning, as children's young minds offer numerous exciting opportunities to explore new ideas.

Jayand Knaus (2018) reported that early childhood, generally recognised as the period from birth to eight years, highlights the importance of play as a fundamental teaching approach. Play is viewed as essential for learning and development in young children, especially before they enter formal schooling. Extensive research supports the positive effects of play on both intellectual development and emotional well-being. Furthermore, engaging in advanced play fosters key aspects of learning and supports overall child development. Effective play-based programs are linked to improved academic outcomes, including higher literacy and numeracy levels.

All these definitions collectively emphasise that the play-based approach serves as a means of achieving meaningful learning, rather than merely breaking up monotony. Play is a vital and fundamental aspect of children's development, beginning in infancy and ideally continuing throughout their lives. Through play, children learn to socialise, think, solve problems, mature, and, most importantly, have fun.

1.2Types of Play-Based Approach

Play-based learning is beneficial for the child, but integrating play in teaching English opens doors for the sharing of values, increases communication, and assists in problem-solving, according to Blyth (2023, p. 24).When exploring types of play, there are two different conceptualisations to delve into.

First, Manitoba’s conceptualisation of play-based learning recognised five types of play as key to children's learning and growth:

1. Exploratory play involves children experimenting with new ideas or materials, often through sensory activities or using loose parts, and is linked to math and problem-solving.
2. Constructive play is goal-oriented, using open-ended materials like art supplies or building blocks, allowing children to identify patterns and similarities.
3. Symbolic play occurs when children use objects to represent something else, showing the development of representational thinking, which is important for early literacy.
4. Socio-dramatic play involves children acting out scenarios like visiting a doctor or running a bakery, helping them understand the world around them and develop empathy.
5. Games with rules teach children about following directions, turn-taking, and impulse control through activities like board games or card games. Teachers in Manitoba are encouraged to incorporate all these types of play in early childhood classrooms.

Second, Danniels’ and Pyle’s conceptualisation of play-based learning (2016, as cited in Blyth, 2023, pp. 24-25) offers a continuum of play, ranging from child-directed to teacher-directed.

- a. Free play is entirely child-led, with minimal teacher involvement, often involving imaginative activities like building with blocks or playing with toys. While free play is important, excessive free play can limit teacher guidance in children's development.
- b. Inquiry play is still child-led but includes teacher involvement to enrich the learning experience, often through spontaneous teaching based on the children's interests.
- c. Collaborative play: represents a shared control between teacher and student, where the teacher sets up play scenarios based on students' interests, with specific learning goals in mind.
- d. Playful learning: occurs when teachers create structured play scenarios aimed at specific outcomes, though not based on students' interests.
- e. Learning through games: is the most teacher-directed form of play, where teachers guide children to develop skills like math or literacy through games. Research suggests that the most effective learning happens in the middle of this continuum, where both the teacher and students share control.

From the above, one can understand that the two conceptualizations of play-based learning can complement each other. The activities in Manitoba's framework can be mapped onto Daniels' and Pyle's continuum, with different types of play fitting into various levels of teacher involvement. Understanding these diverse types of play allows educators to create a more dynamic and effective learning environment for young children (Blyth, 2023).

It can be concluded that a play-based learning classroom offers valuable learning experiences for all students, benefiting them in areas such as social-emotional growth and physical development, allowing students of all abilities to interact with peers and enjoy the

benefits of play. To maximise the advantages of play-based learning, educators need to understand the different types of play to incorporate and recognise their role within the classroom. Since children are naturally inclined to play, teachers can harness this instinct to create a rich learning environment that fosters growth and development.

1.3 The Importance of Play-Based Learning in Language Acquisition

Recently, play has drawn significant attention to education and language learning through its use of play design elements to increase motivation, engagement, and performance for learners. Studies at all levels of education proved that play-based learning is truly effective. In this regard, there is a place for play within the foreign language learning environment.

Furthermore, “Young children are naturally predisposed to exploring that which draws their interest and engages them; to continue growing this disposition, they must feel connected to their learning environment and confident in their abilities as a learner” (Aiono, 2015, p. 2). On this account, using play-based learning for educational purposes develops motivational, participatory, and academic development; Lee and Hammer (2011) declared that play achieves effectiveness in several areas, among them cognitive, emotive, and social respects. Therefore, the play techniques are to be used in different educational areas that benefit the students in their learning.

In the same context, Dominguez et al. (2013) point to the emotional area, outlining that activities shall be equally valued for all learners in order not to disturb the balanced emotional state. The success and failure in certain activities are significantly influenced by the psychology of a student. A student can construct their personality through rewards in the games and a lack of punishment without stress, fear, or anxiety, since the psychological state

can be reflected in their performance and practice. In his report, Whitebread (2012, p. 26) emphasises the environmental and social factors that influence children's playfulness and access to play opportunities. He notes that “even the most playful children cannot fully benefit from play in terms of learning and development unless they are provided with sufficient time, space, and independence to engage in spontaneous, self-initiated play activities.”

In short, play-based learning allows learners to maintain self-efficacy as well as allows for social engagement with peers. It offers a less intimidating platform through which students may seek to enhance their academic performance by making more compelling participation.

1.4 Play-Based Approach as a Teaching Strategy

Teaching techniques differ from one teacher to another. Teaching today has changed from previous years. If you ask any teacher whether using games as a technique is important, you will receive different answers; they may be positive or the opposite. Therefore, using play offers the environment for learners to explore and interrogate information in an enjoyable way with positive interaction. Teachers, when they use a play-based approach in the classroom, will motivate the pupils. As Biggs (2003) says, being active while learning is better than being inactive.

When we consider how learners learn, we can appreciate the effectiveness of a play-based approach as a teaching tool that helps in learning the English language. Therefore, a play-based approach is a tool that encourages pupils to learn the language through different methods. Using play-based activities as a teaching technique can result in positive reactions from pupils, making them more active and participative.

According to Haile and Ghirmai (2024), play-based learning can be a good teaching technique, such as role-playing, imitation games, theoretical expression, and problem-solving activities, and is especially fitting for all stages of language learning. More specifically, using play-based approaches as a teaching tool is important because it introduces diversity, which helps maintain and sustain students' interest. In other words, teachers can support students through play-based activities, allowing even passive students to perform well and engage, as children generally enjoy play, whether passive or active.

A play-based approach makes learning enjoyable and engaging, keeping students active and motivated. It allows students to practice all language skills in real situations, helping both shy and low-confidence learners improve through interaction and problem-solving. A play-based approach creates a relaxed, cooperative atmosphere where students learn without stress, much like how children acquire their mother tongue. According to Alharbi and Alzahrani (2020), it was confirmed that,

Using play to facilitate children's needs is a more effective way for teachers to meet children's naturally occurring stages of development than direct academic instruction. To support children successfully, it is essential to provide teachers with various ways to use play for optimal learning, as well as train pre-service teachers on mastering these approaches to achieve effective learning through play.

(p.15)

The play-based approach makes foreign languages immediately useful to children by bringing the language to life through play. It provides an opportunity for students to learn and use the language in a fun, engaging way.

1.5 Play-Based Approach Activities in Language Learning

The play-based approach has emerged as one of the transformative pedagogies, especially within language learning. The play-based approach integrates play design elements into educational contexts to facilitate engagement, motivation, and enhancement in learning outcomes overall. Accordingly, various activities are used in which a play-based approach is used for effective implementation within language education. According to Hanline (2001), “Play-based activities provide the conceptual and hands-on foundation for literacy by allowing students to enhance their motor and visual abilities while engaging in symbolic thinking” (p. 11)

Moreover, play-based approach activities become a helpful tool in the process of language education, particularly in oral communication skills. Sanchez et al. (2020) assert that immediate feedback and rewards in play-based learning environments lead to increased participation and completion of activities, thus yielding better learning outcomes. Additionally, the following activities are implemented in play-based approaches to further support language development:

1.5.1. Role Play Activity: This type of activity is an important technique to animate the learning climate; in addition, through using this activity, learners can focus more and can acquire language easily. Implementing role-play into the classroom can also give students a chance to practice their opportunities for a lot of language performance, and also a lot of fun because it involves real interactive contexts to enhance speaking skills. According to Revel (1979, p. 16), role-play can be seen as “an individual’s spontaneous behaviour reacting to others in a hypothetical situation.” Role-play is a challenging task that allows learners to talk and present their views and emotions to each other. Also, role-play helps students to promote

their oral proficiency. In this regard, Scrivener (2005, p. 159) defines it as “a large-scale role-play; role cards are normally used, but there is often quite a lot of other printed and recorded background information”.

1.5.2. Games Activities: Games is a fun and engaging way to support your child’s learning and development. In addition, a game is a rule-based formal system with a variable and quantifiable outcome, where different outcomes are assigned different values. The player exerts effort in order to influence the outcome and feels attached to the outcome. The consequences of the activity are optional and negotiable (Juul, 2003).

Similarly, unconventional teaching strategies are required to be put into practice in the classroom because we are teaching a new generation of students, and the best strategies to improve learners’ achievement and motivate them in the classroom are to use games. Games are thought of as useful tools for such understanding in the way of making learning more effective (Adipatet al., 2021). Motivating students and creating a competitive learning environment helps in providing them the opportunity to be appreciated and recognise the contributions of others when playing games in groups or pairs.

This implies that games allow learners to maintain self-efficacy as well as allow for social engagement with peers. It offers a less intimidating platform through which students may seek to enhance their academic performance by making more compelling participation. As well as the competitive dimensions of games, they even raise the motivation more, especially when second language acquisition is in question. Also, games reduce anxiety and develop cognitive capabilities and therefore avoid dropout through building the students' interest in the subject matter (Marti-Parrenoet al., 2016).

Moreover, using communication games encourages student communication by requiring one student to converse with another to solve a puzzle (game). The teacher can incorporate activities from radio and television games into the classroom. For example, "describe and draw" requires one student to describe a picture while the other student draws it. In "describe and arrange," one student describes a structure made of objects, and the other student organises and arranges it without seeing the original picture. In "find the difference," two students have the same picture, but one is slightly different from the other, and the students must find the difference without looking at each other's pictures. (Harmer, 2001)

1.5. 3. Information Gap Activity: This is another kind of play-passed learning activity that consists of grouping students into small groups and giving them information about any topic; then students have to find the gap between the data presented by the teacher and complete the story or the event to get the whole information. According to O'Malley and Pierce (1996), information gap activity is 'the ability of one person to give information to another, an information gap is an activity where one student is provided with information that is kept from a partner' (Cited in Kouicem, 2010, p. 40). In this activity, teachers use interesting materials that can raise EFL learners' imaginations and stimulate their thoughts.

To say it differently, information gap activity is a type of speaking task in which two speakers have different parts of information that together form a whole image when they relate one part to another. This activity requires the students' ability to fill information gaps as well as their vocabulary and information to exchange it with other students, because in most foreign language classes, the teacher uses this type of activity to share information between students during a classroom oral course (Harmer, 1998).

1.5. 4. Storytelling Activity: Storytelling is effective in teaching language function; this type can encourage learners to state a clear idea that they want to address to their classmates. For that, Harmer (2007, p. 129) suggests that “it is a universal function of language and one of the main ingredients of casual conversation narration that has always been one of the main means of practising speaking. Students need to tell stories in English as a beneficial way to develop their speaking.” The main purpose of storytelling is to discover learners' imagination; also, it leads students to interact fluently in the classroom, so this activity is useful for teaching EFL oral classes.

1.5.5. Drama and Simulation Activities: Both of them are strongly related to oral activities; they are essential in language teaching and learning; thus, simulation is a stronger step for learners to show their scenes in real-life situations. According to Bygate (1987, p. 81), “They are not performed for audiences; the participants work together within an imaginary setting; therefore, students often engage in another identity, like drama and simulation activities, where their anxiety is reduced and their motivation will be increased,” so EFL learners speaking skills will be enhanced.”

1.5.6. Problem-Solving Activity: This kind plays a major role in teaching speaking skills; it leads learners to engage directly during an oral expression course; moreover, problem-solving can help EFL learners to reduce their problems. Thus, it involved them to speak fluently the language; also, it demanded that the learners themselves make suggestions, give reasons, accept, modify, or reject suggestions and reasons given by others. Barker and Gout (2002, p. 160) defined problem solving as follows: “A problem-solving group is a group of people who work together to solve a problem by collecting information about the problem, reviewing that information, and making a decision based on their findings.”

Play-based learning activities offer an opportunity to learn through ways that were not previously thought of; this allows students to be creative and come up with ideas on their own. As a result, EFL teachers should integrate this type of activity into their teaching process to encourage students to be engaged with learning.

1.6. Theories Supporting Play-Based Learning

Broadly acknowledged, second language acquisition is the process of acquiring additional languages starting from age 3, like in late childhood, adolescence, or adulthood. Richards and Schmidt (2010) argue, “SLA is the process of acquiring a second or a foreign language, commonly known as a non-conscious process of rule internalisation resulting from exposure to comprehensible input when the learner's attention is on meaning rather than form.” (p.321). Researchers have conducted many studies exploring the field of second language acquisition, reaching no substantive conclusion.

Moreover, some theorists support the implementation of play-based learning in teaching and learning English as a foreign language. The “time of being a child” is the focus of many early childhood theorists. According to Mooney (2013), Piaget’s and Vygotsky’s theories stress the importance of learning through play in early childhood settings. These theorists agree that “education should be child-centred; education must be both active and interactive; and education must involve the social world of the child and the community” (p. 4). Since play-based learning is an important strategy, two major theories that advocate for its use are summarised as follows:

1.6.1 Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development

Piaget (1962) argues that children learn most effectively through play, as it offers them an interactive, sensory experience that promotes exploration and discovery. He emphasises the importance of building on children's prior knowledge and experiences in educational settings. According to Piaget, the role of teachers in early childhood education is to prepare the learning environment in such a way that children can engage with it, explore, and make sense of the world around them. He believes that when children are provided with an environment that stimulates their thinking and curiosity, they can actively investigate, discover, and think critically.

Piaget, along with Montessori, stresses the significance of creating an open environment where children can freely explore and construct their understanding. Play, in Piaget's view, is crucial for children's mental, physical, emotional, and social development. It serves as a vital avenue for learning, enabling children to interact with their surroundings and develop essential life skills. As Piaget (1976) argues, the interactions between children and their environments facilitate learning, making play a foundational component in a child's development (cited in Alharbi & Alzahrani, 2020, p. 12).

1.6.2 Vygotsky's Socio-cultural Theory

Vygotsky (1976) also recognises the central role of play in children's learning and development, asserting that play is fundamental for growth across various domains. His theory transformed educators' perspectives on the significance of play in the developmental process. He argues that play and language development are closely intertwined, with each supporting and building on the other. In particular, he introduces the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which highlights how teachers can scaffold children's learning

during play. Within this framework, teachers initially support children as they attempt tasks, gradually withdrawing their assistance as children gain independence. Vygotsky's view suggests that children can reach beyond their developmental capabilities with the help of teacher-guided play. He believes that play is an essential developmental tool, especially in preschool years, fostering creativity and life skills.

According to Vygotsky (2004), rich play-based experiences are necessary for the development of imagination, which is crucial for understanding the world. Some scholars argue that an overemphasis on direct instruction is developmentally inappropriate, as it may demand academic learning that exceeds children's developmental stages, thus depriving them of vital play experiences. Vygotsky (2004) contends that play provides the balance children need to engage with the world in meaningful ways (cited in Alharbi & Alzahrani, 2020, p. 13).

In other words, play provides crucial foundations for academic learning, imagination, and personality development in children aged four to five. These early years shape future beliefs, skills, and knowledge, and a positive self-image developed through play prepares children for school and life. Play supports emotional competency, social interaction, and confidence, allowing children to take ownership of their learning. It is a holistic, developmentally appropriate approach that encourages active learning through interaction with peers and teachers. Teachers facilitate learning by asking questions and guiding children through play, helping them develop skills in areas like reading, writing, and mathematics (Crehan, 2016).

In short, Piaget's cognitive development theory and Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory suggest that learning through play enhances children's health, imagination, social-emotional

skills, language abilities, and physical development. At this stage, children are progressing in all areas of development, particularly in their mental well-being. Play also enables teachers to identify and address any developmental or health concerns. Through engaging in complex socio-dramatic play, children can improve their language and social skills, empathy, imagination, self-esteem, self-control, and critical thinking abilities.

1.7 Benefits of Play-Based Learning for EFL Students

Essentially, play is important for individuals of all ages, but it is especially crucial for young children. Play-based learning offers numerous benefits in early childhood education, supporting various aspects of development and fostering essential skills.

Play offers numerous benefits for young children, including stimulating brain development, enhancing learning and memory, and sparking creativity. It supports language learning, visual and spatial skills, and helps with emotional regulation, impulse control, and social competence. Pretend play, in particular, strengthens relationships and teaches important life lessons. Encouraging play also fosters imagination and creativity, which have long-lasting effects into adulthood. Teachers and early education providers play a vital role in facilitating play, ensuring children reap these developmental benefits. Play is essential for skill development, social growth, and overall well-being in young children (Clements & Fiorenino, 2004, as cited in Griswold, 2018, pp. 8-9).

In the same context, according to Blyth (2023, pp. 22-23), play-based learning offers several essential benefits, including:

- Development of social-emotional skills, such as empathy, curiosity, and creativity.
- Self-regulation skills help children manage emotions and behaviours.

- Problem-solving and conflict resolution abilities boost confidence.
- Learning social norms like turn-taking, sharing, responsibility, and transitions.
- Enhanced communication skills, including better verbalisation, language comprehension, and advanced language use.
- Improved literacy and math scores, as literacy and math are often embedded in play.
- Increased executive functioning, particularly working memory, through strategy-based games.
- Physical health benefits such as improved gross and fine motor skills.
- Mental health benefits, leading to increased well-being and overall happiness.

These benefits underscore the significance of play in both social-emotional and academic development (Blyth, 2023). Research has demonstrated that play-based learning offers significant benefits during childhood, and positive early childhood experiences involving play can lead to improved health, better stress management, and a longer life expectancy in adulthood. This highlights the importance of incorporating play-based learning in classrooms, as it helps shape well-rounded children who grow into well-rounded adults.

The benefits of play, especially social, dramatic, and make-believe play, are significant and far-reaching. For young children's play evolves, becoming more interactive, cooperative, and longer-lasting. Engaging in social dramatic play contributes to intellectual development and enhances emotional understanding. Make-believe play strengthens mental abilities, improves memory, promotes language and storytelling skills, and expands vocabulary. It also helps children develop problem-solving skills by allowing them to navigate challenging situations, boosting their confidence in decision-making. These advantages have been linked to higher test scores in children who engage in make-believe play compared to those who do not (Berk, 1994; cited in Irvin, 2017, p. 6).

1.8 Challenges of Implementing a Play-Based Approach in EFL Context

Although the play-based approach is useful in the overall development of children, it cannot be used effectively as an instrument to teach lessons that have specific academic objectives due to the various challenges faced by EFL teachers as they try to implement it.

a. Classroom management: Managing a classroom where play is a central component can be challenging for teachers, particularly when dealing with diverse student needs, behaviour management, and maintaining a structured learning environment while allowing for the freedom that play requires. Besides, “classroom management is the way that teachers manage students’ learning by organising and controlling what happens inside the classroom” (Hedge, 2000, p. 46). In a similar view, Watkins et al. (2022, p. 4) mentioned that “teaching in such settings requires a highly developed ability to manage events.” This means that learners need skills to cope with such complexity and become competent learners in such an environment.

Another view by Marzano and Pickering (2003, p. 55) claims that “effective teaching and learning cannot take place in a poorly managed classroom. In contrast, well-managed classrooms provide an environment in which teaching and learning can flourish.”. Therefore, classroom management plays a significant role in improving students’ learning abilities. Ultimately, classroom management encompasses several key elements, such as establishing strong relationships with students, setting clear and organised goals, providing clear instructions and learning tasks, identifying students' strengths and weaknesses to address their specific needs, and promoting self-organisation and positive social behaviours. However, EFL teachers face challenges when implementing a play-based approach, such as students’ problematic behaviours.

b- Time: A challenging factor that several teachers mentioned in their interviews was the impact of the time needed to implement play-based learning. Play-based activities took more time to organise than structured, less resource-intensive teaching strategies; extra time was needed to teach and then organise children for exploratory learning, and added time was required to keep up with the latest research and professional reading required to inform their practice (Jay & Knaus, 2018).

c- Behaviour: In discussing the children's reaction to the play-based program, many of the teachers thought the children appeared to enjoy the experience and were engaged throughout the activities. Some concerns about classroom behaviour were raised, including children becoming overexcited when new activities were introduced. Also, time needed to be taken to teach children the behaviour expectations, such as staying on task and the development of collaborative skills (Jay & Knaus, 2018).

In the same vein, Haile and Ghirmai (2024, p. 36) in their study mentioned some challenges as follows:

- Balancing Policy and Curriculum: Teachers struggle to align play-based learning with policy and curricular requirements.
- Lack of Clear Conceptualisation of Play: The absence of a consistent definition of play leads to confusion among teachers about how to implement PBL effectively.
- Pressure from Traditional Teaching Approaches: Administrators often push for more traditional, direct teaching methods, conflicting with play-based pedagogy.
- Parental Attitudes: In some cultures, like Chinese, parents may not recognise the value of play in learning, creating resistance to PBL.

- **Teacher Education and Qualification:** Many teachers have limited understanding of PBL, resulting in a preference for either overly child-directed or overly structured teaching environments.

More widely, while there are many benefits to using a play-based approach, it is not without its critics. A main concern for educators relates to the use of rewards in play and games and the long-term effects on student motivation. Nicholson (2012) states that a word of caution concerning the use of play is that it should not be assumed to offer instant engagement, and this can have a negative outcome as the use of rewards involved could affect the intrinsic motivation. In this regard, Deci et al. (2001) agree with the view when they say that receiving rewards reduces internal motivations because students' attention shifts from learning to working for a reward.

Further criticism comes from Zichermann and Cunningham (2011), who point out that play-based learning environments can create a "reward loop" in which students will participate only as long as rewards are involved. Without a reward for their efforts, students may simply lose interest in a game or play, undermining sustained participation and motivation.

Although play-based learning is motivating, the students' participation can magnify outcomes such as interest in class activities and a desire to learn more. Using games does present some practical challenges, however. There is the problem of too much noise, especially when the students get overly excited (Stojkovic & Jerotijevic, 2011).

1.9 Integrating Technology in Play-Based Learning

In recent times, as the integration of technology into education threatens traditional methods, it has caused a significant stir in the field of education and other domains. The integration of a play-based approach using technological tools in education has become a focal point in revamping and building upon old pedagogies. This has garnered particular attention, especially in enhancing teaching English skills for young learners. According to Tran (2019, cited in Chien-Yu&Yi-Huey, 2021, p. 10), “The growth of video gaming industries has changed many teachers’ curriculum and instruction from face-to-face into digital game-based models.”

A very good example of play-based learning using technology is the "Vocabulary Ninja" game, intended to enhance intermediate-level English learners' vocabulary acquisition and retention. This is an online, interactive game with points, levels, leader boards, power-ups, and badges as part of several game mechanics, put together in a competitive and engaging context to create opportunities for learning a new language (Zioud, 2021).

Further, Chien-Yu and Yi-Huey (2021) added that online games developed for educational purposes usually contain the following features: First, a storytelling narrative developed for enhancing players’ sense of communal cohesiveness often serves as an initiative. Second, plenty of learning opportunities are presented in the form of problem-solving tasks. Third, a safe space is often provided (particularly in young children’s play) to allow players to construct their identities. These features benefit learners, allowing them to develop communicative competence and learning motivation out of the narratives, agencies, and content (p. 11). Moreover, technology has been applied in various fields, including education. According to Andiema (2024, p. 14), technology enhances learning social skills,

problem-solving, and communication in play-based learning in early childhood education.

She claimed the following points:

-Children with special need benefit from integrating technology into play-based learning.

Integrating technology in play activities improves the quality of teaching in early childhood education (ECDE) centres.

-It is important to understand how technological devices are used in play-based learning settings.

-Technological tools for play-based learning include computers, tablets, interactive whiteboards, interactive books, motion sensors, mobile devices, e-games, and programmable digital devices. (Andiema, 2024, p. 14)

On this account, using technological play-based learning has become an essential tool in education, making learning more interactive, accessible, and efficient, as well as enhancing learners' in-class experiences through multimedia resources that make students more engaged.

In short, using novel educational ideas, tools, and procedures aiming at improving the learning process through active participation of both teachers and students, these technologies highlight individualisation, independent learning, teaching acceleration, and the use of new technical and multimedia resources to promote effective education. Using a technological play-based approach encourages autonomous thinking and free work during sessions, to transition from old approaches to a more structured, goal-oriented, and engaging educational approach. This extract covers the shift in education from traditional teacher-centred approaches to current educational tools. Students used to perform a passive role, but today active and collaborative learning is encouraged (Nazirjonovich, 2023).

Lastly, using play-based learning with technology, faster learning, and the promotion of autonomous thought are modern approaches. This move is intended to better prepare students for real-world difficulties by encouraging deeper comprehension and practical skill development.

Conclusion

In short, the play-based approach significantly enhances language learning by fostering encouragement and motivation toward important language skills. First, it discussed the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in the Algerian context and defined the play-based approach. It then presented the various types of play-based approaches and highlighted the importance of play-based learning in language acquisition. The chapter further examined the play-based approach as an effective teaching strategy and outlined specific play-based activities. Additionally, it explored the theories that support play-based learning. The chapter also discussed the benefits of play-based learning for EFL students, the challenges and criticisms of its implementation, and the integration of technology into play-based learning. The subsequent chapter will focus on vocabulary acquisition in the context of EFL teaching.

CHAPTER TWO:

Vocabulary Acquisition in EFL Classes

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Introduction

This chapter presents a theoretical exploration of key concepts related to teaching vocabulary in the EFL classroom. It focuses on the definition of vocabulary from different views, as well as types of vocabulary teaching. Then, it delves into the processes involved in word definition and acquisition, examining how words are learned and the challenges that learners may encounter. Additionally, it sheds light on the importance of vocabulary and the dimensions of lexical competence. Furthermore, it discussed the effective vocabulary learning techniques. Finally, the chapter concludes with the key issues in teaching and learning vocabulary in EFL classes.

2.1 Teaching Vocabulary in the EFL Classroom

According to Krashen (1989) vocabulary issue is one of the main factors that obscure reading comprehension, teaching vocabulary has long been ignored, because of the large agreement that vocabulary develops through the natural acquisition of comprehensible input.

The forms of the words are "print or oral". Printed words are the words we read and the words we use to write, they are concerned with reading and writing skills. We hear and speak oral words; they are concerned with listening and speaking skills. As Morgan and Rinvolduri (2004, p.05) stated in their introduction, "teachers seemed keen to teach grammar and pronunciation, but learning words-particular words that they need in everyday life came a very poor third". The words could be receptive or productive. According to Palmer (1992, p.118), "Receptive carries the idea that we receive language input from others through listening or reading and try to comprehend it, products that we produce language forms by speaking and writing to convey messages to others". It means that receptive words are the words that we hear and read. However, productive words are the words we use to speak and

write.

2.2 Vocabulary Definition

Vocabulary is one of the most significant components in learning a language, it has different definitions depending on how it's used and understood. Vocabulary's richness provides better reading comprehension as (Graves & Wattstaffe, 2002, cited in Vacca et al., 2000) stated that vocabulary plays an important role in reading, in many other aspects of schooling, and the world beyond the school.

That is to say, vocabulary is very important for young learners, but it's not just about learning nouns. Teachers should help kids learn verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, action verbs, colors, and days of the week. This helps them improve both their understanding and use of vocabulary, fosters vocabulary growth in young learners through formal and informal instruction that clarifies word meanings and deciphering techniques, and integrates diverse vocabulary categories, such as action verbs and colors, into lessons.

In the same vein, Vacca et al.(2000, p.256) pointed out “vocabulary is to suggest that it represents the breadth and the depth of all the words we know, the words we use, recognise, and respond to in meaningful acts of communication”. Vocabulary is all about the meaningful words we speak and write in different contexts. Similarly, the Oxford Dictionary (2005) defines vocabulary can be defined as the total number of words that build up a language. Brown (1995) assumed that vocabulary is a list of words in a language that every speaker might use. Longman Dictionary (1995) defined vocabulary as different views about how we use vocabulary, and how an individual speaker knows, learns, and uses words. Ur (1999, p.60) asserted that “Vocabulary can be defined as the words teachers teach in the foreign language.”

While vocabulary traditionally consists of lists of words to be memorized, lexical forms, on the other hand are considered essential for using language in meaningful, context-aware situations (Nation, 2000).

Vocabulary is also described in the Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary (2008) as all the words that a person knows or uses. To fully grasp a word's meaning, it's not just about its definition but also understanding how often it appears in different contexts, with what other words it often accompanies, and the grammatical and derivational patterns it exhibits. This comprehensive knowledge of vocabulary also includes how words are linked together and their semantic relationships. Thus, vocabulary mastery means having a complete understanding of all the words and their meanings within a language.

In short, vocabulary is linked to how words are associated together and their semantic relationships. Thus, vocabulary mastery means having a complete understanding of all the words and their meanings within a language. Thereon, vocabulary is all the words with their meaning in a language that a person knows or uses in his life. Knowing vocabulary or a word is not simple and easy which we think because; there are various components of word knowledge that are used in word knowledge assessments.

2.3 Types of Vocabulary Teaching

Within the above definitions, there are two major types of teaching vocabulary strategies: Incidental vocabulary teaching and planned vocabulary teaching, as follows:

2.3.1 Incidental Vocabulary Teaching

It is the act of storing information through an activity unintentionally, and it is unconscious learning words as Schmitt, (2000) definition tells "Learning through exposure when one's attention is focused on the use of language, rather than on learning itself. Context, then, plays a very important role in assisting such learning". Hulstijn (1992, p.113-125)

defines incidental vocabulary acquisition as “the learning of vocabulary as the by-product of any activity not explicitly geared at committing information to memory”. Incidental learning occurs unconsciously.

In the same context, Seal, (1991, p.298) incidental vocabulary is “The teaching of problem vocabulary that comes up without warning in the course of a lesson.” it means that; unplanned vocabulary teaching happens when the student expresses his ignorance of a certain word while the lesson, or when the teacher feels that his explaining to the lesson is not enough. So, he/she would need to clarify some words to have a clear picture.

Unplanned vocabulary teaching consists of three steps. In step number one, the teacher conveys the meaning using various strategies such as body language, giving them synonyms, providing opposites, or through an anecdote (short story, joke...). In step number two, the teacher assesses his/her students' understanding of the words by asking them a set of questions. In step number three, the teacher supports the information that the students gathered by aiding them to use the words in different contexts.

Indirect or implicit vocabulary learning involves learning the meaning of new words implicitly when language learners hear or see the words used in many different contexts. For example, through daily interactions, conversations with others, and reading extensively on their own (Read, 2000). Indirect vocabulary learning is concerned with unconscious processes of learning through reading or listening without being aware of the goals of learning. In this type of learning, new words are learned unexpectedly when learners read or listen to stories, films, television, or the radio (Anderson & Nagy, 1991).

2.3.2 Planned Vocabulary Teaching

Planned vocabulary is concerned with learning several words intentionally; this means that teaching words are one of the teacher's objectives that should be achieved during the course. This is supported by (Seal, 1991, p.298) who defines this type of vocabulary teaching

as: “When the teacher goes into the classroom with an item or set of vocabulary items that he/she has decided before and will be taught during the lesson”. In addition to that, vocabulary teaching strategies (VTS) are different, which is why we are going to shed light on the most popular techniques:

a) Using Dictionaries: Dictionaries are very useful sources of information to learn. Dictionaries are divided into two major categories: Bilingual and Monolingual. The Bilingual Dictionary (BD) contains the learners' native language and the target language. This type of dictionary translates the target language's words to native language words or vice versa. A monolingual Dictionary (MD) is written in one language; this kind of dictionary helps English foreign learners EFL to find out the "exact" meaning of the target language's words because it provides different meanings in different contexts.

Moreover, students should be trained to use dictionaries as a very useful strategy to find out the meaning of the unknown words, also it helps to retain words as Grabe and Stoller, (1997,p.112) stated “The conscious thought involved in deciding whether or not to look up a word was useful for vocabulary retention”. Teachers should introduce different kinds of dictionaries to their students, and teach them how to use them, and how to choose good dictionaries to learn words.

b) Glossary: It is considered to be an easy technique to infer meaning because it does not require any effort. In other words, it contains brief and precise definitions that are provided with a text; this is supported by the Oxford dictionary (2008) “it is an alphabetical list of explanations of words”. In addition to this, the glossary saves time, which means the glossary is substantial and workable in case the learner cannot guess the meaning from the context. A glossary is one of the most helpful techniques that enlarges learners' vocabulary knowledge.

c) Focusing on Meaning: When we speak about the semantic value of the words, actually we are speaking about their different semantic relationship that are typically concerned with

synonymy, antonyms, hyponymy, multiple word meaning, and polysemy. It is all about the relationship between new words and known words.

d) Synonyms: Synonyms are words that are closely in meaning. Teaching synonyms for (Vacca et al., 2000, p.268) is “The focus of instruction is to help the student associate new words with more familiar ones. This particular strategy is a good example of the cognitive principle of bridging the gap between the new and the known”. It is a mental principle of associating words together. Finding word synonyms is a useful method to interpret the meaning of words and store them.

According to McCarthy (1990), synonyms are words or phrases that have the same sense, but we cannot say that synonyms have the exact meaning. He pointed out "this type of evidence suggests that synonymy in an absolute sense has no validity in vocabulary study" (p.16), because of some factors stated by McCarthy, including the different contexts in which the words are stated. Every context has its own appropriate words; also, he assumed that the geographical distance has its influence. For example, American people say elevators, but the British say lifts.

e) Antonyms: It is one of the strategies used by teachers to make sure that students have understood. It is words that have the opposite meaning of other words (Vacca et al., 2000, p.267) pointed out “Antonyms, in particular, can demonstrate whether children comprehend the meaning of new words”. Antonyms are a helpful technique for students. In other words, multiple meanings of words may confuse students’ understanding, especially while reading. Antonyms provide comprehension improvement.

Similarly, McCarthy (1990) antonyms are one word or more that have opposites in meaning, but we cannot assume that all the opposites are exact. He thought that some degrees of meaning should be taken into consideration. For example, the words "hot" and the word "cold" have several opposites that cannot imply the same meaning, like the words "warm",

tepid", "cool", "boiling", and "freezing".

f) Multiple meaning words: It is words that have several meanings (Vacca et al., 2000, p.269)said that" words with multiple meanings give students opportunities to see how words operate in context". It is a strategy that helps students to use words in a different context, in which they achieve better comprehension and more verification.

g) Homonymy and Polysemy: They refer to the different uses of many words that have the same forms in a particular language like English, the words may use in a different context, but with big differences in meaning like the word "Bank". For example, "I'm just off to the bank to deposit a cheque", "The bank was steep and overgrown", and "I know I can bank on her"(McCarthy, 1990,p 20).

h) Style, register, and dialect: which recognize varying levels of formality and the impact of specific topics and situations on language use (Vacca et al., 2000).

i) Translation: involves comparative linguistics, which means understanding similarities and differences between the target language and the native tongue (Vacca et al., 2000).

In terms of teaching vocabulary, there are several aspects of vocabulary that need to be taken into account when teaching vocabulary.

2.4Word Definition

All the languages of the world consist of words, and acquiring new words is a process that never stops. According to Daller and Treffer (2007), we cannot measure how many words we know, it is a question that we cannot answer. Dallerand Treffer (2007, p.02) gave a simple definition to a word which is" words are the black marks you are reading on this page, and you know when one word ends and another word begins because there are spaces between words". It is a very simple definition that anyone can produce. In the same vein, Vacca et al. (2000) a word is the basis of vocabulary knowledge, they classified words into three categories, which are:

-Keywords: keywords are important for comprehension; we find keywords in all written materials. The meanings of those words provide the main ideas of the text, the reader cannot overlook the keywords, which means keywords should be identified.

-Useful words: students learn useful words by heart, useful words are relevant, and students use, learn, meet and repeat those words in a different context.

-Interesting words: are the words that make the students excited and create images in the study of the words.

According to McCarthy (1990), English vocabulary consists of thousands of words; speaking about vocabulary is speaking about words. For McCarthy, a word should consist of at least one morpheme. For example, the word “eat”. However, some words consist of several morphemes; sometimes, those words are capable of being freestanding items. A freestanding word is the root of a word. For example, the word "wastepaper-basket" the word contains three morphemes, but at the same time, the morphemes are capable of being freestanding words in other situations.

The form of the word can be looked at from two different angles: one is to consider the words as a part to describe and explain grammatical or pronunciation rules as the following task reveals: What do the words in each group have in common in terms of changes in spelling, stress, or pronunciation when they change from one-word class to another?

Group 1: Change these nouns to adjectives: Malice, finance, office, space

Group 2: Changes these verbs to nouns: Record, contest, protest, increase

The second way is to use words to derive other words by using prefixes and suffixes. For example, the derived adjectives "brutal", "frontal" and "horizontal"(The task and the examples derived from McCarthy, 1990, p.5-6)

2.4.1 How Do We Learn Words?

The decision of knowing the meanings of the words depends on their use as Nagy and

Scott assumed "Knowing a word means being able to do things with it: recognize it in connected speech or print, to access its meaning, to pronounce it, and to be able to do these things within a fraction of a second "(Nagy & Scott 2000, p.273, cited in Vacca et al, 2000,p. 253). To learn words, students should be able to know their spoken and written forms rapidly, as well as their intended meaning.

According to Maley, (1986, cited in Morgan & Rinvolcuri, 2004), learning word processing is associative, in which the learner uses the context he/she in to stick the word in his/her mind, so it is associatively and not mechanically. Learning a word is sometimes an individual process. In another word; students create their techniques to stick the new words in mind as Morgan and Rinvolcuri, (2004,p.5) stated "many students, indeed, to develop their methodologies for making words stick, whether it is that of listening to successive new broadcasts on television or keeping words in matchboxes".

Learning words is a relational process, and our perception of words is affected by several aspects (Morgan & Rinvolcuri, 2004). Knowing a word demands knowing various aspects of knowledge, as stated by (Richard 1976, cited in Read, 2002, pp.25-27). Richard's seven principles focused on the different aspects of knowing a word

1-To know a word means knowing the degree of its frequency in speech or writing. Also, it is worth knowing the words that can be related to or associated with it.

2-Knowing the use of this word according to the variation of function and situations

3-Knowing the syntactic behaviour associated with the word

4-Knowing its basic form and the derivations that can be created from this form

5-Knowing the network of associations between that word and other words in the language that may contain such associative links; for instance, synonymy, antonym

6-Knowing its semantic value

7-Knowing the various meanings associated with words. (Read, 2002, pp.25-27)

In other words, learning a word requires the ability to understand the word in case of reading or listening, and to learn a word is being able to know its use and function in all contexts. Also, learning a word provides knowledge of the formation of the word syntactically in different cases. Moreover, learning a word entails knowing the equivalent words in other languages and knowing its multiple meanings in different situations as well. All the aspects of knowing a word are summarised in Nation's table:

Table 2.1: *What Is Involved in Knowing a Word?* (Nation, 2001, adopted from Daller, Milton, and Treffer-Daller, 2007, p.5). R= receptive, P= productive

Form	Spoken	R	What does the word sound like?
		P	How is the word pronounced?
	Written	R	Written R What does the word look like?
		P	How is the word written and spelt?
	Word parts	R	What parts are recognisable in this word?
		P	What word parts are needed to express the meaning?
Meaning	Form and meaning	R	What meaning does this word form signal?
		P	What word form can be used to express this meaning?
	Concepts and referents	R	What is included in the concept?
		P	What items can the concept refer to?
	Association	R	What other words does this make us think of?
		p	What other words could we use instead of

			this one?
Use	Grammatical functions	R	In what patterns does the word occur?
		P	In what pattern 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 in use	P	Where, when, and how often would we expect to meet
		p	Where, when, and how often can we use this word?

1.4.2 Word Difficulties

Most readers assume that coming across new vocabulary may obscure their reading interpretation. This is why; they have to know the causes that make these new words difficult to understand. According to Nuttall (1982, pp.76-79), various factors make words hard to understand. He classified them into seven types:

1) Idioms: Idioms consist of a particular number of words whose meanings are not understood from single words but from the complete group of words. Thus, students have to be trained in the use of these kinds of words. For example:

1- Show me your colours, 'means', I want to know what kind of personality you have

2- You lost me, which 'means', I do not understand'

The following table gives other examples of idiomatic expression and their meaning:

Table 2.2: *Avoid Idiomatic Expressions (Kane, 2005, p.72)*

Idiomatic expression	Meaning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break new ground • Explore every avenue • In the pipeline • It goes without saying • Read between the lines • Work against time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • start something new • consider all possibilities • being prepared • obviously • understand more than is said or written • try to finish in the time available

2) Transfer of Meaning: Metaphors, idioms, and other sorts of transferred meanings mostly lead to the misunderstanding of word meaning and create many problems. The main reason for this is that these sentences have an implicit meaning that demands to be inferred. For example:

1: 'he is a legend', expresses the fact that this person is a hero and well-crafted in his speciality.

2: 'has something at your tongue tip' means to have words to say.

3) Words with Several Meanings: Many items in the English language have more than one meaning. This shows the flexibility of the language. Well-educated people use particular words that serve their goals, which might be hindered for simple readers. For example, the word 'bank' is a polysemous word that has several meanings:

- I'm just off to the bank to deposit a cheque.

-The bank was steep and overgrown.

-I know I can bank on her.

Although there appear to be three different senses of "bank" stated here, there is an implied meaning that all of these meanings are related.(The examples of the banks are from McCarthy,1990, p 22).

4) Sub-technical Words: Sub-technical words are certain items that have precise technical meanings coordinated to a specific field of study and are considered difficult to understand for readers. For example, legal English words connected to law-like (court, crime, witness,

guilty...)

5) Super Ordinates: The words that are superordinated words have well-known meanings about other words, which have particular meanings and are referred to by the more general term. For example:

1: A piano is a kind of musical instrument.

2: A banana is a kind of fruit.

This is what we call hyponyms.

6) Synonyms and Antonyms: Those words may hinder learners from interpreting because there is no same meaning or same opposite to other words. For example:

1- Tepid, warm, boiling, scorching, and hot are all synonyms in that they share the common meaning, but not the exact meaning, since there are degrees of temperature, and they are all the opposite of cold/freezing.

2- Harmful, hurtful, dangerous, and painful are all synonyms in that they share the common meaning, but not the exact meaning, but they are the opposite of safe, secure, comfortable, and fine.

7) Irony: The difficulty in this kind of word difficulty is different because the hindering is not in the words themselves but their use by well-educated people (writers). According to Nuttal (1982, p.78), "irony is probably the most difficult of all uses of language for the student to interpret".

From the quotation and the explanation above, it is obvious that word difficulties appear when a word is a more complicated issue than it might indicate. This could be truly clear through the following statements:

-Words can indicate more than one function; they may serve grammatical or informational meanings.

-Words are different in form, even with the same word.

- Words can be classified together to form collections that act as if they were single words.
- A lot of words consistently act with other words.
- Words may have the same form and/or sound, but they are so different in meaning.
- One word may have several meanings.
- Some words share similar meanings or may have opposite meanings, and they are different words.
- Words with similar meanings behave differently according to the context. (Thornbury, 1988, p.25).

Additionally, the usual learning of words through discussing, defining, and forming sentences should be supported by directed and instructional teaching vocabulary, and to encourage the students to learn more. In this way, students can meet unusual words frequently in varied contexts. In addition to that, they will improve their language proficiency in general (grammar, pronunciation, and expand their cultural features), and improve their vocabulary stock in particular.

2.5 The Importance of Vocabulary

Vocabulary has become a major concern of linguistic works in the last three decades. As Meara (1995, p.11) stated, "has mushroomed enormously". It is one of the most important elements that make up a language; we cannot learn a language without its words. The acquisition of vocabulary is a requisite task. Additionally, McCarthy (1990) in his book's introduction about vocabulary assumed that, no matter how well grammar is learned by students, no matter how well the pronunciation of the target language is mastered, without vocabulary in the foreign language, communication cannot occur in any way. Besides, words are a very significant element for English as foreign language (EFL) learners, because students frequently want to learn and broaden their vocabulary knowledge as a desire and as a need.

On this account, vocabulary is one of the key indicators of a learner's proficiency level. It is essential to learning English because pupils cannot express their feelings or understand those of others if they do not have thorough comprehension. It is practically impossible to acquire a language without words; in fact, words constitute the basis of human communication. This is supported by Morgan and Rinvolduri (2004, p.5), "if teachers have not always recognised the need to devote time to the teaching of vocabulary, students themselves feel a very real need to devote time and effort to the process".

The importance of vocabulary is also well corroborated by Krashen (1989). His argument is about L2 language learners who try hard to enlarge their vocabulary knowledge as a necessity for mastering a target language. They hold dictionaries with them, not grammatical references. Moreover, Read (2000, pp.1-2) assumed that words must have priority in language teaching. This requires tests and activities to assess the students' development in vocabulary learning. The vocabulary's importance was also mentioned by the linguist Willkins (as cited in Thornbury, 2002, p.13) as an advisor to his learners, "If you spend most of your time studying grammar, your English will not improve very much. You will see the most improvement if you learn more expressions. You can say very little with grammar, but you can say almost anything with words!"

Eventually, vocabulary is vital in foreign language learning because it forms the foundation of communication. Without a solid vocabulary, expressing oneself clearly and comprehending written and spoken texts becomes difficult. A diverse vocabulary allows for more detailed and accurate communication, improving language fluency and expertise. In essence, vocabulary enables learners to excel in all aspects of foreign language acquisition: speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

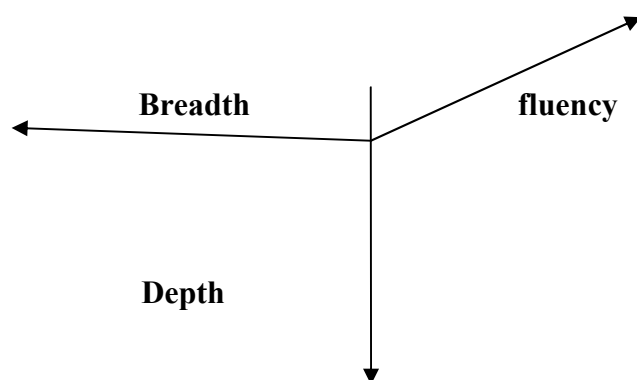
2.6 The Dimensions of the Lexical Competence

According to Pawley and Syder (1983), memorising a huge number of lexical items

enables fluent speakers. According to Daller, Milton, and Treffer-Daller (2007), the lexical space is divided into three dimensions:

a) The concept of lexical breadth (vocabulary size): It is concerned only with the number of the words that a student can identify, Daller, Milton, and Treffer-Daller (2007, p.7) "in figure 1 the horizontal axis represents the concept of lexical breadth which is intended, in essence, to define the number of words a learner knows regardless of how well he/she knows them" the student's knowledge about the words and the correct usage of them is not important, this would also consist of the form and the meaning of the words. Figure 2 shows the breadth:

Figure2.1: *The Lexical Space: Dimensions of Word Knowledge and Ability (Daller, Milton, &Treffer-Daller, 2007, p.08)*



b) The concept of lexical depth (organisation)

It is concerned with the knowledge of the student about the words (Daller, Milton, & Treffer-Daller, 2007, p.7). "The vertical axis in figure 1 represents the concept of lexical depth, which is intended to define how much the learner knows about the words he/she knows", including how the words are associated with each other, and how the words work grammatically, also their derivation and references. Moreover, the different contexts in which

the words can be used.

c) The concept of fluency: It is all about the student's speed to recall words Daller, Milton, and Treffer-Daller (2007, p.8)"the final axis is that of fluency and this is intended to define how readily and automatically a learner can use the words they know and the information they have in the use of these words". It is concerned about the student's ability to use the words he/she know automatically, whether in writing or speech.

d) The Lexical Approach: After the popularity of the lexical approach by Lewis (1993), and according to his work, teaching lexis should be developed to achieve successful language learning. The author is definitely against the usual way of teaching grammar, but he focuses on the different methodologies that the teacher can use to reach new and effective teaching of vocabulary (lexis). These methodological changes highlight some evocative expressions, so his idea is about emphasising the lexical chunks rather than words alone. He argues that "The lexical approach is not a new all-embracing method, but a set of principles based on a new understanding of language." (Lewis, 2005, p.2)

This means that teachers should develop teaching of lexis in which they focus on multi-words, and adopt tasks that have a clear emphasis on lexis. The author gave an excellent argument about teaching pre-patterned chunks, in which he asked, why we do not know more about pre-patterned chunks; to use them correctly. What we need to master is lexis for successful language. The terminologies that describe this theory are many, they are not always very precise, and they always overlap in meaning, for example, the lexical phrase and the lexical sequences:

1) The lexical phrase: According to the work of (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992 cited in Read, 2000) they have developed a group of phrases that act like units and have specific functions in the written and the spoken form, it's called the lexical phrase, those phrases are almost grammatical structures which are divided into four categories: Poly words, Institutionalized

expressions, Phrasal constraints, and Sentence builders.

-Poly words: They are phrases that are considered to be short and stable, and have several functions.

-Institutionalised expressions: They are phrases that are considered to be long and fixed in their structure; they consist of proverbs and aphorisms.

-Phrasal constraints: They are phrases that are consisted of one or two gaps to fill with words, like (the sooner, the better...).

-Sentence builders: They are phrases that consist of one or two gaps to form a sentence in which an idea is expressed, like (but also..., not only)

2) The lexical sequences: The units of words are not just phrases; they are also sequences, and they have certain characteristics. Read (2000, p.23) said that "they are relatively fixed in form, although there may be some variation in the actual words "First of all, they are formally fixed, but sometimes the words change according to the context in which they are said or written.

Read (2000, p.23) said that "it may be difficult, if not impossible, to work out what they mean from just knowing the meaning of the individual words", also sometimes are difficult to understand, and cannot be understood when the words are separated. Moreover, Read stated that "we recognise them as familiar expressions"; they are familiar sequences that we use to communicate in daily life. For example, (nice to meet you, I'm afraid I have some bad news for you).

2.7 Vocabulary Learning

Vocabulary plays a crucial role in mastering language. Thus, to build a strong foundation in both oral and written communication, learners actively employ various strategies to maximize vocabulary acquisition. In other words, teaching vocabulary is a process that needs to reduce students' paucity of words; however, full grasping of words is mostly concerned with effective means of learning. Students are aware of vocabulary

significance, they are aware of their need to grasp an adequate number of words. This is supported by Morgan and Rinvolcuri (2004, p.5) "if teachers have not always recognised the need to devote time to the teaching of vocabulary, students themselves feel a very real need to devote time and effort to the process".

Consequently, learners should practice and develop their techniques to learn words as Morgan and Rinvolcuri (2004, p.5) stated, "Many students, indeed, develop their methodologies for making words stick, whether it is that of listening to successive new broadcasts on television or keeping words in matchboxes". In the same vein, Thorunbury (1988) developing one's vocabulary knowledge in a foreign language is a task that should follow certain points, as said by (Thorunbury, 1988, p.22):

-Observation: the unfamiliar words have to be observed in their situations; more obviously, the next words and the syntactic structure should be noted. On the other hand, a good dictionary should be available, and models of the use of the unknown word have to be checked.

-Imitation: it is necessary to use the new word that the student has found in its suitable situation, corresponding to the examples he has already noted.

-Repetition: students need to stick the word in their minds; students will need to memorise the word several times to use it later on. In other words, repetition is a very important technique to learn words.

In short, vocabulary learning strategies are the actions, behaviors, steps or techniques that learners consciously employ to enhance their understanding of new words and terms. Importantly, these strategies should be chosen based on the level, comprehension, learning style and assimilation of learners. There are a lot of strategies such as using context cues, flashcards, song, reading or video. Besides this, the teacher is an essential element for guiding learners towards the appropriate strategies. Researchers bring many classifications of learning

vocabulary strategies. Various classification systems for vocabulary learning strategies can be found in the literature, often categorized as a subset of general learning strategies (Llach& Alonso, 2014).

2.8 Effective Techniques in Teaching Vocabulary

Many researchers have suggested several techniques that are considered to be helpful for the growth of vocabulary. In addition, an EFL teacher applies these techniques, which help students to learn vocabulary more effectively. According to Vacca et al. (2000), four strategies are suggested: two for the growth of vocabulary, and two for the creation of self-independence in the process of learning vocabulary.

1) Operating Context: Using the usual way of learning vocabulary is not enough for word growth; researchers and teachers believe that students need to learn words in a different context. Defining words and forming sentences is helpful to practice, but also when we operate in the context, students may discover the meaning of the unknown words. Vacca et al.(2000, p.267) stated that “we know that using the context provided in the most text tells us something about the word’s meaning”.

2) Classifying and categorising: The second strategy is classifying and categorising words for vocabulary growth. Classifying and categorizing words strategy treats the relationship among words and allows the students to engage words together, not to use this, or to imply ideas, classifying and categorizing strategy learns students how to think critically about words, (Vacca et al., 2000, p. 270) said that “such strategies involve the processes of joining, excluding, selecting, and implying”. The other two strategies are all about how to develop learners’ independence to learn vocabulary. The first strategy is called the self-selection strategy, and the second is the word knowledge rating:

3) Self-selection strategy: it is concerned with the words or concepts that the students have found in literature or incidental learning experiences, and as the title implies, the students

select words to be studied in the classroom, after they explain the words' importance, and why they should be learned. (Vacca et al., 2000)

4) Word knowledge rating: it is concerned about to which rate are students familiar with vocabulary words, students use a self-selection strategy to choose words with the teacher and writing them on the board, and then using the continuum of (Dale, 1965, cited in Vacca et al., 2000, p.282) to display the student's vocabulary cognition, it is stated as:

-I've never seen the word

-I've heard of it, but I don't know what it means.

-I recognise it in context. It has something to do with.....

-I know the word in one or several of its meanings

In summary, mastering vocabulary is a crucial element in the journey of acquiring a foreign language. Recently, teachers have integrated effective techniques to teach vocabulary, these techniques provide learners with contextually engaging content that can help retain vocabulary and apply it to educational situations.

2.9 Key Issues in Teaching and Learning Vocabulary in EFL Classes

Using a variety of teaching and learning strategies can expand vocabulary and improve communication. Through these strategies, teachers can create engaging learning experiences and enable students to actively and successfully build their vocabulary skills. Thereon, in vocabulary teaching and learning, EFL teachers play a crucial role in building a better environment to learn vocabulary and providing an enjoyable atmosphere for the students.

Some factors classify whether vocabulary is difficult or easy. Gower et al.(1995, as cited in Rohmatillah, 2017) present the following issues:

- Similar to L1: the difficulty of vocabulary items is based on how the items resemble the student's first language in meaning and form. Similar words in English and the mother tongue maybe deceptive rather than helpful.

- **Connotation:** Another challenging concept for students is connotation. The word for instance, what is the native speaker's perception of the word? Is it negative or positive? A thin person can be called either slim or skinny, but the speaker indicates a particular attitude by preferring one word over the other because they have different connotations.
- **Similar to English words:** learners who have some English knowledge will discover that a word that is similar to one they already know is easier than one that is not. In this case, since students are already familiar with the word friendly, they will directly know what unfriendly means.
- **Spelling and pronunciation:** learners who speak English with a highly regular spelling system might face difficulties with the spelling of many English words. For example, it is obvious why a lot of learners confuse the meaning, pronunciation and spelling of the following words: thorough, tough, thought, though and through.
- **Multi-word items:** a lexical item may include several words, like in a compound noun as sports car or tennis shoes, or a phrasal verb, like put someone up. Because phrasal verbs constitute a group of simple words, generally prepositions or adverbs, they are notoriously hard for English language learners.
- **Collocation:** Collocation is a term that describes how two or more words are used together. We cannot say heavy sun, but we say there is a heavy rain, or that we can make a decision and not do it; therefore, heavy rain and make a decision both are collocations (McCarten, 2007).

More specifically, there are several aims for learning vocabulary. Linse and Nunan (2005) discussed many of them, including the following:

1- Defining learning objectives is crucial for creating courses and study schedules. Three types of information to consider when planning vocabulary goals are the number of words in

the language, native speakers' knowledge, and the required words.

2- Fluency in a language is an ambitious goal due to its lack of a comprehensive vocabulary, but understanding the number of words used is interesting for professionals in fields like computational linguistics or nuclear physics.

3- Setting goals for vocabulary development that aren't as ambitious are as simple as looking at what language natives already know.

Similarly, Hu and Nation (2000) stated that the goals of learning vocabulary revolve around two principles:

First, students should be aware of the language they need to learn, as well as how to acquire it, apply it, and assess their level of understanding and application. This concept is essentially a summation of the majority of the other vocabulary learning principles since it embodies the objectives of vocabulary acquisition. It consists of three components: format and presentation, monitoring and assessment, and content and sequencing (Nation, 2000).

Second, students should keep adding to and broadening the vocabulary they currently possess. So, principle two is more concerned with the outcomes than principle one, which is with the nature of vocabulary learning (Nation, 2000).

In short, effective teaching and learning strategies provide essential principles to guide teachers in improving learners' vocabulary acquisition. Hence, teaching vocabulary involves employing different strategies and techniques that help with effective learning and comprehension. This ongoing pursuit demands that teachers explore diverse strategies to engage students and promote meaningful learning.

Conclusion

In short, it is known that learning a second/ foreign language is like learning a large number of words in that language. Students' vocabulary improvement relies on teachers, who provide and select vocabulary activities that enhance the learners' vocabulary stock. When learners meet, know, learn, and use words, they develop their ability to comprehend what they read. This theoretical chapter has provided an in-depth exploration of the key concepts central to the present study. It began with the definition of vocabulary and its types. Also, it discussed various approaches to vocabulary teaching, including, as well as the process of word definition and how words are learned. The chapter then highlighted the importance of vocabulary in language acquisition. Additionally, it explored the dimensions of lexical competence and identified effective strategies for vocabulary learning, along with the challenges that learners often encounter. Finally, it addressed key issues in teaching and learning vocabulary within the EFL context. The findings are presented in the next chapter and deals with the methodology employed and the analysis of the designed questionnaire and classroom observation.

CHAPTER THREE:

Research Methodology and Data Analysis

CHAPTER THREE: Research Methodology and Data Analysis

Introduction

In this chapter, we focus on the practical side of the research, which is the research methodology and data analysis. It outlines the methods and procedures for data collection and analysis, describes the mixed research, and provides information about the study population and sample. Furthermore, it sheds light on the two primary data collection instruments, namely, classroom observation and teachers' questionnaire. Finally, the chapter wraps up with the analysis and interpretation of the results obtained from both research tools.

3.1 Research Design

The methodology used is mixed-methods research because it serves the objectives of our study. To support this point, Selinger and Shohamy (1989, as cited in Khaldoun, 2008) affirmed that, "Research design is based on understanding the steps within the interactive framework of the research, without isolating variables" (p.85) In addition, research design is an important component of the dissertation to answer the research questions. Then, the research design is the overall strategy for conducting research, which defines a concise and reasonable plan to solve existing research problems by collecting, interpreting, analysing and discussing data.

Similarly, Cresswell (2009) said that "research designs are plans and procedures for research that span the discussion from broad. Furthermore, a good research design is typically defined by adjectives such as adaptable, appropriate, and effective."(p.51) Research design minimises variance and maximises the reliability of collected and analysed data. In certain tests, the design with the smallest experimental error is considered the best.

As a result, this research employs a mixed-methods research design that uses a case study approach and involves quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. According

to Yin (2002), “the case study, like other research strategies, is a way of investigating an empirical topic by following a set of pre-specified procedures” (p. 20). Selecting a research design depends on the nature of the research problem, the target audience, and the researchers' personal experiences. It involves specific procedures through which data are collected and analysed to study, interpret, and transform general assumptions into detailed methods.

3.2 Mixed Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

The basis of methodology is that such integration permits a complete use of data rather than separate quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. Mixed methods research comes from the social sciences and has recently expanded into medical sciences, including nursing, family medicine, social work, and others.

In addition, a mixed-methods approach is useful for such design and incentivising of the type of questions being raised and the objectives being designated. Since any investigation requires a certain set of tools for collection and analysis, it is necessary to shed light on the various instruments, the sample, and the analysis procedures pertinent to each data gathering tool (Creswell & Clark, 2011). “Mixed-methods” are quantitative and qualitative data within a single investigation. This approach allowed for a deeper understanding of the role of the play-based approach in improving EFL pupils' vocabulary acquisition.

A qualitative study is appropriate to explain a phenomenon by relying on the perception of a person's experience in a given situation (Stake, 2010, p.62). In the same context, Birks and Mills (2011) described a qualitative approach that comes from the human experience with complete objectivity, understanding that a human's perception is imperfect, influenced by society, culture, or other external influences.

The Qualitative Approach involves collecting and analysing non-numerical data. Creswell (2009, p.101) defined it as “a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problems”. On the other hand, Frankel and

Wallen (2009) argue that qualitative researchers have a much greater flexibility in both the strategies and techniques they use and the overall research process itself.

Given what has been mentioned, the basic principle for using the two approaches is that the strengths of the two methods will complement and compensate for each other. Frankel and Wallen (2009,p.105)express that “it is advantageous to use multiple methods; researchers are better able to gather and analyse considerably more and different kinds of data than they would be able to using just one approach”.

Qualitative methods use descriptions and categories to study human experiences and realities from the subject’s perspective. Its primary goal is to understand the phenomenon from the participants’ viewpoint, with its institutional and social context intact (Palmer & Bolderston, 2006).

However, a quantitative approach is used to analyse the data. So, through quantitative methods, we can measure and analyse data gathering through statistical procedures. Blaxter et al. (2006, p.09) stated that: “Quantitative research is characterised by deductive approaches to the research process aimed at proving, disproving, or lending credence to existing theories. This type of research involves measuring variables and testing relationships between variables to reveal patterns, correlations, or causal relationships”. The quantitative research method deals with the numerical analysis of variables to obtain plausible results. It involves the use of numerical data to answer questions like “who”, “how”, “what”, etc.

Aliaga and Gunderson (2002) describe quantitative research methods as an issue where data are collected and analysed numerically and using mathematical methods. Furthermore, to pursue quantitative research, one needs to follow four main steps: establishing the statement of a problem, generating the hypothesis or the research question, reviewing related literature, and implementing a numerical analysis of data (cited in Apuke, 2017, p.21). This combination in the research provides valuable results, as it benefits from the

strengths of both approaches.

3.3 Setting and Sampling

It is important to identify the setting and the sample of the work to trace an organized path for collecting the required data; Kothari (2004), sampling may be described as “the choice of a few a part of a combination or totality on the idea of which a judgement or inference approximately the combination or totality is made” (p, 152).

Moreover, this study was conducted at Gharib Kouider Primary school, Biskra, located on the northern edge of the Sahara desert in Algeria, during the academic year 2024–2025. The school hosts approximately 800 pupils across different levels (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th year), including three classes of fourth-year pupils (75 pupils). It also employs 26 teachers who are responsible for delivering various subjects. This research was designed as a case study focusing on a sample of fourth-grade pupils. Accordingly, a classroom observation is done with fourth-year pupils to investigate the role of a play-based approach in improving EFL pupils’ vocabulary acquisition.

Thereon, the EFL teachers use a play-based approach to teach fourth-year students and facilitate learning the English language and acquire vocabulary effectively. For this reason, this school is highly relevant to the research. The second sample was English teachers from different primary schools in Biskra who were going to answer a questionnaire designed to obtain information about teachers’ viewpoints and attitudes towards the investigated topic. This setting was selected because it aligns with the objectives of the study. Familiarity with the school and its academic environment helped ensure smooth access to pupils, who contributed to an effective data collection process, and this reinforces the relevance of the topic under investigation.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis is considered one of the most important and challenging stages of research, in which the researcher collects and analyses data. It is not limited to examining the external appearance; instead, it goes deeper, as the researcher aims to uncover the deeper meanings behind the data (Denscombes, 2014). This means the researcher seeks, through data analysis, to discover and extract both hidden and visible information. Data analysis involves the classification, interpretation, and understanding of data. Moreover, data analysis includes two types of procedures: qualitative data and quantitative data.

The quantitative analysis of the data collected from the teachers' questionnaire. The results are interpreted in terms of numerical data manually coded in the form of percentages, which were demonstrated in the form of figures. According to Pal (2017), quantitative data collection involves surveys, statistics, measurements, pre-existing data, and questionnaires to gather numerical data. A thorough understanding of research problems is essential for managing and addressing the accumulation of data or facts. The frequency and the percentage distribution in figures express the frequency distribution, making it easier to compare various data. In addition, the quantitative analysis verifies and measures the validity of the previously stated questions and hypotheses.

The data collected through the classroom observation followed a qualitative approach in analysis through thematic interpretation. Clarke and Braun (2013) define the qualitative approach as "the usage of words as data collected and analysed in all sorts of ways" (Clarke & Braun, 2013, p.3). In the same vein, Coles and McGrath (2010) add, "Qualitative data is mainly concerned with words; it is usually presented in a discursive manner. You can then use your powers of logic, induction, and deduction to dig into the data". Additionally, Lee (2012) demonstrates:

Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information

about the values, opinions, behaviours, and social contexts of particular populations. The strength of qualitative research is its ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. (P.1)

By analysing themes in classroom observation, the goal was to gain deeper insights into the role of a play-based approach in improving EFL pupils' vocabulary acquisition and identify qualitative factors that influence students' vocabulary acquisition.

3.5 Data Collection Tools

It is necessary to select effective tools for our study, which provide us the description of the subjects involved in it. It will also include information about the instruments used to collect data. There will be a discussion of the data collection and analysis procedures of the questionnaire and classroom observation.

As mentioned before, to obtain the required data for our research, we chose the mixed method because it is a suitable way that could enhance the validity. Due to that, the triangulation approach of data collection was employed by using two data collection tools: an online questionnaire designed using Google Forms was sent to EFL teachers from different primary schools in Biskra in their Facebook group, and a classroom observation was conducted with fourth-year pupils at Gharib Kouider Primary School-Biskra. These two tools will be described and analysed in detail in this chapter.

Furthermore, data collection is a method of collecting and analysing data and knowledge about the study's subjects (people, artefacts, and phenomena) as well as the environment in which they occur. Then, data collection helps the researcher to obtain information from a variety of sources in order to answer pertinent questions, assess results, and make decisions.

3.5.1 The Teachers' Questionnaire

The questionnaire is perhaps the most widely used for eliciting information from some target informants relative to their goals, attitudes and backgrounds. These data collection tools aim to investigate the teachers' attitudes towards the subject under investigation. According to the importance of the questionnaire, it is said that: "the questionnaire was used as a main instrument to elicit data from the two omnipresent partners in the teaching/ learning process: students and teachers for the reason that it allows the analysis of a large number of informants in a relatively short period anonymously" (Wallace, 1998, p.41). The questionnaire is one of the most frequent quantitative data-gathering tools. It is a set of questions asked to collect statistically useful information about a given topic. It is a valuable method of collecting data from respondents (Roopa& Rani, 2012).

In designing the present self-completed questionnaire for research purposes, the items required answers with dichotomies (yes/no questions), or picking the most appropriate answer from a series of options, or asking the students to give their opinions or to explain their choices. This questionnaire is addressed to EFL teachers at primary schools in Biskra. The participants of this questionnaire are twelve (12) teachers from different schools. It consists of nineteen (19) questions arranged logically to gather insights about the teachers' attitudes towards the role of the play-based approach in improving EFL pupils' vocabulary acquisition.

3.5.2 The Classroom Observation

Classroom observation is an inexpensive method for discovering more details about pupils' behaviours and existing spaces. Additionally, observation can lead the researcher to new information about the participants, where everything is presented to the observer directly and in front of him or her. The primary purpose of observations is to describe.

Essentially, certain types of research can best be investigated through observing how people act or to watch what they do, that is why, it was important to observe a concrete

classroom setting, because “observation seems to be pre-eminently the appropriate method for getting the correct answers ... direct observation in the field permits a lack of artificiality which all too rare with other techniques” (Robson, 2002,p.310). Accordingly, a major advantage of observation as a technique is its directness; therefore, by observing pupils, we can watch what they do and listen to what they say. It supports research that discusses the role of the play-based approach in improving EFL pupils’ vocabulary acquisition.

Moreover, the observation technique provides a chance for getting more reliable data in this sense, Chaudron (1998, p.772) affirms that, “The data obtained from observation are demonstrably extensive and informative”. In a similar view, Denscambes (2014, p.215) believes that “observation does not rely on what people say they think, instead it is based on the premise that, for certain purposes, it is best to observe what happens”. Observation is observing the research theme related to the sample activity, moving or working process.

The observation was conducted with fourth-year pupils at Gharib Kouider Primary School-Biskra, the sample is (25) pupils in each class, the selection of such a sample was based on the consideration that the teacher will integrate play and games in teaching pupils.

Furthermore, the self-designed checklist consists of sixteen observations, which are arranged logically. In addition, it includes two sections: the first section was designed to gather data about teachers’ roles and classroom environment, and the second section highlighted the role of the play-based approach in improving EFL pupils’ vocabulary acquisition. The classroom observation provides a comprehensive understanding of the investigated topic.

3.6 Analysis of the Teachers’ Questionnaire

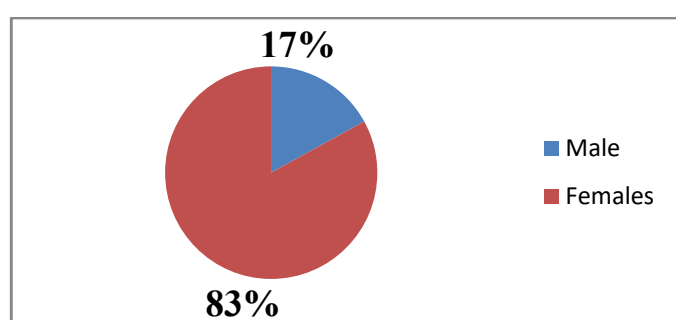
Section One: General Information

Q1. What is your gender?

This question aimed to identify the gender distribution of the primary school

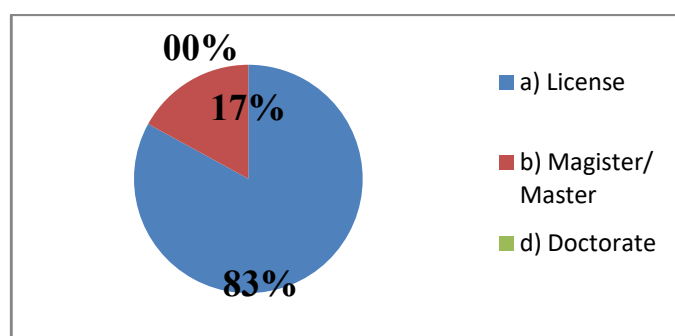
teachers in Biskra who participated in the study. According to what is shown in the figure below, the majority of participants (83%) were female, while only (17%) were male. The teaching staff at primary schools in Biskra is largely dominated by females, which may reflect broader national or regional trends in the gender composition of the teaching profession at the primary level. This imbalance might also influence classroom dynamics and pedagogical preferences in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching.

Figure 3.1: Teachers' Gender



Q2. What degree do you have?

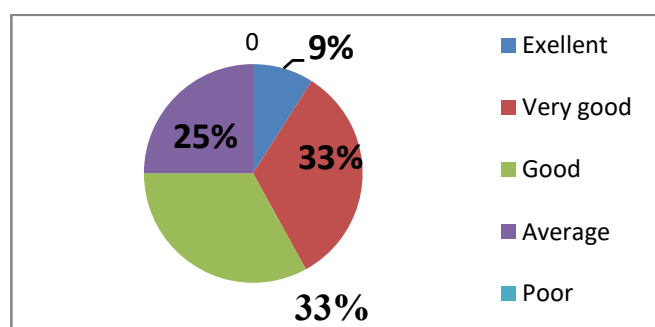
The researcher questioned the informants about their academic qualifications to understand their educational background and how it might relate to their teaching practices. From the quantitative evidence, one may notice that the majority of the teachers (83%) reported holding a license degree. A smaller portion (17%) stated they hold a Magister/Master's degree. Interestingly, none of the teachers has a doctoral degree. This means that most primary school teachers in Biskra possess a basic academic qualification, which is a license degree. The limited number of teachers with postgraduate degrees could reflect a lack of opportunities for further education or a reduced emphasis on advanced academic training for primary-level teaching in the region. This may have implications for specialised or updated EFL teaching strategies.

Figure 3.2: Teachers' Degree**Q3. How many years have you been teaching English at the primary school level?**

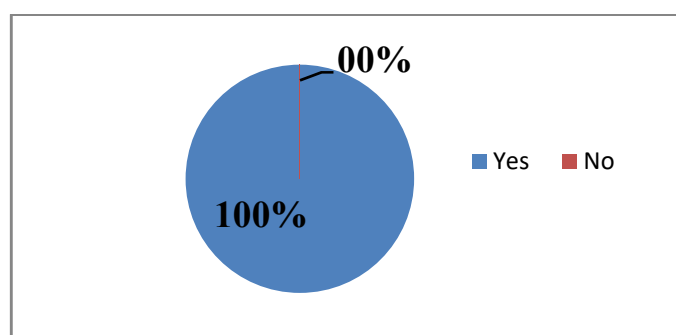
The researcher questioned the informants about their teaching experience to assess their professional exposure to teaching English at the primary level. From the quantitative evidence, one may notice that most teachers (6 participants) have been teaching for two years. Some others (3 participants) reported three years of experience, while (2 participants) stated that they have been teaching for one year. Only one teacher mentioned having 7 months of experience. This indicated that most primary school teachers in Biskra are relatively new to teaching English, with experience ranging between one and three years. The limited teaching experience could suggest that English at the primary level is still a recent reform, and many teachers may still be adapting to the requirements of EFL instruction at this stage.

Q4. How would you assess your pupils' level of English?

The question aimed to evaluate how teachers perceive the English proficiency of their primary school pupils. According to the data, an equal percentage of teachers (33%) rated their pupils' level as "very good" and "good". A smaller portion (25%) assessed their pupils as having an "average" level, while only (9%) considered them "excellent". Notably, none of the teachers selected the "poor" option. This indicated that most teachers view their pupils' English level as generally positive, though not outstanding.

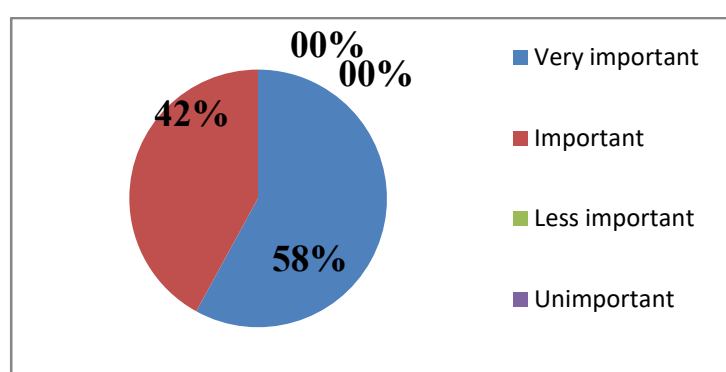
Figure 3.3: The Teachers' Consideration of Pupils' Level in English**Section Two: Play-Based Approach and Language Teaching****Q5. Do you incorporate a play-based approach as a strategy in your language classes?**

The question aimed to determine whether primary school teachers in Biskra use play-based approaches in their English language teaching. According to the data, 100% of the teachers reported incorporating a play-based approach as a strategy in their language classes, while none reported not using it. This indicated that all teachers recognise the value of play-based strategies in engaging young learners and likely use these methods to enhance language acquisition and create a more interactive learning environment.

Figure 3.4: Teachers' Incorporating Play-Based Approach in Language Class**Q6. How do you qualify a play-based approach (role play, storytelling, games, crosswords ...) in EFL classes?**

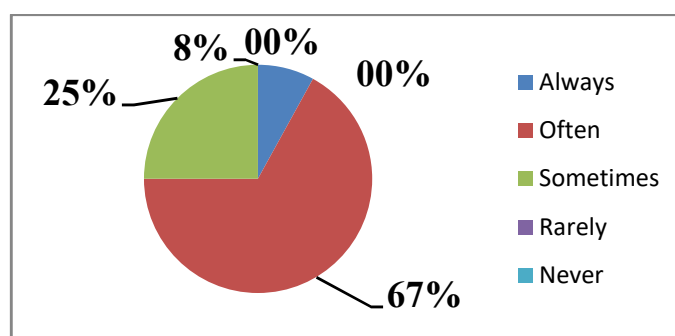
The question aimed to assess how teachers perceive the importance of play-based approaches in teaching English as a foreign language. According to the data, the majority of teachers (58%) rated the use of play-based approaches as “very important”, while 42% considered it “important”. None of the teachers selected “less important” or “unimportant”. This indicated that the teachers strongly value the role of play-based activities in EFL classes, recognising them as essential for creating engaging and effective learning experiences.

Figure 3.5: The Importance of a Play-Based Approach in Language Classes

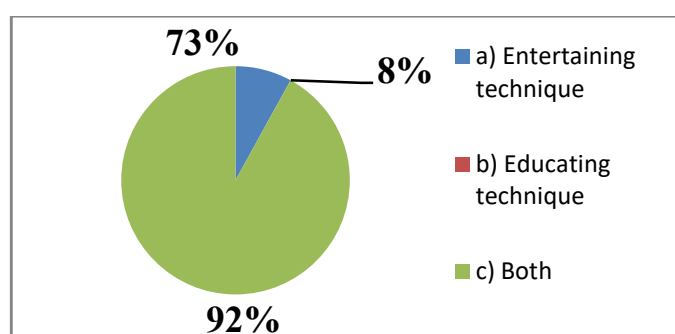


Q7. How often do you use the play-based approach in your teaching process?

This question aimed to determine the frequency with which primary school teachers in Biskra incorporate play-based approaches. According to the data, the majority of teachers (67%) reported using a play-based approach “often”, while 25% said they use it “sometimes”. A small percentage (8%) claimed to use it “always”, and none of the teachers selected “rarely” or “never”. This indicated that most teachers regularly incorporate play-based approaches into their teaching, with a notable frequency of use. However, not all teachers use it consistently in every lesson, suggesting that while play-based strategies are valued, they may not always be feasible or appropriate for every teaching context.

Figure 3.6: Teachers' Frequency of Using Play-Based Approach in Teaching Process**Q8. According to your experience, the play-based approach is:**

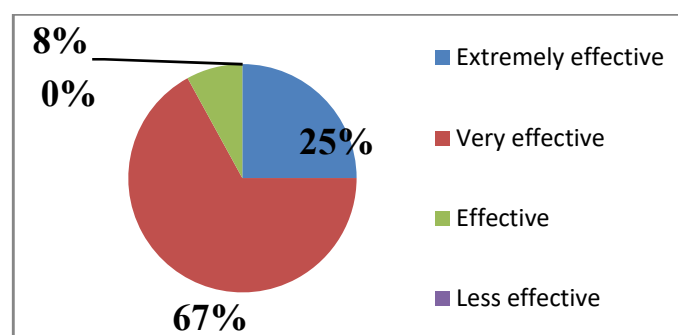
The researcher questioned the informants about their opinion on how they perceive the play-based approach in terms of its effectiveness. From the figure below, one may notice that the majority of the teachers (92%) believed that the play-based approach is both an entertaining and educational technique. A small portion (8%) viewed it as entertaining only, while none of the teachers selected the educational technique as the sole description. This indicated that teachers generally see the play-based approach as a dual-purpose technique, both engaging and educational. The overwhelming majority recognise its value not only for making lessons more enjoyable but also for facilitating learning dynamically.

Figure 3.7: Teachers' Perception of the Play-Based Approach in EFL Classes**Q9. Do you think that a play-based approach is an effective tool that helps learners acquire new words?**

The researcher questioned the informants' opinions about the effectiveness of play-

based approaches in helping learners acquire new vocabulary. From the figure below, one may notice that the majority of teachers (67%) considered play-based approaches to be “very effective” in aiding vocabulary acquisition. A smaller portion (25%) believed it to be “extremely effective”, while 8% viewed it as “effective”. No teachers selected “less effective”. This indicated that the majority of teachers strongly believe in the effectiveness of play-based approaches for vocabulary acquisition. The high percentage of those who consider it very effective suggests that teachers see this method as a key strategy for improving students' language skills in a fun and engaging way.

Figure 3.8: The Effectiveness of the Play-Based Approach in the Acquisition of New Words

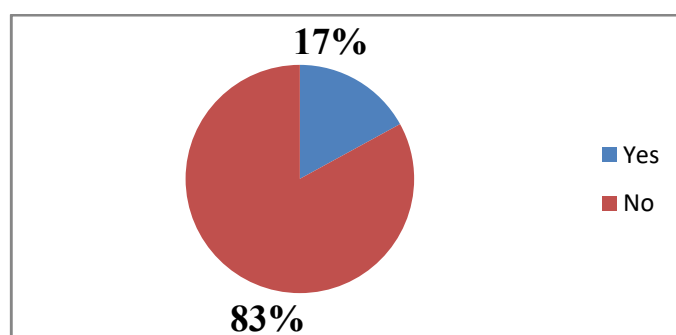


Q10. Do you encounter difficulties while implementing a play-based approach in teaching?

The researcher asks EFL teachers about the challenges they face when using play-based approaches in their teaching. From the figure below, one may notice that the majority of teachers (83%) reported that they do not encounter difficulties when implementing play-based approaches. However, a small portion (17%) acknowledged facing challenges. When asked to specify them, the teachers mentioned two main issues: time management and student control. Additionally, they pointed out that play-based approaches often require new vocabulary and involve a lot of repetition, which can be time-consuming. This indicated that while most

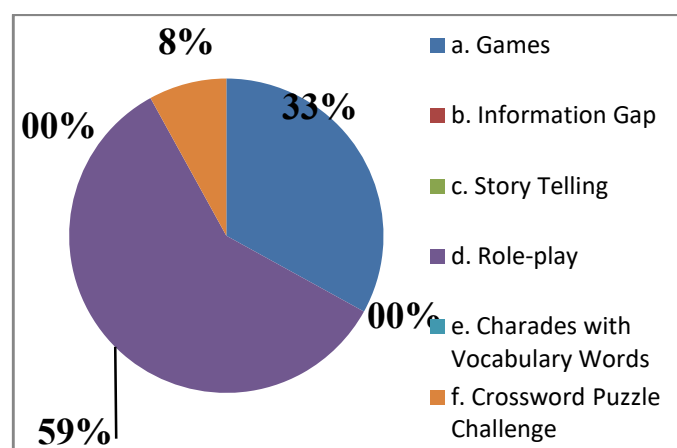
teachers do not face significant obstacles in using play-based approaches, a minority do struggle with managing class time and maintaining control. The need for additional vocabulary and the repetition involved in these activities suggest that successful implementation might require careful planning and extra resources.

Figure 3.9: Teachers' Difficulties in Implementing the Play-Based Approach in Teaching



Q11. Which types of play-based approach activities do the most use?

Another important question addressed to primary school teachers in Biskra was about the type of play-based activities they use the most in their language teaching. From the analysis of the data collection, the majority of the teachers (59%) claimed that role-play is the most frequently used play-based activity. Also, some teachers (33%) selected games as their widely used activity. However, others (8%) mentioned crossword puzzle challenges. No teachers reported using information gap activities, storytelling, or charades with vocabulary words as frequently used activities. This indicated that role-play is the preferred play-based approach among teachers, followed by games. The minimal use of other activities like information gap or charades suggests that these methods may not be practical or engaging enough for regular use in EFL classrooms.

Figure 3.10: The Most Used Type of Play-Based Approach Activities

Q12. According to your experience, are there any benefits of using the play-based approach in the classroom? Please, mention them?

This question aimed to collect data on the perceived benefits of using play-based approaches in the classroom as reported by primary school teachers in Biskra. From the analysis of the data collection, all of the teachers agreed that there are significant benefits to using play-based approaches. Among the benefits mentioned, the majority highlighted that these activities are educational, entertaining, and help focus students' attention. Teachers also noted that play-based approaches serve as a kind of drill, assisting students in practising language skills such as asking and answering questions fluently. Additionally, they help enhance vocabulary and sentence structure, motivate students, increase engagement, and facilitate interaction.

Teachers also emphasised that these activities enhance grammar rules and provide a way to break the routine in lessons. Other specific examples provided by the teachers included activities such as the knock door strategy, basketball strategy, competitions between girls and boys, role plays, debates, storytelling, quizzes, and puzzles. This indicated that teachers recognise a wide range of benefits from using play-based approaches, particularly in terms of enhancing motivation, vocabulary acquisition, communication skills, and student engagement.

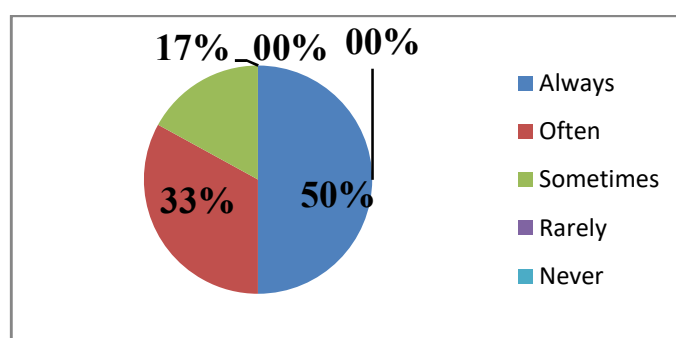
These activities not only make learning more enjoyable but also support the development of key language skills dynamically and interactively.

Section Three: Vocabulary Acquisition

Q13. How often do you present new words in class?

The question aimed to assess how frequently primary school teachers in Biskra introduce new vocabulary in their English language classes. From the analysis of the data collection, half of the teachers (50%) reported that they present new words “always” in their classes. A significant portion (33%) indicated that they do so “often”, while 17% said they present new words “sometimes”. None of the teachers reported presenting new words “rarely” or “never”. This indicated that most teachers consistently introduce new vocabulary to their students, with a notable emphasis on frequent word presentation. This reflects an understanding of the importance of vocabulary in language learning and suggests that teachers prioritise vocabulary acquisition in their lessons to ensure effective language development.

Figure 3.11: Teachers’ Frequency in Presenting New Words in Class

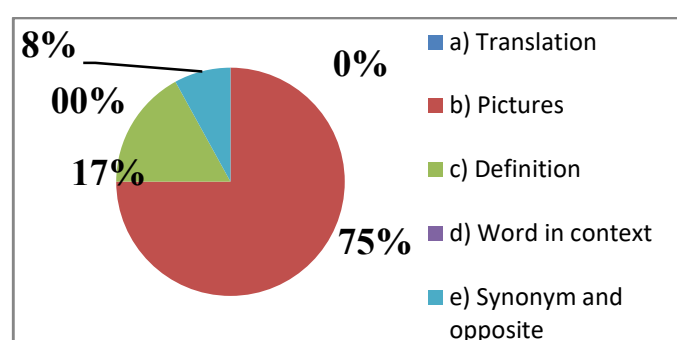


Q14. When you teach new vocabulary, what strategy do you use?

This question aimed to know the strategies primary school teachers in Biskra use when teaching new vocabulary in their English language classes. From the analysis of the data collection, the majority of teachers (75%) reported using pictures as their main strategy for teaching new vocabulary. A smaller portion (17%) stated they use definitions to explain new

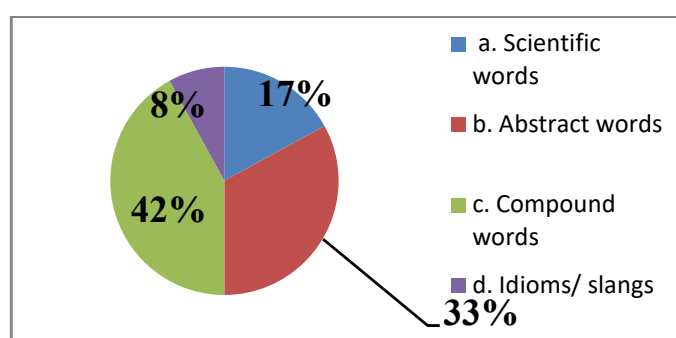
words. Few teachers (8%) indicated using synonyms and opposites, while none of the teachers reported using translation or presenting words in context as their primary strategy. Teachers predominantly rely on visual aids like pictures to teach new vocabulary, recognising their effectiveness in making words more accessible and memorable for students. The minimal use of definitions and synonyms suggests that teachers may prefer more visual and context-based methods to enhance understanding and learning.

Figure 3.12: Teachers' Strategies to Teach New Vocabulary

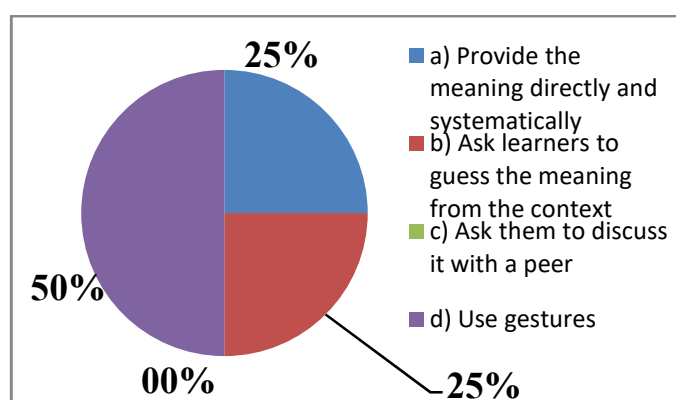


Q15. What types of vocabulary items do pupils find the most difficult?

The researcher questioned the informants about the vocabulary items pupils find most challenging to learn. From the figure below, one may notice that the majority of teachers (42%) claimed that compound words are the most difficult for pupils. Some teachers (33%) selected abstract words as the most challenging, while a smaller portion (17%) identified scientific words. Only a few teachers (8%) mentioned that idioms/slang were the most difficult for students. This indicated that compound and abstract words are the most challenging for pupils, suggesting that these types of vocabulary may require more focused strategies or additional support to help students grasp their meaning and usage effectively.

Figure 3.13: The Difficult Type of Vocabulary for Pupils**Q16. When students cannot understand some vocabulary, do you?**

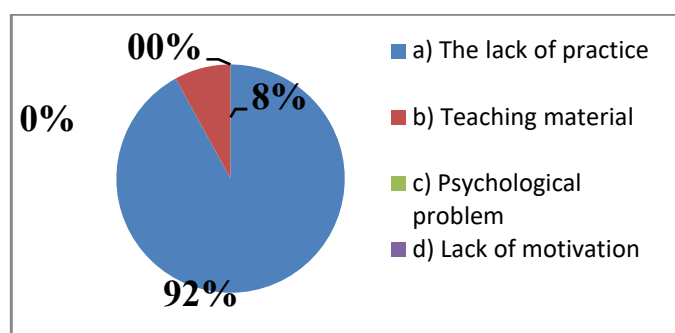
The researcher asks the informants about the strategies used when students struggle to understand vocabulary. From the figure below, one may notice that half of the teachers (50%) reported using gestures to help students understand vocabulary. An equal percentage of teachers (25%) chose to either provide the meaning directly and systematically or ask learners to guess the meaning from the context. None of the teachers selected asked students to discuss it with a peer. This indicated that teachers predominantly use gestures to clarify vocabulary, suggesting they prefer a non-verbal, visual approach. Providing direct meaning and encouraging context-based guessing are also commonly used, while peer discussion is less favoured as a vocabulary clarification method.

Figure 3.14: Teachers' Method in Explaining Some Vocabulary

Q17. Do you think that students' poor vocabulary stock is due to?

This question aimed to understand the factors leading to students' poor vocabulary acquisition. From the figure below, one may notice that most teachers (92%) attributed students' poor vocabulary stock to the lack of practice. A smaller portion (8%) believed it was due to the teaching material. None of the teachers selected psychological problems or lack of motivation as contributing factors. This indicated that teachers strongly believe the main cause of students' limited vocabulary is insufficient practice. This suggests that teachers may feel more emphasis is needed on providing opportunities for students to acquire new vocabulary in various contexts.

Figure 3.15: The Reasons behind Students' Poor Vocabulary



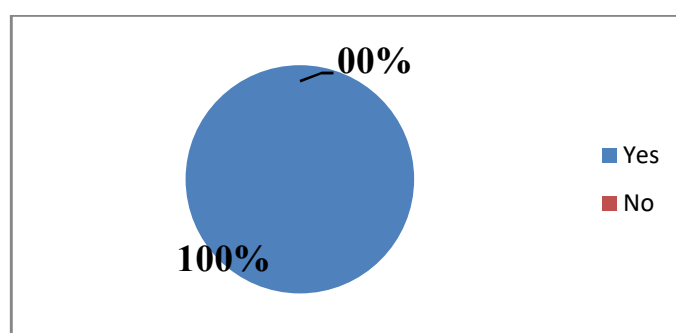
18. Based on your experience, are play-based approach activities helpful in mastering vocabulary acquisition? If “Yes”, explain how.

The question aimed to assess teachers' views on the effectiveness of play-based activities in helping students acquire vocabulary. From the figure below, one may notice that all the teachers (100%) affirmed that play-based approach activities are helpful in mastering vocabulary acquisition, while none disagreed.

When asked to explain how play-based activities help in vocabulary acquisition,

teachers mentioned several key benefits. These included the ability of play-based activities to reinforce memory, provide repetition (both individually and chorally), and motivate students. Teachers also emphasised that play allows students to learn new words quickly and makes the learning process more enjoyable. Additionally, play activities help students use new vocabulary in daily contexts, promote listening skills, and create a positive and engaging environment that encourages active participation. This indicated that teachers strongly believe in the positive impact of play-based approaches on vocabulary acquisition. The benefits highlighted suggest that these activities not only make learning more enjoyable but also significantly enhance students' retention and use of new words.

Figure 3.16: The Impact of Play-Based Approach Activities in Mastering Vocabulary Acquisition



Q19. If you have further suggestions or comments concerning *this topic*, please mention them.

This question aimed to gather additional feedback and suggestions from teachers regarding the role of play-based approaches in improving vocabulary acquisition. From the responses, teachers made several valuable suggestions for play-based approaches. Many teachers emphasised the need for games suited to the pupils' level and interests for better engagement and results. Some teachers pointed out the importance of activating and

increasing play-based activities in fourth-year classrooms and suggested giving role-play extra time during sessions to reinforce previous learning.

Teachers also mentioned that certain tools, like small theatres, instruments, and even outside trips, could help make play-based activities more effective. Additionally, it was suggested that play activities should connect to real life to make them more relevant and engaging for students. Other suggestions included incorporating more fun activities, such as games, role-playing, and storytelling, to keep students interested. Teachers also proposed using projects or games as alternative ways to assess vocabulary acquisition, rather than relying solely on tests. One teacher commented that play-based methods make learning enjoyable, which in turn helps students retain vocabulary better.

However, a few teachers pointed out a lack of time for practising play-based activities, with some students not being able to engage in role-play due to compressed time sessions. Despite these challenges, the overwhelming consensus was that play-based approaches are a very effective strategy that helps both teachers and students.

This indicated that teachers recognise the potential of play-based approaches in improving vocabulary acquisition but face practical challenges such as limited time and resources. The suggestions highlight the need for more time and resources to fully implement these strategies and make the learning experience more engaging and impactful for students.

3.7 Analysis of the Classroom Observation

Classroom observation is a direct research tool that enables the investigator to collect authentic data and gain valuable insights into the teaching and learning processes. This observation technique ensures a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of play-based methods, classroom dynamics, pupils' engagement and acquiring vocabulary in language

learning.

The current study focuses is on the role of play-based approaches in enhancing vocabulary acquisition among fourth-year primary school pupils. The research was conducted at a primary school in Biskra, where the investigator observed the lesson and examined the impact of play-based strategies on the English language learning process. The observation aimed to analyse the teacher's role, classroom environment, and the use of play-based activities in vocabulary acquisition, while identifying challenges faced by both the teacher and the pupils.

By attending the session, the researcher aimed to gather data on how play-based approaches are applied in teaching English vocabulary, assess their effectiveness in improving pupils' language skills, and understand the classroom dynamics. This observation allowed the researcher to identify the benefits and difficulties in using play-based approaches in the language classroom.

Table 3.1: Preliminary Data Gathered from Classroom Observation about Course Content and Conduct

The Observed Points	Short-comings
Teachers	-Teachers are motivated to teach fourth-year pupils in primary school, and they are expert teachers since they teach English for three years.
The presented lessons	-The lesson on "Parts of the Body" could have been enhanced by incorporating a more play-based approach. The teacher uses a Bingo game that includes parts of the body.
The pupils	-They were paying attention to the teacher's explanation, and

	sometimes they asked for more clarification
Timing	-The session on 20/04/2025 -From 10:00 to 11:00
Attendance (teachers vs pupils)	-Teachers attend the sessions on time -All pupils attend the sessions, they are motivated, interested and engaged

After conducting the classroom observation session, the investigator identified several key points regarding the teacher's role and the use of play-based approaches in enhancing vocabulary acquisition. These findings are summarised as follows:

Section One: Teacher's Role and Classroom Environment

Observed Behaviour 01: The teacher plays various roles, including a promoter, participant, and feedback provider. This flexible approach allows the teacher to adapt to students' needs, thus fostering a more dynamic and interactive learning environment. The teacher's proactive engagement motivates students to actively participate in the lesson, making the learning process more effective.

Observed Behaviour 02: The mutual encouragement among students was a notable feature of the classroom environment. They often help each other understand difficult concepts or provide assistance during activities. This collaborative atmosphere not only aids in language acquisition but also promotes a sense of community in the classroom, encouraging students to work together and learn from one another.

Observed Behaviour 03: The teacher was supportive, as he consistently listened to students, encouraged them, and responded to questions. This approach creates a safe and open learning environment where students feel comfortable asking for clarification and engaging with the

content without fear of making mistakes. This fosters an atmosphere of trust, which is essential for effective language learning.

Observed Behaviour 04: The classroom environment was spacious and appropriately arranged, with formal seating allowing individual work and group activities. The layout was conducive to both focus and movement, providing students with the flexibility to engage in group activities and games. This flexible setup supports the teacher's pedagogical strategies, particularly those that involve interactive and play-based learning methods.

Observed Behaviour 05: The teacher was observed to create a positive emotional climate in the classroom. This is crucial for motivating students and reducing anxiety. A supportive and stress-free classroom environment helps students engage more readily with the lesson and feel comfortable experimenting with the new language. This emotional support is integral to the success of language acquisition.

Observed Behaviour 06: The teacher designs activities according to pupils' level; this ensures that each student receives appropriate challenges and support, fostering an inclusive learning environment. Designing activities to suit various levels helps ensure that all students can participate meaningfully and progress in their language learning.

Observed Behaviour 07: Effective classroom management was observed, with the teacher maintaining control over the classroom environment and the students' needs. The teacher's ability to manage the class efficiently ensures that continuous learning and those students remain focused on the lesson. This structured yet flexible approach supports optimal learning conditions.

Section Two: The Role of Play-Based Approach in Improving EFL Pupils' Vocabulary Acquisition

Observed Behaviour 08: The teacher consistently used play-based approaches to teaching the English language, which significantly enhances the vocabulary acquisition process. Activities such as role-play, games, and group discussions were employed to make learning more engaging and interactive. These strategies effectively motivated students and created an enjoyable learning environment.

Observed Behaviour 09: New vocabulary was introduced through a combination of methods, including visual aids such as pictures and contextual games. The teacher presented new words clearly to help pupils connect the words to images and real-life contexts, which enhanced comprehension.

Observed Behaviour 10: The teacher occasionally used the mother tongue (Arabic) when necessary, particularly to explain difficult words or concepts. This helps ensure that students understand the meaning of new vocabulary, especially when dealing with abstract or complex terms. However, this was done sparingly to maintain the focus on English.

Observed Behaviour 11: Students face challenges when learning English, including difficulties with pronunciation and vocabulary usage. Some pupils mispronounced words, while others resorted to using Arabic when they couldn't recall the English equivalent. The teacher actively addressed these issues by providing corrective feedback and encouraging students to try again.

Observed Behaviour 12: The teacher effectively used games to motivate students to comprehend and internalise new vocabulary; these games helped to break down the traditional barriers of language learning, making vocabulary acquisition more engaging and less

intimidating for students.

Observed Behaviour 13: The teacher demonstrated a negative attitude toward the use of French and discouraged students from switching to it during lessons, which suggests a preference for maintaining the target language (English) in class, which is important for immersion and promoting language acquisition

Observed Behaviour 14: Despite the benefits of using play-based methods, the teacher did face some challenges, particularly in managing time and maintaining class focus during activities. These challenges indicate that while play-based approaches are valuable, they require careful planning to ensure they are effective and do not disrupt the lesson flow.

Observed Behaviour 15: Students struggle with compound words and find them difficult to comprehend and use. This is a common challenge in language acquisition, particularly for young learners, and requires targeted instruction to help students understand how compound words function.

Observed Behaviour 16: Psychological Challenges: Several students exhibited psychological barriers such as shyness, anxiety, and a lack of self-confidence. These emotional challenges can hinder active participation and language learning. The teacher addresses these issues by creating a supportive and non-judgmental classroom environment where students are encouraged to participate.

Observed Behaviour 17: The teacher incorporated crossword puzzles to teach vocabulary, which proved to be an effective tool for reinforcing students' knowledge. Puzzles provided an enjoyable and interactive way for students to recall and apply new words.

Observed Behaviour 18: The teacher organised students into individual tasks, pairs, and

groups during play-based activities. This collaborative approach allowed students to practice language skills in different contexts and with peers, promoting responsibility and teamwork.

Observed Behaviour 19: The play-based approach was highly effective in helping students master vocabulary acquisition. Engaging activities allowed students to absorb new words in a fun, interactive manner, which enhanced both retention and understanding.

In short, the observations confirm that play-based methods significantly enhance EFL students' vocabulary acquisition. The teacher's adaptive strategies, through games, group work, and visual aids, create a dynamic and engaging learning atmosphere that fosters vocabulary development. Despite some challenges, particularly with pronunciation, code-switching, and psychological barriers, the overall classroom environment supports the effective acquisition of new words. Moving forward, further attention to individual needs and more time for practice could enhance the success of play-based approaches in vocabulary learning.

3.8 Discussion of the Results

3.8.1 Discussion of the Teachers' Questionnaire Results

The results revealed a strong belief among primary school teachers in Biskra about the benefits of play-based approaches in enhancing vocabulary acquisition. Teachers expressed that activities like role-play, games, and storytelling help students engage more effectively with new vocabulary. These methods are not only enjoyable for students but also provide a more interactive and contextual way to learn words. Teachers noted that play-based activities enable students to practice language skills in real-life contexts and increase understanding of vocabulary. Thereon, these activities foster an engaging environment where students are more willing to participate and learn.

However, the study also highlighted some challenges faced by teachers when implementing play-based approaches. One of the major concerns was time limitations, with many teachers feeling that there is not enough time in the classroom to include these activities. Teachers mentioned that some activities, such as role-play, require additional time for students to engage meaningfully and benefit from repetition. This time constraint limits the frequency and depth of play-based methods in vocabulary instruction, which might reduce their potential effectiveness. Despite these challenges, teachers remain convinced of the positive impact that play-based approaches can have on students' language skills.

In addition, teachers suggested several ways to enhance play-based methods in the classroom. They recommended varied and engaging resources, such as small theatres, instruments, and outdoor activities, to make learning more interactive and enjoyable. Teachers also emphasised the importance of tailoring activities to the specific interests and proficiency levels of students. Moreover, they proposed diversifying assessment methods, using games and projects instead of traditional tests, to evaluate vocabulary acquisition more engagingly. These suggestions underscore the need for more time and resources to fully implement play-based strategies, ensuring they can effectively improve vocabulary learning in the classroom.

3.8.2 Discussion of the Classroom Observation Results

The observed classroom was a fourth-grade English as a Foreign Language (EFL) class at a primary school in Biskra. The teacher employed traditional and interactive teaching methods, with a noticeable emphasis on play-based approaches to engage the pupils and facilitate language acquisition. The lesson was focused on vocabulary building, specifically learning new words related to parts of the body. The teacher introduced the vocabulary using pictures and employed Bingo game cards to ensure pupils could understand and apply the new words.

The classroom observation revealed that the teacher played a dynamic and supportive role in facilitating vocabulary acquisition among fourth-year primary pupils through a play-based approach. The teacher fostered a positive and interactive learning environment by using varied roles, promoter, participant, and feedback provider, which encouraged pupils' engagement. Activities such as games, group discussions, and visual aids effectively captured students' interest and made learning enjoyable. The classroom was well-organized, enabling both individual and group activities, and the emotional climate was notably supportive, which helped reduce anxiety and increased pupils' willingness to participate.

Despite the overall success of the play-based strategies, the observation also highlighted a few challenges. Some pupils struggled with pronunciation and understanding compound words, and showed signs of shyness or anxiety, which occasionally limited their participation. Although the teacher addressed these issues through encouragement and corrective feedback, time management during play-based tasks and maintaining focus during activities remained difficult. Nevertheless, the integration of playful learning through games proved effective in promoting vocabulary and comprehension, confirming the value of these methods in enhancing language learning.

In conclusion, the classroom observation demonstrated that play-based approaches, including games, can significantly enhance student engagement and vocabulary acquisition. The teacher created an interactive and supportive environment and used games to encourage pupils to participate actively. However, to improve the effectiveness of the lesson, more time could be allocated for individual practice, and additional strategies could be employed to support quieter or less confident pupils. In short, the observation highlighted the importance of balancing play-based learning with structured learning to ensure that all pupils benefit from the lesson and acquire new vocabulary effectively.

Conclusion

In short, this chapter presented the research methodology and analysed the data collected from the teachers' questionnaire and classroom observation. It explained the research tools, participants, and procedures used to gather information about the role of the play-based approach in improving EFL pupils' vocabulary acquisition. The results from the questionnaires and classroom observation revealed that teachers recognise the importance of using the play-based approach in facilitating the teaching and learning process. The findings highlight the effectiveness of play-based activities in enabling pupils to practice language skills in real-life contexts, which contributes to a better understanding of vocabulary.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

General Conclusion

The present study investigated the role of a play-based approach in improving EFL pupils' vocabulary acquisition. It aimed at exploring how implementing play-based learning can foster pupils' vocabulary acquisition and enhance language proficiency.

The present dissertation contains three main chapters. The first chapter explains the main concepts related to the play-based approach. Additionally, the previously conducted studies are laid out, and an overview of the theoretical framework is provided, which sheds light on using the play-based approach in the EFL classroom. The second chapter sheds light on vocabulary definition, the importance of vocabulary, assessing vocabulary, approaches to vocabulary instruction, principles for teaching vocabulary, techniques for teaching vocabulary, and strategies to support vocabulary development.

The last chapter is devoted to the field work, the methodology procedures of data collection, data analysis and discussion of the obtained findings through the teachers' questionnaire and classroom observation in relation to the theoretical framework, answers the pre-asked questions, and confirms or refutes the research hypotheses. Finally, a general conclusion sums up the research by highlighting all the main points and findings, pinpointing the limitations of the study, and offering instances for further research.

To attain the research objectives, answer the research questions raised in the general introduction, and confirm or refute the proposed hypotheses, we have examined the role of the play-based approach in improving EFL pupils' vocabulary acquisition. A mixed-methods approach was adopted; to be more precise, data were collected using a questionnaire for EFL primary school teachers. In addition, a classroom observation was conducted with fourth-year primary school pupils, and both qualitative and quantitative methods were used for data analysis.

Based on the results displayed in this chapter and the discussion provided, the research questions can be answered, and the stated hypotheses are tested. The findings from both the teachers' questionnaire and classroom observation revealed that the play-based approach effectively enhances fourth-year primary school pupils' English vocabulary acquisition. Pupils showed increased engagement and enthusiasm during lessons that included games, role-play, and other interactive strategies.

The classroom observation confirmed that students were more motivated and willing to participate when learning through play, which led to better comprehension and retention of vocabulary. This supports the first hypothesis and answers the first research question (To what extent can a play-based approach help to develop fourth-year Primary School pupils' English vocabulary?). This approach was highly effective in making vocabulary learning more enjoyable and meaningful.

Furthermore, teachers expressed strong support for play-based learning, confirming the second hypothesis and answering the second research question (What teachers' attitude toward using the play-based approach in the EFL classroom is?). They acknowledged its benefits for student engagement and vocabulary development. However, the questionnaires and classroom data highlighted several challenges, including time constraints, classroom management, and assessing student progress, especially in large or mixed-ability classrooms. These findings validate the third hypothesis and answer the third research question (What challenges EFL teachers face in using the play-based approach for teaching vocabulary?). While the benefits of play-based learning are clear, its successful implementation requires adequate time, planning, and support to address these challenges.

Implications and Recommendations

The findings of this study provide compelling evidence on the effectiveness of play-based approaches in developing English vocabulary among fourth-year primary school pupils. Both the classroom observation and teacher questionnaire results highlight that play-based methods such as games, role-play, and visual activities create an engaging and supportive environment that fosters vocabulary acquisition and encourages active student participation. These approaches not only improve learners' language proficiency but also reduce anxiety and build confidence in EFL classrooms. However, teachers face challenges, including time constraints and difficulties managing large or diverse groups, which may limit the frequency and depth of implementing play-based strategies. To conclude the present study, the following recommendations are suggested for EFL teachers and students in Algerian primary schools, particularly in Biskra:

1. Recommendations for EFL Teachers in Primary Schools:

- Teachers should incorporate play-based activities (e.g., Bingo, crossword puzzles, storytelling) to engage students in vocabulary learning in a meaningful and fun context.
- Teachers need to allocate more time in the lesson plan specifically for interactive activities to allow sufficient practice and repetition.
- Teachers should consider differentiated instruction to cater to mixed-ability learners during play-based tasks, ensuring all pupils can participate and benefit.
- Classroom resources, including visual aids, digital games, should be integrated to enrich the play-based learning experience.

- Teachers should receive professional development training on designing and managing play-based vocabulary lessons effectively, especially in time-constrained settings.

2. Recommendations for EFL Pupils:

- Pupils should be encouraged to actively participate in play-based learning activities, as they enhance vocabulary acquisition and improve language use.
- Pupils should be involved in group-based games and discussions to practice vocabulary in real-life communicative contexts.
- Pupils should be supported emotionally and socially to overcome challenges such as shyness and anxiety, which hinder active participation.
- Pupils can benefit from reflecting on their learning progress and vocabulary improvement through playful self-assessment activities such as games or vocabulary.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

Despite the insightful findings obtained, the current study encountered several limitations that should be acknowledged:

- The study was limited to one primary school in Biskra, which affects the generalizability of the results to other educational settings across Algeria.
- Time constraints limited the observation to a one session, which may not fully capture the long-term effects of play-based vocabulary learning.
- Teacher responses were gathered from a relatively small sample size, which might not reflect the full attitudes or practices across different schools.
- Due to limited classroom time, only one play-based technique (Bingo game, pictures) was observed, leaving out other potentially effective strategies.

- The study focused only on vocabulary acquisition; other language skills, such as speaking fluency or writing, were not assessed.

In light of these limitations, future research is encouraged to explore the following areas:

- Researchers could conduct studies to measure the long-term effects of play-based instruction on vocabulary acquisition.
- Future studies may expand to include different grade levels or regions across Algeria to increase the reliability and applicability of findings.
- Experimental research using a control group could provide stronger evidence of a relationship between play-based learning and vocabulary growth.
- Additional research could investigate the effectiveness of play-based approaches in enhancing other EFL skills such as grammar, reading comprehension, or speaking fluency.
- Finally, it would be beneficial to explore pupils' perceptions of play-based learning to gain a deeper understanding of its motivational impact and challenges from the pupils' perspective.

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Appendices

Appendix One: "Teachers' Questionnaire"

Dear Teachers,

This Questionnaire aims to collect information for a Master's dissertation titled "**The Role of Play-Based Approach in Improving EFL Pupils' Vocabulary Acquisition: The Case of Fourth Year Primary School in Biskra**". Therefore, you are kindly requested to answer the following questions. Your responses are invaluable to the success of this research. Please be assured that your answers will remain anonymous and will be used solely for academic purposes.

Thank you for your time and cooperation

Section One: General Information

Q1. What is your gender?

- a) Male ☐ b) Female ☐

Q2. What degree do you have?

- a) License ☐ b) Magister/ Master ☐ d) Doctorate ☐

Q3. How many years have you been teaching English at the primary school level?

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Q4. How would you assess your students' level of English?

- a) Excellent ☐ b) Very good ☐ c) Good ☐ d) Average ☐ e) Poor ☐

Section Two: Play-Based Approach and Language Teaching

Q5. Do you incorporate play-based approach as a strategy in your language classes?

- a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

Q6. How do you qualify using the play-based approach (role play, storytelling, games, crosswords ...) in EFL classes?

- a. Very important ☐ b. important ☐ c. Less important ☐ d. Unimportant ☐

Q7. How often do you use play-based approach in your teaching process?

- a) Always ☐ b) Often ☐ c) Sometimes ☐ d) Rarely ☐ e) Never ☐

Q8. According to your experience, the play-based approach is:

- a) Entertaining technique ☐ b) Educating technique ☐ c) Both ☐

Q9. Do you think that a play-based approach is an effective tool that helps learners acquire new words?

- a. Extremely effective ☐ b. Very effective ☐ c. Effective ☐ d. Less effective ☐

Q10. Do you encounter difficulties while implementing play-based approach in teaching?

- a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

If yes, please mention them.

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Q11. Which type of play-based approach activities do the most use?

- a. Games ☐ b. Information Gap ☐ c. Story Telling ☐ d. Role-play ☐

- e. Charades with Vocabulary Words ☐ f. Crossword Puzzle Challenge ☐

Q12. According to your experience, are there any benefits of using play-based approach in the classroom? Please, mention them.

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Section Three: Vocabulary Acquisition

Q13. How often do you present new words in class?

- a) Always ☐ b) Often ☐ c) Sometimes ☐ d) Rarely ☐ e) Never ☐

Q14. When you teach new vocabulary, what strategy do you use?

- a) Translation ☐ b) Pictures ☐ c) Definition ☐ d) Word in context ☐
e) Synonym and opposite ☐

Other:

Q15. What types of vocabulary items do learners find the most difficult?

- a. Scientific words ☐ b. Abstract words ☐ c. Compound words ☐ d. Idioms/ slang ☐

Q16. When students cannot understand some vocabulary, do you?

- a) Provide the meaning directly and systematically ☐
b) Ask learners to guess the meaning from the context. ☐
c) Ask them to discuss it with a peer ☐
d) Use gestures ☐

Q17. Do you think that students' poor vocabulary stock is due to?

- a) The lack of practice ☐ b) Teaching material ☐ c) Psychological problem ☐
d) Lack of motivation

Q18. Based on your experience, are play-based approach activities helpful in mastering vocabulary acquisition?

- a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

If “Yes”, explain how

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Q19. If you have further suggestions or comments concerning this topic, please mention them.

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Thank you for your participation!

Appendix Two: Classroom Observation Framework

Observer name: **Mrs. Messameh Samiha**

Teacher name: Dr. Leila Loucif

Topic: **The Role of Play-Based Approach in Improving EFL Pupils' Vocabulary Acquisition: The Case of Fourth-Year Primary School in Biskra**

Date:

Time:

The class observed: **Fourth-Year Primary School Pupils**

The observed class: **Pupils at Gharib Kouider Primary School-Biskra**

Name of the observed teacher:

Observations	observed	Not observed	frequency
<p><i>Section One: Teacher's Role and Classroom Environment</i></p> <p>1. The teacher plays different roles, like promoter/ participant /feedback provider, to facilitate and motivate pupils to learn the English language effectively.</p> <p>2. The students are encouraged and motivated by each other in the session.</p> <p>3. The teacher is supportive (listening, giving encouragement and responding to student questions).</p> <p>4. The physical setting was large, the classroom environment was appropriate, and the furniture arrangement was formal.</p> <p>5. The teacher creates a positive affective classroom climate in order to enhance learners' motivation and reduce stress.</p> <p>6. The teacher designs activities according to the level of their students in learning a foreign language.</p> <p>7. The teacher manages both the classroom and EFL learners' needs.</p> <p><i>Section Two: The Role of Play-Based Approach in Improving EFL Pupils' Vocabulary Acquisition</i></p> <p>1. The teacher uses a play-based approach in teaching the English language.</p> <p>2. The teacher presents new words to students.</p>			

<p>3. The teacher uses the mother tongue if necessary, especially in order to explain some words or expressions.</p> <p>4. Pupils face challenges in learning English.</p> <p>5. Pupils sometimes mispronounce some words in English.</p> <p>6. Pupils lack vocabulary and use Arabic instead of English.</p> <p>7. The teacher uses games to motivate pupils to comprehend the vocabulary of the target language.</p> <p>8. The teacher has a negative attitude towards his pupils' use of French and forbids it.</p> <p>9. Using play-based approach is significant to pupils' vocabulary acquisition.</p> <p>10. The teachers use pictures to explain new words.</p> <p>11. EFL teachers face difficulties when using a play-based approach.</p> <p>12. Pupils find difficulty in compound words.</p> <p>13. Pupils encounter some psychological problems such as shyness, anxiety, fear of making mistakes and low self-confidence.</p> <p>14. The teacher uses a crossword puzzle to teach some vocabulary.</p> <p>15. The teacher forms the students individually, in pairs or in groups when playing games.</p> <p>16. Play-based approach activities are helpful in mastering vocabulary acquisition.</p> <p><i>Other observation:</i></p>			
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ملخص الدراسة

تتناول هذه الدراسة دور المنهج القائم على اللعب في تحسين اكتساب المفردات لدى تلاميذ اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، وذلك في حالة تلاميذ السنة الرابعة بمدرسة غريب قويدر الابتدائية ببسكرة. وتهدف الدراسة على وجه التحديد إلى تحقيق ثلاثة أهداف رئيسية. أولاً، تسعى إلى تحديد أكثر أنواع الأنشطة القائمة على اللعب فعالية في تعزيز اكتساب المفردات لدى تلاميذ السنة الرابعة في المدرسة الابتدائية. ثانياً، تهدف إلى معرفة أبرز التحديات التي يواجهها معلمو اللغة الإنجليزية عند استخدام منهج اللعب في تدريس المفردات. ثالثاً، تسعى إلى تقييم مدى مساهمة هذا المنهج، مثل الألعاب، ولعب الأدوار، وسرد القصص، في تحسين معرفة التلاميذ بالمفردات. ولتحقيق هذه الأهداف، تم اعتماد المنهج المختلط، حيث جمعت بيانات كمية ونوعية من خلال استبيان موجه لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية في مدارس ابتدائية مختلفة ببسكرة، بالإضافة إلى ملاحظة صفية أجريت مع تلاميذ السنة الرابعة. أظهرت النتائج أن معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية يؤمنون بشدة بفعالية الأساليب القائمة على اللعب مثل الألعاب، ولعب الأدوار، وسرد القصص في تعزيز تعلم المفردات. كما بيّنت نتائج الاستبيان والملاحظة الصفية أن هذه الأساليب تزيد من تفاعل التلاميذ وفهمهم للمفردات في سياقها، رغم وجود تحديات مثل ضيق الوقت وضعف ثقة التلاميذ. وأوصى المعلمون بتوفير موارد متنوعة، وتصميم أنشطة تعليمية ملائمة، وتبني أساليب تقييم بديلة لتحسين تطبيق المنهج وزيادة فعاليته.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المنهج القائم على اللعب، اكتساب المفردات، تلاميذ السنة الرابعة، استراتيجيات التدريس.