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**Using Discovery and Consolidation Vocabulary Learning Strategies to
Improve Foreign Language Learners' Writing Skill.**

**A Case Study of Second Year EFL Students at Mohamed Kheider University of
Biskra**

**A dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Master
Degree in Language Sciences**

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Dedication

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

I would like to dedicate this modest work:

*To the sun and the moon of my life; **my mother** and **my father** the most precious persons to my heart. My Allah blesses them.*

*To my dear brothers: **Mabrouke** and **Abdelhalime**.*

*To my dear sisters: **Nassima**, **Hanane**, **Amira** and **Karima**.*

*To all my extended family, especially my aunt **Hada** and all her daughters and Sons.*

*To my dearest friend, Madam **Samira Adjadj**, her husband **Mr. Khaled**, and to her sweet daughter **Nourine**.*

*To all my teachers and my friends especially: **Radia**, **Hassina**, **Yasmine**, **Wadia**, **Manal**, **Amel**, **Sonia**, **Wafa**.*

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Abstract

Vocabulary learning is an essential aspect of any language learning process. Perhaps, the greatest tool that we can give students not only in their education but more generally in life is an extended, rich vocabulary. This research reports a study about the importance of vocabulary to writing achievement since the ability to write hinges upon having an adequate ample vocabulary. The educational setting in which this study takes place is the English Division at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of using vocabulary strategies in enriching and improving learners' vocabulary tock and the impact it has on the English writing skill. Students of English as a foreign language are facing a variety of problems that make them struggle when writing. One of the major problems is the lack of vocabulary which inhibits them from expressing their ideas. Thus, we hypothesize that a correlation may exist between using vocabulary strategies and writing proficiency. In order to gather the data needed for achieving the aim of this study, two questionnaires were handed to both second year EFL LMD learners and EFL teachers of written expression module from the Department of languages at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra. A random sample of thirty five students and six teachers answered the questionnaires. The learners' questionnaire was to investigate their strategies in learning vocabulary and the difficulties they encounter in their writing task. The teachers' questionnaire was to collect data about the techniques they use when dealing with unknown words in their lessons. The findings gathered in this study confirmed the set hypothesis in that the problems students face in writing can be avoided if they make use of the right strategies that help them enlarging their vocabulary reservoir which in turn contribute to the success of writing skill. On the basis of the results obtained, some pedagogical implications have been proposed to direct learners towards the effective way to learn and enlarge vocabulary reservoir in order to improve their writing skill, and others to help teachers in their task of developing vocabulary and writing improvement in their students.

List of Abbreviations

COG: Cognitive Strategies

DET: Determination Strategies

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

FL: Foreign Language

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

LMD: Licence, Master, Doctorate

MEM: Memory Strategies

MET: Metacognitive Strategies

SOC: Social Strategies

TV: Television

VLS: Vocabulary Learning Strategies

%: Percentage

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Vocabulary has always been taught through the other skills rather than being taught as a separate module, which has ranked vocabulary in a lower position by comparison with grammar. Curricula are full of grammatical rules that are said to develop the learner's language as if teaching a language equals teaching its grammar. However, we can convey little without grammar whereas we can convey nothing without vocabulary. Wilkins (1972; cited in Thornbury, 2002). Harmer (2001) claims that if the language skeleton made out of the language structures, it is vocabulary that provides the vital organs and the flesh. Therefore, the use of grammatical structure does not have any potential for conveying messages or expressing meaning unless words are used. Beginners often succeed in communicating in English using just individual words, and they can most of the time transmit their messages and convey meaning without necessarily having acquired grammar. Further, vocabulary is concerned with the four skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This latter is an expressive process that requires a deep vocabulary items which give the learner the opportunity to express his ideas and thoughts effectively and consequently to be a good writer. .

Generally, students employ different strategies for learning new vocabulary they come across. Those strategies which are so called vocabulary learning strategies are part of language learning strategies (Nation, 2001). The major concern of this research is to highlight the role of vocabulary learning strategies used by EFL learners in enhancing one of the productive skills which is writing.

1. Statement of the problem

Learning English as a foreign language generally entails the exposure of learners to the four skills that are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This latter is one of the most difficult and challenging skills for almost all learners. According to Nunan (2001), learning to write fluently and expressively is the most difficult skill in comparison to the other skills for all users of the language regardless of whether the language is first, second or foreign one. Developing the writing skill especially at the high level is thought to be highly complex if not the most complex in comparison to listening, speaking, and reading. According to Emig (1997; cited in Nosratinia and Adibifar, 2014), writing skill is the most challenging and complex language skill because it includes “generating and creating a

unique verbal product that is graphically recorded” (Emig, 1997: 08; cited in Nosratinia and Adibifar, 2014: 1390).

The reason behind the difficulty of writing may be due to some criteria of acceptability that are required in any piece of writing in order for it to be judged as a correct and an acceptable one. Those criteria are relative to different aspects of writing such as content, spelling, vocabulary, punctuation, and capitalization. This is supported by Harmer (2007) who suggests that the components of writing which include handwriting, spelling, punctuation, and the construction of the written discourse are the core and the centre of the writing skill that need to be focused on at certain stages of learning to write in English.

Due to the complexity of the writing skill, a great majority of FL learners find it difficult to produce acceptable compositions. One of the most factors that seem to be preventing learners from attaining proficiency and consequently being good performers in writing is the lack of vocabulary. According to Seely (1998); the main reasons for learners’ major problems in writing are at the expense of: grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, and native language interference.

The problem, we believe, behind the lack of vocabulary which is in turn results in a poor writing achievement is mainly due to the fact that EFL students do not make use of the strategies that enable them to learn easily new words and consequently to have an ample vocabulary that may contribute to a successful writing.

2. Aim of Study

This research work aims at investigating the effectiveness of using vocabulary strategies by second-year English students to foster their academic achievement in writing skill. It aims also at making second language learners aware of the importance of vocabulary learning strategies on enlarging their vocabulary knowledge which is, in turn, believed to be one of the most important components of performance in a foreign language, especially in an academic setting. Another aim for this research is to bring the teachers’ awareness about the importance of teaching the vocabulary strategies and creating conditions that encourage and motivate students for promoting their knowledge of vocabulary through the use of the right vocabulary knowledge in order to improve their writing performance.

3. Research Questions and Hypothesis

In our research, we will try to answer the following questions and other ones.

1. Do EFL students use discovery and consolidation vocabulary strategies to learn new vocabulary items?
2. How do discovery and consolidation vocabulary learning strategies contribute to students' successful writing?
3. Could students' difficulties in writing skill be lessened if they make use of discovery and consolidation vocabulary learning strategies?

In the light of the above raised questions, we hypothesized that "if students use the right vocabulary learning strategies, then their level of academic achievement in the writing skill will be enhanced".

4. Research Methodology

4.1. The Choice of the Methodology

To confirm the research hypothesis, we relied on the descriptive method in order to investigate the correlation between the vocabulary learning strategies and the improvement of writing skill. We used this method in particular because we believe that it is well suitable for the task of finding out about the difficulties encountered by Algerian EFL students at Mohamed Kheider University when writing, and to highlight the different strategies used by these students to discover and consolidate vocabulary.

4.2. The Population and Sampling

The population of the present study was Second Year EFL LMD students and EFL teachers at the Department of Foreign Languages, section of English at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra. The reason behind choosing second year LMD students to be a target population is that during this year, students in written expression module will be exposed to a huge number of vocabulary items and start to write paragraphs.

Since it is difficult to deal with the whole number of the population (more than 400 students), we selected a sample of about 45 students, but unfortunately only 35 who have answered our questionnaire. Our sample has been chosen randomly and taken from two

groups where the students in the two classrooms were with different ages and genders. In addition, a sample of 6 teachers of written expression module has been chosen randomly.

4.3. Data Collection Tools

In order to meet the objective of our study, we use formal questionnaire to be our tool for both EFL LMD students and EFL teachers at the department of languages at the University of Biskra for the academic year 2014-2015. The questionnaires used in this study consist of numerous items varied from both closed-ended and open-ended questions. After collecting the required data for this research, we would analyze them quantitatively and qualitatively to investigate the issue under study.

4.4. Significance of the Study

The study is significant in the way that its findings provide relevant information about learners' preferred strategies for learning vocabulary so teachers could decide which appropriate teaching vocabulary strategies may use in order to meet their needs.

Furthermore, findings from the study would give implications for learners to pay more attention for using vocabulary strategies that enable them to have an ample vocabulary which in turns contribute to the success of writing skill. In addition to this, the findings would also give implications for teachers to encourage their students to learn these strategies and use them in and outside the classroom.

4.5. Structure of the Study

This research is divided into three main chapters; the two first chapters are devoted to the literature review, and chapter three covers the analysis of the results obtained from questionnaires.

The first chapter deals with vocabulary learning strategies; starting by defining the term vocabulary, and showing its importance. Moreover, it also deals with Vocabulary learning in general then, what do we mean by vocabulary learning strategies, its different classification of different scholars and its importance. Finally, it demonstrates the influence of vocabulary knowledge on successful writing.

The second chapter gives a literature review on the writing skill. It includes definition of the writing skill, approaches to writing skill, and the importance of writing.

Moreover, it also deals with components of writing, reasons for teaching writing skill in addition to learners' major difficulties in the writing skill. Finally, we explore the relation between writing and the other skills.

Chapter three deals with data analysis. It contains the analysis of the learners' and teachers' questionnaires.

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Chapter One: Vocabulary Learning Strategies

1. Introduction

Dealing with vocabulary in writing in a foreign language has always been one area of my interest. As a student, I have noticed that most students have problems in writing performance because of the lack of vocabulary. Words are considered as the central element of language because students who have not sufficient vocabulary cannot learn a foreign language (Fengning, 1994). The way this problem could be overcome has always been an area of investigation by many researchers. Nation (2001) has believed that the amount of vocabulary could be enlarged with the help of vocabulary learning strategies.

1.1. Definition of Vocabulary

Any language has its own vocabulary which is different from other languages and enables its users to communicate. Vocabulary is defined in Oxford Dictionary (2002) as the total number of words that compose a language. The Longman Dictionary (1995) defines vocabulary as all the words that someone knows, learns or uses. It is vocabulary that allows learners to express themselves and to convey their messages clearly and appropriately in a wide variety of situations. Hatch and Brown (1995) consider vocabulary as a list or a set of words of a particular language that individual speakers of a language might use.

Knowing a language involves recognizing and knowing its vocabulary. Hence, one of the main goals of foreign language learners is to know, use, and enlarge their vocabulary stock. Although there are many researchers and scholars who define the concept of word knowledge in different ways according to their views, they generally agree on the idea that the word knowledge requires knowing three main aspects which are the form, the meaning, and the use of the word. For example, Pavicic (2008) stated that knowing a word refers to knowing its different features and facets; for instance, knowing its “phonological, orthographic, morphological, syntactic and semantic” characteristics (Pavicic, 2008: 10).

Generally, words come into oral and print form. Oral vocabulary refers to the words we recognize and use in listening and speaking. Print vocabulary includes those words that we recognize in reading and writing. Further, word knowledge also comes into two kinds: receptive and productive. By receptive vocabulary, we mean the words that we recognize when we hear or see them. Productive vocabulary includes the words that we use when we

speak or write. In addition, Nation (2001) makes distinction between receptive and productive language. He states that: *“Receptive carries the idea that we receive language input from others through listening or reading and try to comprehend it. Productive carries the idea that we produce language forms by speaking and writing to convey messages”* (Nation, 2001: 37).

1.2. The Importance of Vocabulary

The vocabulary's importance is clearly stated by the linguist David Wilkins (cited in Thornbury, 2002: 13) in his students' advice:

If you spend most of your time studying grammar, your English will not improve very much. You will see most improvement if you learn more words and expressions. You can say very little with grammar, but you can say almost anything with words!.

That is, in order, for learners, to enhance their English, they should try to develop and enlarge their vocabulary knowledge and this is may be done through spending much time in learning new words and expressions which lead them to say whatever they want.

According to Krashen's view, vocabulary is very essential because usually when learners go to foreign countries, they face some problems and difficulties in communicating with native speakers of the host community and in most of the time, they could not convey their messages. This can be done through using only a word rather than grammatical rules. *“When students travel, they do not carry grammar books, they carry dictionaries”* (quoted in www.aburn.edu). Therefore, being able to use grammatical structures do not have any potential for expressing meaning unless words are used.

In his introduction about vocabulary, McCarthy (1990:IX) argued that there is no matter how well the learners learn grammar, no matter how effectively the sounds of the target language are mastered, without words needed for expressing a wide range of meaning, communication in the foreign language cannot take place. Thus, words are the most important aspects that we need to acquire, as foreign learners, in order to achieve successful communication with those who are the native speakers of the target language.

It is also clear that vocabulary is quite important element for the English foreign language (EFL) learners, since they always in need to learn, enlarge, and expend their vocabulary knowledge in order to convey a meaning. This is supported by Wilkins (1972;

in Thornbury, 2002: 13) *who claims that “without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed”.*

Since vocabulary have a great importance especially in the foreign language context, learners should look for opportunities to learn more vocabulary. In general, there are two processes in which learners learn new vocabulary items which are a direct and an indirect learning, they differ in the learners' intention and focus when learning.

1.3. Direct and Indirect Vocabulary Learning

When we learn our first language or mother tongue, we develop concepts and general notions. At the same time, we learn all the ways our language community states and expresses these concepts and general notions. Therefore, when we approach another language, we are already in possession of many concepts; we only look for the ways to express them in the new language. In other words, we seek the right vocabulary to label them.

According to Nation (1990), it is useful to make a distinction between direct and indirect vocabulary learning. He characterized direct vocabulary learning being a situation in which learners do exercises and activities, such as word building exercises and vocabulary games, focused on the vocabulary. However, indirect vocabulary learning is a situation in which learners give attention and focus on some other features which are usually used to convey messages.

According to Schmitt (2000), explicit learning is the process in which the learner gives a great attention to the information to be learnt in order to make the possibility and the chance of acquisition greater. Furthermore, Hatch and Brown (1995) stated that it is a planned process intended by the teacher or even by the learner. In contrast, indirect or 'Implicit' learning is a process where the learner focuses on the use of the language more than learning (Hatch & Brown, 1995). For example, it occurs when the learner focuses on understanding the message and getting the meaning of a text being received rather than understanding its vocabulary (focusing on single words).

Explicit and Implicit learning are two types of vocabulary learning which differ in the way the information is learned either intentionally or incidentally. In intentional learning, the learner plans to learn vocabulary through using different activities and

techniques where the primary focus is on vocabulary items. These activities require the learner to:

- Make up charts and memorize them.
- Learn words that are associated.
- Use new words in phrases.
- Use a dictionary when necessary.
- Carry a notebook to write down new items.

According to Naiman et al (1978; cited in Ellis, 1995), some learners prepare and memorize vocabulary lists by keeping notebooks in which they write the English word to be learned, its pronunciation, and its equivalent term in the mother tongue, are written. The arrangement and the way in which words are organized in these lists differ from one learner to another depending on their preference. Some learners refer to the alphabetical lists or association of words by themes or topics or simply writing the words at random. Others do not attempt to keep lists but rather they rely on picking out key vocabulary items from the context in which they are used. However, there are others who reported that they drilled themselves deliberately by putting new words in different sentences or reading or playing word games.

However, incidental learning refers to the situation in which learners incidentally pick up vocabulary unconsciously via the exposure to different materials. This may occur through exposure to passages and other materials. According to Schmitt (2000), incidental vocabulary learning is learning through exposure when the learner's primary attention focused on the use of language, rather than being focused on learning itself.

How effective students learn vocabulary in the foreign language classroom setting may be influenced by the way in which those vocabulary items are taught. That is, there are different techniques and strategies that could be adopted by teachers when teaching unfamiliar words that are encountered by their students, so teachers need to select the appropriate ones that suit their students' needs.

1.4. Strategies for Teaching Vocabulary

Inside the classroom setting, the teacher's interference is necessary and required in many situations. Thus, teachers are supposed to adopt various strategies and techniques to deal successfully with unfamiliar words that their students may come across while teaching

them. This includes unplanned and planned vocabulary teaching, and some techniques in teaching vocabulary.

1.4.1. Unplanned Vocabulary Teaching

Seal (1991: 298) defines this term as the “*teaching of problem vocabulary that comes up without warning in the course of a lesson*”. Sometimes students feel that they are in need of the meaning of a given word which is unfamiliar to them during the lesson and sometimes the teacher feels that it is necessary to give an explanation or to make certain clarifications. In this, the teacher is going to fulfill his students’ need for the meaning. Further, Hatch and Brown (1995: 403) state that: “*unplanned vocabulary teaching happens when the students requests a meaning for a vocabulary item during a lesson or when the teacher realizes that a word that has just come up needs to be clarified*”. Seal (1991: 298) suggests three stages in the unplanned vocabulary teaching: the stage of conveying, the stage checking the meaning, and the stage of consolidation.

In the first stage, the teacher tries to convey the meaning of the target word to the students using different techniques and ways as mining, giving synonyms or telling an anecdote, using opposites, or translation. In the second stage, he checks whether the meaning of unknown word is understood or not. This may be done through asking the learner questions, or clearly through getting them do some exercises and activities to ensure or test their understanding, such as crossword puzzles. In the final stage of this kind of vocabulary teaching, the teacher tries to consolidate the information by urging students to use the word in other contexts.

1.4.2. Planned Vocabulary Teaching

Hatch and Brown (1995: 415) refers to this technique as “*intentional vocabulary instruction*”. Seal (1991: 298) defines it as “when the teacher goes into the classroom with an item or set of vocabulary items he/she decided before hand will be taught during the course of the lesson”. Here, Seal meant that the teacher have to pay attention that he may face automatically students who will not understand some vocabularies which are included in the course while introducing his lesson in the class, because these vocabulary items are not easy to comprehend. Seal mentions two types of this kind of vocabulary teaching.

In the first step, the teacher predicts that certain vocabulary items will cause problems for students’ comprehension. So, he plan and prepares how to teach them.

Through his experience, he is able to use the appropriate ways in teaching and providing students with what suits them.

The second type of planned vocabulary teaching can be described as the vocabulary lesson. It can be taught as a separate module aiming at enlarging the FL learners' stock of vocabulary and developing its knowledge, or it can be taught as a follow-up to other activities such as reading (Stories), listening (Songs), discussion, dialogues, recording. There are several techniques to be followed in teaching vocabulary of a foreign language. We can use the dictionary, definition, or translation.

Finally, vocabulary teaching strategies entails the use of different techniques by which new vocabulary items are presented. Therefore, the teacher should select the appropriate techniques depending on his students' learning styles in order to facilitate their vocabulary learning process.

1.5. Vocabulary Presentation

Teaching is uneasy task because the teacher holds the responsibility of selecting and choosing the appropriate input for learners that fit their levels and meet their needs. That is, teaching a language requires a careful selection of what to teach especially when teaching vocabulary. After selecting the input to be taught to second or foreign language learners, a new matter arises concerning how to present this chosen input in an effective way. Therefore, there are different techniques and methods that can be adopted by teachers in order to accomplish the task of presenting vocabulary in a successful way. According to Meara (2005), there are many techniques and procedures used in presenting vocabulary for optimal learning; therefore, the teachers have to vary these techniques as much possible as in order to fit the different learning styles of their learners and help them benefit from the lesson. Moreover, the choice of which technique could be used by the teacher for presenting vocabulary items depends on different factors; on learners' level, their familiarity with the word, word difficulty, word teachability, and the purpose of teaching this word either for production or for recognition only. There are three ways or procedures used in presenting items which are translation, visual techniques, and verbal techniques.

1.5.1. Translation

For many foreign language learners, especially beginners, the use of the native language is one of the facilitating factors that could used in order to overcome the

difficulties that they may encounter when learning a language. According to Thornbury (2002), Translation has been widely used method, by many teachers, of presenting a new item meaning in monolingual classes; it is useful since it is a direct link between the target word and its equivalent in the L1. However, he hypothesizes that being much reliable on translation may indicate learners' failure to get second language lexis without making use of L1 equivalent, or they do not spend much time and effort in order to get the meaning of the target word as the case "*no pain, no gain*" (Thornbury, 2002: 77).

What is more, translation is a useful means for presenting meaning of words, but it can prevent learners from learning second language words when eliminating the use of L1. Moreover, the same idea presented by Nation (2001) who claims that translation is beneficial because it does not require much time, much effort, and much thinking. In the other hand, it can diminish the time allocated to second language learners to use the language. In a conclusion, translation is a good technique for presenting new vocabulary items. However, teachers need to make use of other alternative techniques such as using visual presentation.

1.5.2. Visual Techniques

Presenting new words via the visual techniques is an attractive and motivating method that can be used for facilitating the task of learning vocabulary. Visual presentation involves different tools such as pictures, gestures or other demonstrations. According to Gairns and Redman (1986), using visual tools for introducing words can be more useful than using translation since it can help in word retention.

Furthermore, Thornbury (2002) defined this technique as a way of illustrating and presenting vocabulary items through the use of visual aids. It is a motivating factor that helps learners and contributes to remembering new learned words through remembering their representations. This is supported by Meara (2005: 78) who claims that "*visual images works as a sort of temporary content; it fixes the physical form of the word, makes it more resistant to forgetting and provides a way of recalling the words via images when you need it*".

Although visual presentation is a useful technique, there are many people who doubt in the effectiveness of using images and other visual aids. Nation (2001: 107) claims that presenting a meaning through any way which contains "*changing of an idea into some*

observable form” may be a misleading factor. Thus, the learner may not interpret that meaning correctly. So, in order to overcome this problem, the teacher can integrate some verbal techniques which may contribute to better understanding of the word.

1.5.3. Verbal Techniques

Verbal technique is a way of presenting words and their meanings; it includes the use of language for the sake of making more clarification of what have been introduced. Moreover, it is another method that is used for defining the word meaning, and which may include “*providing an example situation*”, “*giving several example sentences*”, “*giving synonyms or superordinate terms*”, or “*giving a full definition*” (Thornbury, 2002: 81).

What is more, explanation is one of the most used verbal techniques. It is a key factor for good understanding for second language learners especially the beginners since they are not familiar with the language presented to them. However, teachers have to carefully select the explanations to be presented to their students. According to Tsui (1995), the decision of how the explanation could requires from teachers to consider both learners’ level and previous knowledge. Besides to this, teachers may use the students’ previous knowledge in order to make the connection between the new information and the old one for easily and effectively conveying the meaning of the target words.

In order, for learners, to learn effectively the new vocabulary items that are presented by their teachers through the different teaching techniques, they need to adopt different vocabulary strategies that would help them to grasp words’ meanings easily and to facilitate their vocabulary learning task.

1.6. Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Regarding a definition of vocabulary learning strategies, different researchers have defined VLSs differently. For example, Nation (2001: 217) claims that “*vocabulary learning strategies are a part of language learning strategies which in turn are a part of general Learning strategies*”. Moreover, Rubin (1987: 29; cited in Saengpakdeejit, 2014: 150) defines vocabulary learning strategies as “*the process by which information is obtained, stored, retrieved, and used.*” In addition, Catalan (2003: 56; cited in Saengpakdeejit, 2014: 147) defines vocabulary learning strategies as:

“Knowledge about the mechanisms (process, strategies) used in order to learn vocabulary as well as steps or actions taken by

students (a) to find out the meaning of unknown words, (b) to retain them in long-term memory, (c) to recall them at will, and (d) to use them in oral or written mode”.

Thus, it can be said that vocabulary learning strategies are commonly used not just to discover the meaning of unknown words but also to retain them in long-term memory and to recall them at will (Saengpakdeejit, 2014). In fact, vocabulary learning strategies are the specific techniques used by learners in the process of learning vocabulary in the target language.

Vocabulary learning strategies are very numerous, including many different categories and strategies which are classified by different scholars, thus, each of them gives his own classification according to his point of view.

1.7. Classification of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Several researchers have proposed different classifications of vocabulary learning strategies based on their own criteria. Some of these classifications are presented below:

1.7.1. Cook’s Classification of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

According to Cook (2008: 58-62), vocabulary learning strategies can be divided into two groups; the first group includes strategies for understanding the meaning of words and the other including the strategies for acquiring words as shown below:

✚ Strategies for understanding the meaning of words

- Guessing from the situation or context.
- Using dictionary strategy.
- Making deductions from the word form.
- Linking to cognates (finding similarities in words of two different languages).

✚ Strategies for acquiring words

- Repetition and rote Learning.
- Organizing words in the mind.
- Linking to existing knowledge.

He identified two main categories for understanding and using vocabulary which include strategies for getting meaning, and strategies for acquiring words. Language learners can get meaning of vocabulary items by guessing the meaning from context, using a dictionary, making deduction from the word form, and linking vocabulary items to

cognates. They may also acquire vocabulary items through repetition and rote learning, organizing words in their mind, and linking words to existing knowledge.

1.7.2. Hatch and Brown's Classification of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Hatch and Brown (2000; cited in Pavicic, 2008: 73) divide vocabulary learning strategies into five main steps involving great number of different strategies:

- (1) Encountering new word (with sources of new words being reading, watching TV, listening to radio, conversation with native speakers, textbooks, wordlists, Dictionaries, etc.);
- (2) Creating a mental picture (visual auditory or both) of word form (e.g. relating A new word with L1 words or other FLs with similar sounds, using phonetic Script, relating to already acquired English word that sound similarly);
- (3) Learning the word's meaning (e.g. asking the native speakers for the meaning, Creating a mental image of the meaning, guessing from context);
- (4) Creating a strong linkage between word form and meaning in the memory (regardless of the memory strategy used-as long as it is used); and
- (5) Using words (in example sentence, collocation, various contexts, conversation, etc.).

Hatch and Brown (2000) argue that the extent to which learners engage in each step is directly dependent to on the goal of learning. That is, it depends on the goal of learning whether it is active or passive. For example, if the goal of learning is passive in which learners receive knowledge of certain vocabulary, then the fifth step is irrelevant. They see that these five steps are related to each other. The greatest number of words enter the first step but just a limited number of those lexis pass to the next step. The process is repeated through all steps, the number of lexical items that are memorized and retained by learners is smaller than the initial input, i.e. the first encountered number. Consequently, the greater number of words that are successfully transferred by the learner from one step to the other is his or her richer vocabulary.

1.7.3. Lawson and Hogben's Classification of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Lawson and Hogben (1996, pp. 114-115) classified vocabulary learning strategies according to procedure called the think-aloud and interview conducted in 15 students

learning Italian in Australia. The individual vocabulary learning strategies were classified under four different categories:

Category 1 : Repetition

- Reading of related Word ;
- Simple rehearsal ;
- Writing of word and meaning ;
- Cumulative rehearsal ;
- Testing

Category 2: Word Feature Analysis

- Spelling ;
- Word classification ;
- Suffix ;

Category 3: Simple Elaboration

- Sentence translation ;
- Simple use of context ;
- Appearance similarity ;
- Sound Link

Category 4 : Complex Elaboration

- Complex use of context ;
- Paraphrase ;
- Mnemonic

As shown above, the individual vocabulary learning strategies recognized by Lawson and Hogben (1996) have been classified under four different categories. These involve Repetition, Word Feature Analysis, Simple Elaboration, and Complex Elaboration. The first category comprises five strategies, the second category comprises three strategies, the third category comprises four strategies, and the fourth category comprises three strategies for learning new vocabularies. Repetition and complex elaboration strategies seem to be popular among EFL learners.

1.7.4. Schmitt's Classification of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Schmitt (1997; cited in Schmitt, 2000: 134) divided vocabulary learning strategies into two main categories. First category involves strategies that are used for discovering words' meaning. Second category contains those strategies used for consolidating words'

meaning once they are encountered. He stated that this classification reflects the different processes necessary for finding out a new word's meaning and usage, and for consolidating that meaning for future use.

Strategy group	Strategy
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+ Strategies for the discovery of a new word's meaning

DET	Analyze part of speech
DET	Analyze affixes and roots
DET	Check for L1 cognates
DET	Analyze any available pictures or gestures
DET	Guess meaning from textual context
DET	Use a dictionary (bilingual or monolingual)
SOC	Ask teachers for a synonym, paraphrase, or L1 translation of new word
SOC	Ask classmates for meaning

+ Strategies for consolidating a word once it has been encountered

SOC	Study and practice meaning in a group
SOC	Interact with native speakers
MEM	Connect word to a previous personal experience
MEM	Associate the word with its coordinates
MEM	Connect the word to its synonyms and antonyms
MEM	Use semantic maps
MEM	Image word form
MEM	Image word's meaning
MEM	Use keyword method
MEM	Group words together to study them
MEM	Study the spelling of a word
MEM	Say new word aloud when studying
MEM	Use physical action when learning a word

COG	Verbal repetition
COG	Written repetition
COG	Word lists
COG	Put English labels on physical objects
COG	Keep a vocabulary notebook
MET	Use English-language media (songs, movies, newscasts, etc.)
MET	Use special word practice (expanding rehearsal)
MET	Test oneself with word tests
MET	Skip or pass new word
MET	Continue to study word over time

Moreover, Schmitt (1997) classified these two categories, as it is shown in the classification, into five groups:

- **Determination Strategies (DET)**

This group involves strategies used by an individual for discovering the meaning of new words without resort to another person's expertise. This can be achieved through guessing from one's L1 cognates, guessing from structural existing knowledge, or using reference material (mainly using a dictionary).

- **Guessing from Context**

Guessing vocabulary meaning from context is a key vocabulary learning strategy for dealing with low-frequency vocabulary, especially when reading authentic texts. Nation (1990: 130) hypothesizes that guessing from context is "*undoubtedly most important vocabulary learning strategy*". Moreover, Schmitt (2000) argued that guessing new words' meaning from context is a key to learning vocabulary. However, he stated that this strategy is a complicated process, and there is no guarantee that learners will automatically be successful in finding out what new terms mean since it requires learners to know enough vocabulary in a text, and to possess an adequate level of vocabulary as well as sufficient background knowledge of the content for guessing to be effective.

- **Dictionary Use strategy**

Generally, learners consult dictionary in order to check spelling, look up the meaning of unfamiliar words and to confirm the meaning of unknown words. Dictionaries are easy

for searching for new words, because they are formed in alphabetical order. They contain words' spelling, syllables, pronunciation, origin, meaning, etc.

There are three categories of dictionaries for FL learners: the Bilingual Dictionary which provides a translation of target words in the first language and vice versa, the learners' Monolingual Dictionary which is written only in the FL and appeals to the learners whatever their first language is, and the standard Monolingual Dictionary which appeals mainly to native speakers. Another kind of dictionaries used by readers is Electronic Dictionary which offers further options for teachers and learners. E-dictionaries provide both pictures and text; thus, the learning of unfamiliar words becomes more efficient (Chun and Plass, 1996; cited in Hunt and Begler, 2005 on-line pages). These dictionaries are useful for learners' vocabulary acquisition.

Dictionaries are used for the sake of helping learners with understanding texts, producing texts, and with expanding and enlarging the learners' vocabulary acquisition of new words. This is supported by Nation (2001: 281) who suggests that dictionaries can be aids for:

➤ **Comprehension**

- The learner looks up uncommon words while listening, reading, or translating.
- Ensuring the meaning of unknown words.
- Ensuring guessing from context.

➤ **Production**

- Look up uncommon terms required when speaking, writing, or translating.
- Check the spelling, pronunciation, meaning, grammar, collocation.
- Edit an error and confirm that a word exists.

Despite the importance attributed to dictionaries in learning the meaning of unknown vocabulary. In many cases, the dictionary may confuse learners, particularly when the unfamiliar word has numerous entries (Hunt & Begler, 2005 on-line). In addition to this, dictionary is time-consuming and disrupts the flow of reading. According to Pavicic (2008), dictionary use strategy is used by learners when reading in order to discover words' meaning or to check their assumptions; hence, to consolidate those words' meaning. He claims that learners find the use of dictionary very useful and necessary; however, if they cannot appropriately make use of dictionary, if they, for instance, look up

a big number of words or do not understand the definition provided by dictionary, learners may become frustrated. Hence, they need to be trained in using dictionary as well as they need to be provided with opportunities to apply this strategy in different tasks of language learning (Pavicic, 2008).

- **Social Strategies (SOC)**

Schmitt (2000) argued that social strategies involve using interaction with others to improve language learning. That is, one can ask teachers or peers for information about an unfamiliar word and they can answer in different ways. For example, teacher may give a definition, a synonym, or an equivalent term in L1. In addition, classmates or friends may also help learners fill knowledge gaps and even group work activities. Hence, social strategies are strategies where learners learn new words through interaction and communication. However, not all the social strategies involve meaning determination because there are some that can be used for consolidating knowledge, so this set of strategies can be regarded as having double dimensions.

- **Memory Strategies (MEM)**

Schmitt (2000) defines memory strategies as those strategies involving making connections between the to-be-learned word and some previously learned knowledge, using some form of imagery or grouping. He stated that those strategies contain the kind of elaborative mental processing which are useful in facilitating long-term retention. Memory strategies play an important role in helping learners to store new words into memory and in the whole process of vocabulary learning. In addition, Oxford (1990; cited in Zahedi and Abdi, 2012: 2266) claims that memory strategies “*make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations*”. He also states that language learners have serious problems and difficulties in remembering the large amounts of vocabulary that are necessary and helpful in order to achieve fluency and he hypothesizes that memory strategies have a great role in helping them to overcome these problems (Oxford, 1990).

- **Cognitive Strategies (COG)**

According to Schmitt (2000: 136) cognitive strategies “*are similar to memory strategies, but are not focused so specifically on manipulative mental processing*”. They include both verbal and written repetition as well as some mechanical means used for

learning vocabulary. Those mechanics involve word lists, keeping vocabulary notes, taping L2 labels onto their respective physical objects. Learners use cognitive strategies to transform or manipulate the target language. According to Cook (2008), repetition is the commonest approach in which the learner repeats a word again and again until he learns it by heart. Typically repetition is done by either memorizing lists of words or by testing himself repeatedly on bills, eliminating the words he knows until none are left.

- **Metacognitive Strategies (MET)**

Schmitt (2000: 136) stated that metacognitive strategies “*involve a conscious overview of the learning process and making decisions about planning, monitoring, or evaluating the best ways to study*”. According to him, metacognitive strategies require learners to improve access to input, to decide on the most efficient methods of study and review, and to test themselves to evaluate their improvement.

In this light, Schmitt argued that students should be exposed to the TL through all possible means (books, movies, the Internet) and that they should engage in communicative activities with native speakers. They should also be checking whether the process of lexical acquisition works accurately and properly and if the learning strategies used by them meet their requirements and they should regulate how to study L2 vocabulary and the time to be spent on doing it (Schmitt, 2000). In summary, we can say that metacognitive strategies are those strategies used by the learners to control and evaluate their learning process.

To conclude, all the aforementioned strategies are very important for accomplishing the task of vocabulary learning in an effective way. Hence, learners need to choose the appropriate vocabulary strategies according to their purpose of learning.

1.8. The Importance of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

The main benefit gained from all learning strategies, including strategies for vocabulary learning, is the fact that they enable learners to take more control of their own learning so that students can take more responsibility for their studies (Nation, 2001). With the help of vocabulary learning strategies, learners could acquire a large amount of vocabulary. Those strategies are very useful for students of different levels (Nation, 2001).

Hence, students should be taught how to use strategies for acquiring vocabulary on their own. . The best teaching plan may be the one which introduces a variety of learning strategies to students so that they can decide for themselves the ones they prefer (Schmitt, 2000). Consequently, we may find learner using different vocabulary strategies for learning the same target word they come across because this depends on their own styles and on what they prefer as a strategy to learn too.

For Nation (2001), the most important way to learn vocabulary by learners is using strategies independently of a teacher. In his recent publication, strategy training is suggested to be part of a vocabulary development program. Schmitt (2000) saw the need to help learners acquire the necessary strategies for learning words on their own. Vocabulary learning strategies are very useful for both EFL teachers and students. If students acquire those vocabulary strategies, then they will be able to use them whenever they meet new words, especially in the classroom, and consequently the teacher will spend more time on presenting the lesson rather than on explaining the unfamiliar words at every time they occur.

Vocabulary learning strategies plays a crucial role in increasing learners' vocabulary knowledge and size. Those latter are very important aspects in achieving proficiency in the four learning skills especially in writing since it is an expressive skill, so, the learner needs to master this powerful tool, which is words, in order to be able to write effectively.

1.9. Vocabulary's Influence on Successful Writing

Writing is an art that needs words to build a coherent whole, and that requires taking into consideration several aspects of the target language (TL) such as the linguistic components such as vocabulary.

The ability to write effectively depends on having sufficient vocabulary knowledge. So, vocabulary plays a crucial role in the assessment of the quality of the written work. Nation (2001) proposes that one way to measure vocabulary size and growth in written work is analyzing the vocabulary of students' written compositions. That is, the sufficient and appropriate vocabulary is much more needed for writing since vocabulary's size is one good indicator of the student's proficiency. In addition, having a large stock of vocabulary permits the writer to get a well thought onto paper. This is not to say that the writer's real

pleasure is to get or to come up with attractive words, but it is from using the most appropriate words.

Moreover, a lot of studies have investigated the most serious errors in EFL learners' writing were related to the lexical ones. This is what Ellis (1991; in Schmitt, 2000: 155) and others have argued:

In the teaching of writing, many teachers focus on the grammatical Well-formedness of a composition. However, it seems that lexis may be the element requiring more attention. Research has shown that lexical errors tend to impede comprehension more than grammatical errors, and native-speaking judges tend to rate lexical errors as more serious than grammatical errors.

Hence, students' deep vocabulary knowledge has a direct influence up on the facilitates descriptiveness, accuracy, and quality of their writing. In short, having the adequate vocabulary the ability to write effectively. For learners, their vocabulary knowledge of the English language will serve as building blocks for writing.

Conclusion

To sum up, learning new vocabulary is a challenge to foreign language students but they can overcome this problem by having access to a variety of vocabulary learning strategies. Strategies including analyzing part of speech, guess meaning from context, use a dictionary, ask teacher for a synonym or L1 translation of new words, verbal repetition, and many other strategies that are very useful for EFL students which expand their vocabulary size. Moreover, the teacher needs to make students aware of different strategies that can help them realize their goal which is being knowledgeable about language vocabulary. Besides to this, he/she has to look for techniques that may encourage them and create the desire to learn better. Teacher' s responsibility appears in providing learners with clear hints about what they need in order to learn any word, and how they can enlarge and arrive at ample vocabulary.

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Chapter Two: A Literature Review on the Writing Skill

2. Introduction

The aim of this study is to help foreign language learners improve their writing skill by enriching their vocabulary stock through using the vocabulary learning strategies. For this matter, it is of major interest to provide background about this skill. The chapter explores the definition, the importance and the components of the writing skill. It focuses also on approaches to teaching writing and learners' major difficulties in writing. Furthermore, it looks at how writing is connected to reading and speaking.

2.1. Definition of Writing

Language skills are categorized as either receptive or productive; listening and reading are the receptive ones, and speaking and writing are the productive ones. Writing is a productive skill; it involves producing language rather than receiving it. Also, it is a way in which we can express our feelings, emotions, or whatever we want to say.

Writing have been defined differently; each researcher defines it according to his understanding. Byrne (1991: 1) defines writing as "*An act of forming graphic symbols*"; that is, combining letters in a written way to make the abstract ideas and thoughts concrete. He sees it as the arrangement of sounds into words in a conventional form in which those words are organized together to make sentences. He states that "*Writing involves the encoding of a message of some kind: that is we translate our thoughts into language*" (Byrne, 1991: 1). This implies that writing is a representation of speech, thoughts, and ideas through various forms of sound graphs.

In addition, writing does not only wrap ideas and thoughts to give them tangible and visible existence; it encompasses connecting ideas together. In this context, Chandler (1995: 72) asserts that "*Writing often involves putting together ideas which the writer had not previously associated*". Or as Plimpton (1988; in Chandler, 1995: 72) puts it, "*You bring things together, you synthesize, you connect things that have had no previous connection when you write*". However, Writing is more than the transformation of those connected oral ideas and thoughts into concrete and visible signs. It is a difficult and uneasy task; so, teachers should look for the best techniques and strategies that facilitate this task.

Writing is an important means of communication. It is the skill which is most needed in academic setting; where the learner write down written records of lectures, and sit for written homework, write summaries and reports, and sit for written exams in all most their modules. Furthermore, writing is a complex process with a number of operations on going simultaneously. Besides to this, effective writing requires variety of strategies and activities to develop a text you are going to write. In support of this point, Hedge (2000: 124) stated the different operations and stages involved in the writing process:

It involves a number of activities: setting goals, generating ideas, organizing information, setting appropriate language, making a draft, reading and reviewing it, then revising and editing. It involves a complex process which is neither easy nor spontaneous for many second language writers.

Finally, writing is a learnt skill, it is taught at the different educational levels. Teaching writing involves following specific methods and approaches. These latter are determined by the teacher depending on what he wants his students to focus on.

2.2. Approach to Teaching Writing

In the early 1960's, writing was a neglected skill; it was argued that the spoken form of the language is more important than the written one; hence writing was not given much attention and interest. When writing was first included in teaching curricula, it was considered to be as a simple strengthening and reinforcement of "what students learned to say" (Rivers, 1968: 51).

After the 1960's, writing was given a big importance and was seen central in the language learning context. In every discipline, the understanding and the use of writing became largely valued and each of them requires a specific method of teaching. Consequently, a great number of approaches and methods of teaching have emerged. Although no approach can be considered as ideal, they have proved to be successful and useful in one period or another (Nemouchi, 2008).

According to Harmer (2001), teachers need to choose between these different approaches and decide on which they want students to focus more; that is, on the process of writing, its product, or its genres. He also claimed that they need to be aware of the different roles and positions that they can and should take on for writing activities (Harmer, 2001).

2.2.1. The product Approach

The product approach, as the title indicates, focuses on the final product of the writing process and is concerned with the production of well-produced composition. This is supported by Nunan (2001: 36):

The product approach to writing focuses on the end results of the act of composition, i.e. the letter, essay, story and so on. The writing teacher who subscribes to the product approach will be concerned to see that the end product is readable, grammatically correct and obeys discourse s convention relating to main points, supporting details and so on.

Moreover, this approach is mainly based on tasks in which learners engage in imitating and transforming model texts that are usually presented by the teacher and which are always taken as the starting point before getting to write. Besides to this, the model text is studied and analyzed by the learner from all aspects: content, organization, structures of the language, and text functions. Then, he needs to manipulate these features in order to be able to write about new topics in a parallel with the model text. This is supported by Hyland (2003: 03) who states that: “...writing is seen as a product constructed from the writer’s command of grammatical and lexical knowledge, and writing development is considered to be the result of imitating and manipulating models provided by the teacher”. Thus, in the product approach, the focus and the importance is given to the surface structure of the language rather than on the quality of ideas or the meaning to be conveyed. In other words, the writer is seen as a manipulator of language structures which have been already learned whereas the teacher is viewed as a corrector of the errors of grammar and lexis.

2.2.2. The Process Approach

This approach shifted the focus from the traditional view that looks at writing as a purely product to give emphasis to the process of writing. Teaching writing as a process is very beneficial for students since it depends on giving them time to work on what they want to write and also enables them to use the different stages of the writing development going from pre-writing activities to the final draft and hence come up with an effective product. According to Hedge (2000), writing is a difficult process involving a set of strategies and activities that start with setting goals and end with editing.

Writing is the result of employing strategies to manage the composing Process, which is one of gradually developing a text. It involves a number of Activities: setting goals, generating ideas, organizing information, selecting Appropriate language, making and reviewing it, then revising and editing. (Hedge, 2000: 303)

Therefore, students need to consider how to deal with the different phases which are involved in the writing process in order to have a final correct and effective piece of writing. Also, teachers should encourage their students to do a lot of writing practices for the sake of acquiring and developing this learned skill. In general, writing process seems to have four main stages which are planning, drafting, editing, and final draft.

2.2.2.1. Prewriting Stage

What begins well organized and well formed will end in that way and will be really appreciated. Hence, it is the case in writing. Planning or prewriting is the first stage that involves all the things the writer does before he gets ready to start writing. According to Harmer (2007), experienced writers make some kinds of planning to what is going to be written before actually starting to write or type. There are many techniques used by the writer in the planning stage: some writers make detailed notes. For others it is enough to jot down few words as a preparation to the next stage. Still others who may not actually make any written planning, hence their planning takes place in their heads (Harmer, 2007).

Moreover, planning is the stage in which writers spend a good amount of time generating ideas and organizing them into a particular plan before they write. However, as Harmer (2007) states Students need to be clear about the message they want to convey, they should be aware of their purpose of writing (what they want to achieve through their writing), and they should be concerned about their readers/audience).

Further, prewriting includes many techniques and the most used ones in the academic setting are brainstorming and free-writing. First, brainstorming means to search the brain for ideas and information (Brown and Hood 1993). Second, the free writing means to write about the chosen topic whatever comes to your mind, without stopping for editing even if there are mistakes. This is supported by Williams (2003: 109) who defines free writing as:

This technique involves writing nonstop for 5, 10, 15 minutes. During this period, students keep generating words, even if they cannot think of anything meaningful to say. The rationale is that,

eventually, they will produce ideas that they can develop into an effective paper.

2.2.2.2. Drafting/Writing stage

Writing or drafting is the stage where real writing takes place. It is the stage in which the writer moves from the abstract (ideas) to the concrete (written text) based up on the prewriting stage. So it is the first version of a piece of writing as defined by Harmer (2007). In addition to this, Hedge (1988: 89) defines it as being the stage where the writer “*puts together the pieces of the text through developing ideas into sentences and paragraphs within an overall structure*”. That is, during this stage, the student writes down his thoughts and ideas into sentences and paragraphs in a coherent way.

Moreover, during the drafting stage, the writer may produce a number of drafts on the way to the final way of the final product. These drafts are often done on the assumption that they will be changed and corrected later in the next stages (Harmer, 2007).

In drafting, the student should give attention only to the content and forget about language and mechanical aspects such as grammar, spelling, and punctuation. However, he must write in a free way and try to find the best way to convey and communicate his ideas. This idea is supported by Brown and Hood (1993: 14) who claims that “*the drafting stage is where you really begin writing. The most important thing here is to get words onto paper. It is not the time to worry about spelling, grammar, punctuation, or the best wording.*”.

2.2.2.3. Reviewing Stage

In fact, to revise means literally to “re-see”, or to “re-look” at your writing again. While drafting is for the writer, revision is for the reader. In other words, to revise means to look at your writing product with a reader’s eye. Brown and Hood (1993) explain that the revising stage includes checking the appropriateness and clarity of the content and the purpose for the reader in particular writing situation. Moreover, it requires a series of strategies such as changing, arranging, adding, leaving out words, and so on.

In other words, it is the stage where the writer can make changes at both form and content levels of their first draft: he may correct lexical, grammatical, and syntactical errors and/or realizes substantial changes in his writing. Those changes may involve addition and deletion, changes in word use, sentence structure, and organization as it is

stated by Grenville (2001: 153) “*as you revise, you will be looking for changes that will help readers understand the information better or be more convinced by your argument. Once you have found the places that need fixing, you have to decide whether to cut, add or move.*” Moreover, reviewing includes more than only checking spelling, grammar and punctuation, it also includes checking that content and purpose are clear and appropriate for the reader in the particular writing situation (Grenville, 2001).

Further, this step is really important since when drafting, it seems to the writer that the message he wants to convey and how this message has been written are clear in terms of the form and the content. Yet, when he comes to revise his draft, he may find that he has made errors. For such purpose, revising means evaluating the piece of writing in a critical and objective way. That is, revising is a useful and a helpful phase in the writing process, in the sense that the writer can know whether his writing is effective and successful or not (Brown and Hood, 1993).

2.2.2.4. Editing Stage

In this stage, the writer makes a final check in order to improve and correct his draft. The writer should take into consideration that the rules and aspects of English writing are correct. That is, students should check the following; grammar, mechanics, spelling, and neatness. Hedge (2005: 23) argues that “*good writers tend to concentrate on getting the content right first and leave details like correcting spelling, punctuation, and grammar until later*”. By “getting the content right”, Hedge means revision while the rest is editing.

In addition to this, editing enables the writer to examine his first draft along with feedback that is given by teacher or peers. Nation (2009) calls for the significance of the different types of feedback in improving and developing the student’s writing especially at this stage saying, “*Learners can be encouraged to edit through the feedback they get from their classmates, teacher, and other readers*”. (Nation, 2009: 120).

2.2.3. The Genre Approach

The genre approach emerged as a result of criticizing of the two previous mentioned approaches which are the product and the process approach. It advocates learners’ study of a text in a particular genre that they are going to be writing before they actually start writing (Harmer, 2001). Furthermore, this kind of approach is mainly concerned, as the name indicates, with teaching particular genres that students need to learn in order to

succeed in particular situations. This kind of approach might include a focus on the language and discourse features of the as well as the context in which this text is produced (Nemouchi, 2008).

Hammond (1992; in Burns, 2001: 202) sees the genre model as “*a wheel model of a teaching cycle having three phases: modeling, joint negotiation of text by learners and teacher, and the independent construction of texts by learners*”. There are three main stages that are involved in writing under the genre approach which are: modeling, joint negotiation of text, and the independent production of texts.

Modeling the target genre is the phase in which learners expose to the studied genre. Thus they need to focus on its educational and social functions as a central point of discussion as well as take into account the analysis of the given text and the language. The second stage, joint negotiation of text, involves a discussion of the target genre between the students and the teacher. This latter designs exercises and activities in which he puts into practice the language forms which are related to the genre to be studied. Finally, the third stage involves learners’ production texts through various activities.

Moreover, Harmer (2001) claims that the genre approach is particularly appropriate and useful for students of English for specific purposes as well as for general English students for producing well written work that they can proud of. Furthermore, students who are exposed to write within a particular genre, they need to pay attention to certain factors. Thus, they need to have some knowledge about the topic to be written about, the rules and style of the genre within which they are exposed to write, and the context where the writing occurs or in which it will be read and by whom will be read (Harmer, 2001).

2.3. The Importance of the Writing Skill

Generally, there are two basic means of interaction and communication with people, either through speaking or writing. Concerning writing, it is so crucial and essential because it is used at all the educational stages especially at the University level where writing is not considered to be just as a way of communication but also as a crucial tool for learning (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987; in Weigle, 2009). Moreover, writing is essential also in educational setting in the sense that it is a predictor of academic success. According to Harmer (2001), most of the exams depend on how students write for the sake of measuring their knowledge.

Besides to this, writing is not important only for education but rather for professional communication such as reports, e-mails, or applications, and as well for social, and personal purposes. As Hyland (2002: 69) states that “*writing is one of the main ways that we create a coherent social reality through engaging with others both personally and professionally*”. This means that, if learners do not know how to express themselves in writing, they will not be able to communicate appropriately with their employers and peers.

Further, writing leads the student to discover what he has in mind concerning what to be written about. This is supported by Wyrick (2011, XXV) who claims in his introduction that “*writing helps us explore our own thoughts and feelings. Writing forces us to articulate our ideas, to discover what we really think about an issue*”. For example, if we are faced with a difficult decision then, the arguments are jumbled in our heads but when we start to write down our feelings and facts, we will see that we have stronger arguments for one side of the issue than the other one (Wyrick, 2011).

Finally, in order, for learners, to write accurately and to convey their messages and ideas in an effective way, they need to consider all the aspects and elements concerning the writing skill. Thus, writing is constituted of different components that require learners to master them in order to perform better in this skill.

2.4. Components of the Writing Skill

Writing involves four main points, starting with the simplest activity which is notation, moving to spelling, then to writing practice, and finally arriving at the complex activity of composing a written discourse in which the learner makes use of the different elements of the language. Writing effectively requires having knowledge of the different parts of speech, mechanics, and structures of the language. Being knowledgeable of these aspects may not be enough; hence, the learner needs to know how to manipulate them in order to write comprehensively.

In order, for the learners, to produce an effective piece of writing, they have to master these different elements that constitute the writing skill. Harris (1969) recognizes five essential components:

- Content, which includes the expressed ideas;
- Form, which refers to the way in which the content is organized;

- Grammar, which refers to the use of grammatical forms and syntactical patterns;
- Style, which refers to the use of different structures of language and lexical items to give such character and tone to writing; and
- Mechanics, which involves the use the graphic conventions of language.

In addition to this, writing is a complex and difficult skill to learn because it requires the mastery of different variables. Thus, the writer is required to demonstrate the mastery of these variables altogether. At the sentence level, this includes control of both the content and the form in addition to the sentence structure and the different mechanics. Due to the complexity of these aspects, some of them are never fully reached and realized by many students even in their first language. Bell and Burnaby (1984; cited in Nunan, 2001: 36) claim that:

Writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously at the sentence level, these include control of content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and letter formation. Beyond the sentence, the writer must be able to structure and integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and texts.

Finally, all the aforementioned components are not easy to be mastered by many learners. Hence, they need to be taught effectively for getting learners acquire them in order to facilitate their writing tasks. Besides to this, there are many other reasons behind teaching the writing skill.

2. 5. Reasons for Teaching Writing

Almost all human beings grow up speaking their first language because spoken language, for a child/learner, is acquired naturally as a result of being exposed to it. However, the ability to write is realized and studied through the process of learning. Harmer (2007) agrees that writing should be learned because, unlike speaking, it could not be naturally acquired. He provides some reasons for teaching writing to EFL learners which include reinforcement, language development, learning style, and most importantly, writing as a skill in itself. Harmer (2001: 79) illustrates the reasons for teaching writing as follows:

- *Reinforcement*: Some learners acquire language in a purely oral/aural way, but most of them benefit greatly from seeing the language down.
- *Language development*: The mental activity learners go through in order to construct proper written texts is all part of the ongoing learning experiences.
- *Learning style*: For many learners, producing language in a slower way is something they appreciate. Writing provides time and ease for learners more than face-to-face communication does.
- *Writing as a skill*: Learners need to know how to write essays, how to put written reports together and how the writing system operates (for example, in terms of conventions such as punctuation, paragraph construction) just as they need to know how to pronounce language appropriately.

Moreover, writing is a communicative skill in which the writer conveys his expressive ideas and thoughts to an audience for a specific purpose. The main purpose or objective behind teaching writing to foreign language learners is to get them acquire the abilities and skills they need in order to produce a range of different kinds of written texts similar to those that would be expected to be produced by an educated person in his own language (Ur, 1999).

Since the primary reason for teaching writing is developing learners' abilities in this skill, the teacher should carry out teaching tasks depending on his learners' weaknesses and problems in writing. In other words, there are many difficulties that are encountered by learners when they come to write and which require teacher to select the appropriate writing tasks that help those learners to delaminate and overcome their difficulties.

2.6. Learners' Major Difficulties in the Writing Skill

Writing is the most difficult task for many English language students comparing with the other skills. For many people, writing is very difficult even in their first language. This is supported by Hedge (2005) who mentioned that the poet Strachey explains the difficulties that he experiences in writing and he puts it like this "first, I write one sentence. Then I write another. That's how I write. And so I go on. But I have a feeling writing ought to be like running through a field."(Hedge, 2005: 07). Thus, a big question that all of us may ask is "*what can I do to facilitate my writing task*", or "*why writing is difficult*". In other words, we are searching for what are the most difficulties we encounter when writing and how we can deal with them. According to Seely (1998), the main reasons for learners'

major problems in writing are at the expense of: grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, and native language interference.

2.6.1. Grammar

It is a set of rules and conventions that determine how language works. It can be classified into two aspects: syntax that explains the way we can put words to make sentences, and morphology which deals with the way we construct words with stems, prefixes, and suffixes.

For many people, grammar is considered to be a difficult aspect in writing. Seely (1998) suggested that most learners have the idea that grammar seems too difficult or even impossible to grasp because of the way it has introduced to them in schools, or later in their lives. According to Seely (1998), the major difficulties in grammar that may be encountered by learners and hinder their achievement in writing is:

- **The Sentence:** Seely (1998) claims that the major problems that learners may face at the expense of sentence are:
 - **The Verb:** the sentence that does not contain a finite verb is not a sentence because the reader is left waiting for an action to happen or something to occur as well as he can not exactly know what the writer meant. Furthermore, the lack of subject-verb agreement is another possible problem concerning the verb.
 - **The Object:** the commonest problem concerning the object is when some pronouns change according to whether the word is the subject or the object of the sentence.
 - **Adverbials:** learners may face a difficulty where to place the adverbials. “[...] *there is not much choice about where you put them in the sentence. Adverbials can pop up anywhere.*”(Seely, 1998: 161).
 - **Coordinating Conjunctions:** the purpose of using the different coordinating conjunctions is to combine between two clauses or two phrases. If the learner does not use the appropriate conjunction, errors will occur.
 - **Word Order:** in English language, much of the meaning of the sentence is conveyed correctly through the order of its words.

2.6.2. Vocabulary:

Seely (1998) classifies the English vocabulary as follow:

- **Active Vocabulary:** involves all those words that we know, and use confidently in our daily life; especially when doing more serious writing.
- **Passive Vocabulary:** contain those words that we can recognize and understand well enough when reading texts, but we do not remember them most of time when writing.
- **Vocabulary in the process of moving from being Passive to being Active (or vice versa):** it consists of words that we use after a lot of thinking, or sometimes even looking up in a dictionary to check their correct meaning.
- **Vocabulary that is beginning to enter the Passive Vocabulary:** which includes the words that we have seen before, but their meaning is not clear.
- **Vocabulary that we have never dealt before:** it consists of those words that we have never encountered and met before.

Moreover, Seely (1998: 150) said that “*English is not static but dynamic, its vocabulary and grammar continue to develop and change, as they have done for centuries.*” In addition to this, understanding English vocabulary is a difficult task for foreign language learners because of the richness and variation of this language

2.6.3. Spelling:

Spelling is one of the most difficulties that are encountered by English language learners. “*the major with English for many students, however, is the correspondence rules that govern how letters are arranged in words, in other words, spelling*” (Cook, 2008: 91).

Moreover, most of the English language letters do not have equivalence or a direct relation with their sounds, and this problem can only be solved if we use a series of rules that may facilitate this task. These rules developed over a period of time when vocabulary and pronunciation of English were also developing. Seely (1998: 209) claims that “*there are over forty sounds in English [...] and we only have the same twenty six letters in the alphabet. So we have to combine letters in different ways to represent the “missing sound”.*” Another reason is that there are many English words which have been derived from other foreign languages, and plenty of them kept their original spelling whereas their pronunciation have been changed.

2.6.4. Punctuation:

Seely (1998) claims that punctuation is a group of conventions agreed up on. They are used not only for decoration but rather for facilitating reading the written English since they are used to separate a text into sections, hence; the reader's eye and brain can assimilate. Seely claims also that punctuation marks are changing overtime. What is more, some parts of punctuation are clear and simple; whereas, there are others that are much more a matter of opinion and style such as: commas and semicolon. In other words, the way of how we use punctuation marks differ from one person to another. This is supported by Seely (1998: 226) who states that "*punctuating well is a combination of knowing a number of fixed "rules", and applying a series of rather looser conventions to your own writing style.*" The most confused parts in punctuation are:

- **Comma:** the comma is an important and essential part that makes writing clear and understood. It is used to make a short pause, so the reader can see quickly which points are related and which are separated in a sentence. Seely (1998: 229) hypothesizes that "*the person who has learned how to use the commas has learned has learned how to write*".
- **Apostrophe:** the apostrophe is the most misused punctuation mark in English. It is widely used in a wrong way; on posters or even on broad sheet news papers for instance. What makes it worse is the fact that even the total neglecting of this punctuation mark would cause no problem of confusion in our writing. However, at the same time we are stuck with it. Apostrophes are used only for two purposes:
 - To show that one or more letters have been abandoned, this is carried out with contractions.
 - To show possession.

2.2.7. Writing and the Other Skills

Learning a foreign language entails the exposure to its four skills which are: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Both reading and listening are receptive skills (taking an input) while speaking and writing are productive ones (giving an output) (Harmer, 2001). These four skills may appear different and isolated from one another but, they establish an interwoven relationship. That is, they work together in order to enhance the development of each other (Johnson, 2008). In other words, the development of an individual language skill contributes and leads to the development of others. For example,

hearing and listening to other people using language raises one's ability to speak, reading helps learners become better writers.

2.7.1. Writing and Speaking

Writing like speaking, is concerned with conveying and communicating specific thoughts and information to a specific audience. To be understood, we have to take into consideration the prior knowledge of the audience. It is believed that writing has been considered as just “*a support system for learning grammar and vocabulary*” (Harmer, 2007: V). Moreover, these two skills are similar in the sense that they are used for sustaining and maintaining relationship between people as Chandler (1995: 43) states “*writing serves a multiplicity of purposes in everyday life: communication is only one of the reasons why people write. For instance, like speech, writing also has what linguists call a phatic function: maintaining rapport between people*”.

Whatever similarities there may be between writing and speaking, the experience of the act of writing is different from the one of speaking. As Rosner and Abt (1970; in Chandler, 1995: 48) states:

When I speak, I can elaborate an idea at length or in depth, but the ideas do not give birth to each other even when they follow each other. But when I write, there is more of a ladder to my thoughts; they seem to follow from each other and not merely after each other.

That is, writing helps in generating ideas and thoughts from each other, .i.e., each idea is a useful contributor to the growth of another one in a following way. For example, if we are supposing to write a paragraph about a particular issue, then it may seem for us that we have nothing in minds about it. Yet, as we start writing the first idea that comes to our minds, this idea may act as an initiator to some other ideas which, in turn, lead to get other ones.

Moreover, in spoken language, there is an immediate given and expected from our audiences on how clear and how well a message is being communicated to them. In the other hand, in the written language, writers must somehow construct a coherent message taking into consideration the background information of the reader since there is no immediate feedback (Weigle, 2009).

In addition to this, another distinction between these two productive skills is gesture and paralinguistic features which are, unlike in speaking, missing in the writing skill. As Hedge (2005: 07) states:

One reason is that writing is detached from the wide range of expressive possibilities in speech. A writer is unable to exploit all the devices available to a speaker such as gesture, facial expressions [...]. A speaker can back track or clarify and revise ideas as listeners question or disagree. A writer has to compensate for all of these disadvantages.

In the real world, there are several situations where speech exhibits the features of writing as claimed by Harmer (2007: 07): “some speech feels a lot like writing”. He pointed out that lectures are obviously spoken events; however, they are often read out from written notes or a full text (Harmer, 2007). In the other hand, there are other situations in which writing looks like speech. Harmer claims that, for example, people who use the written words in the Internet when they chat with others, their typing look more like speech than written discourse.

Furthermore, Brown (1994; in Weigle, 2009: 16) also distinguishes the two productive skills in terms of permanence, production time, distance, orthography, complexity, and formality. Grabowsky (1996; in Weigle, 2009) notes that only the two first items on Brown’s list-permanence and production time- can be considered as essential and the other aspects arise from them.

- Performance: Oral language is transitory and must be processed in real time, in real time, while written language is permanent and can be read and re-read as often as one likes.
- Production time: Writers generally have more time to plan, review and revise their words before they are finalized, while speakers must plan, formulate and deliver their utterances within a few moments if they are to maintain a conversation.
- Distance between the writer and the reader in both time and space, which eliminates much of the shared context that is present between speaker and listener in ordinary face to face contact and thus necessitates greater explicitness the part of the writer.

- Orthography which carries a limited amount of information compared to the richness of devices available to speakers to enhance a message (for example: stress, intonation, pitch, volume, pressing).
- Complexity written language tends to be characterized by longer clauses and more subordinators, while spoken language tends to have shorter clauses connected by coordinators, as well as more redundancy (for example: repetition of nouns and verbs).
- Formality: because of the social and cultural uses of which writing is ordinarily put, writing tends to be more formal than speaking.
- Vocabulary: written texts tend to contain a wider variety of words, and lower frequency words, than oral texts.

Thus, we can say that each skill reflects its significance when used appropriately, regarding its conventions and rules. That is, each skill owns its advantages and benefits according to the circumstances under which we are because they are used in different situations, for different reasons, and also for achieving different goals (Weigle, 2009). So, both of them are powerful means for learning, expressing individual thoughts and ideas, and sensing the power of language to influence the others.

Finally, dealing with all the aforementioned difficulties may give improvement to the writing performance which in turns contributes to developing other learning skills. In other words, writing has a strong relationship with speaking and reading skills in the sense that the development of one of them may lead to the development of the other one and vice versa.

2.7.2. Writing and Reading

When looking at the nature of writing and reading, it seems that the two skills are isolated and separate in that reading is a passive activity whereas writing is productive one; however, these two skills complement each other and can be closely developed in the sense that mastering one skill results in mastering the other. Harmer (2001: 251) has claimed that “*what we write often depends upon what we read*”. He argues that learners have to be provided with opportunities to practice these two skills together instead of being taught them in isolation because in many cases the production of writing can only continue and done in combination and relation with the practice of receptive skill (Harmer, 2001).

Moreover, in order to read any piece of writing in a critical way depends on how aware the reader about the various aspects of a given written discourse manipulated by the writer. This is supported by Hedge (2000:199) who hypothesizes that:

The ability to read critically depends on an awareness of how elements of language can be manipulated by writers, and that language learners need to build this awareness. Critical reading pedagogy requires close scrutiny of the language in order to see what the writer means by the text.

Moreover, according to Johnson (2008), the obvious relationship that exists between the two preceding skills is that reading helps learners to become better writers. Through reading, learners have incidental exposure to different passages which include different structures of language and rules of grammar. Hence, those different passages somehow function as a primary model from which students can learn how to write.

Conclusion

In conclusion to this chapter, it can be said that writing is an essential tool for learning, it is a skill that allows integration in social roles. Nevertheless, it is the hard skill to acquire in comparison with the other skills which are speaking, reading, and listening. What is more, neither developing nor teaching the writing skill is an easy task, so both learners and teachers need to look for the ways that would reinforce and facilitate the teaching/learning of the writing skill.

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Chapter Three: Field Work

3. Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the data analysis. The method that is used in this research is the descriptive method since it is the appropriate one that helps us find the relationship between using vocabulary strategies, discovery and consolidation strategies in particular, and writing skill's improvement.

In order to achieve the aim of this study, we relied on the questionnaire as a data gathering tool; two questionnaires were used in this study, one for EFL teachers of written expression module and the other one for second year EFL LMD students at the Department of foreign languages at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra to explore the different attitudes on vocabulary learning and teaching and learning strategies used by EFL students.

3.1. The teachers' questionnaire

3.1.1. Administration of the questionnaire

This survey is managed to six English teachers of written expression course who have been teaching English at Biskra University. It aims at providing us with insights about teaching vocabulary, teaching the writing skill, and it also clarifies the importance they give to vocabulary learning strategies in enhancing the foreign language learners' writing skill.

3.1.2. Description of the Teachers' Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of fifteen questions grouped in two sections. Most questions are closed-ended questions; respondents had to tick the appropriate answer (s) from a series of options. There are some open-ended questions where the respondents were asked to provide explanations or further alternatives. The questionnaire consists of 15 questions divided into two sections:

Section One: Teaching and learning vocabulary (1→8)

In this section, we investigate the teachers' perception on introducing new vocabulary items each lesson, their used vocabulary strategies for presenting new items, and how they train their students to get the new words' meaning. In addition, we investigate their opinion about whether their students have problems with vocabulary's

paucity, and whether vocabulary learning strategies are useful for expanding learners' vocabulary reservoir.

Section Two: Vocabulary learning strategies and writing improvement (9→15)

Section two contains questions. Its overall objective is to help us to find out the teachers' view about teaching the writing skill in general. For example: whether writing is an easy or a hard task to teach, whether it is a necessary skill to develop in their students, and whether having an appropriate vocabulary reservoir contributes to improving writing. In addition, we investigate the major problems that are encountered by learners when writing, and the influence that vocabulary learning strategies have on writing performance.

3.1.3. Analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire

Section one: Teaching and learning vocabulary

Item 1: Do you appreciate introducing new words each lesson?

Response	Number of teachers	Percentage
Yes	06	100%
No	00	00%

Table 1: Teachers' perception of the introduction of new words in every lesson

The table above shows that the whole population of our participants 100 % has responded positively; all of them appreciate introducing new words each lesson. This implies that teachers are aware of the importance of vocabulary in the learning process.

Item 2: Learning a foreign language is essentially learning its vocabulary

Response	Agree	Disagree	Total
Number of teachers	05	01	06
Percentage	83%	17%	100%

Table 2: Level of agreement or disagreement among the participants about Item 2

As seen in the table above, five respondents 83% agreed totally with the statement that learning a foreign language is essentially learning its vocabulary, and just one teacher 17% who had a neutral view about that statement. This indicates that learning a foreign language entails learning its vocabulary.

Item 3: Which technique do you prefer to use when presenting new vocabulary?

Response	Definition	Synonym/Antonym	Translation	All of them	Total
Number of teachers	02	03	00	01	06
Percentage	33%	50%	00%	17%	100%

Table 3: Teachers' preferred technique for presenting new vocabulary

The question tries to identify the most used techniques in teaching new vocabulary items. It appears that synonyms/antonyms are the widely used because 50% of the respondents state that they use this technique when presenting new words. It also appears that there is another technique used by the majority of teachers (33%) which is using the definition. Only one teacher (17%) shows that he prefers to use all these techniques. However, none of the respondents shows his preference for using translation because most of the foreign language teachers do not appreciate the use of the mother tongue in the class unless it is necessary. The main significance of using synonyms/antonym is creating a relation and a linkage between familiar and unfamiliar words which contributes to the recall of the new words easily as the case of "similar" and "akin". For example, if teachers

want to present the word “akin”, they may use the synonym “similar” since it is more familiar to clarify the meaning of the unfamiliar one. Therefore, learners can remember the meaning of “akin” through remembering its relation to “similar”, and it is the same with using antonyms. Definition also can help learners to grasp the meaning of a new word in addition to knowing its characteristics. In the other hand, using all these techniques together may help learners to get a better understanding of the new word since translation may contribute to consolidating the new word’s meaning.

Item 4: How do you train your students to get the meaning of unfamiliar words?

Response	Asking the teacher	Using a dictionary	Guessing from context	All of them	Total
Number	00	02	00	04	06
Percentage	00%	33%	00%	67%	100%

Table 4: Different ways that students can use to get the word meaning

The table above shows that 02 respondents (33%) answered that they train their students to use a dictionary and the majority of them 67% preferred using all of these strategies by their students. On the other hand, no teacher chose the other strategies. This implies that using a dictionary is a useful strategy to be used by students as being exposed to new words to enlarge their repertoire and to build ample vocabulary in learning their target language. Also, training students to use all of these strategies is important because each word can be used in different positions, different forms, and of course with different meaning. Therefore, sometimes words can be grasped only from their positions in the sentence, or through their forms, but others to be explained through using a dictionary.

Item 5: In your opinion, do you think that your students have problems of vocabulary's paucity?

Responses	Number of teachers	Percentage
Yes	06	100%
No	00	00%

Table 5: Teachers' views about students' problems of vocabulary's paucity

It appears from the table above that all the respondents with a rate of 100% claimed that their students have troubles with vocabulary reservoir. Therefore, the learners' paucity in vocabulary may be due to the negligence of the vocabulary strategies when encountering new words. So if learners make aware and have a clear understanding about the steps of learning vocabulary effectively and make use of the strategies that facilitate this learning process, then their vocabulary will be enrich.

Item 6: Analyzing word structure is a useful strategy for learning vocabulary?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	06	100%
No	00	00%
Total	06	100%

Table 6: Teachers' perception of analyzing word structure strategy

All teachers (100%) agreed that analyzing word structure is a useful procedure when learning vocabulary. So, it is important for learners to pay attention to word structure (prefixes, suffixes) in order to learn new vocabulary item.

Item 7: Students make use of vocabulary learning strategies so as to store into memory those vocabulary items they come across.

Response	Number	Percentage
Always	02	33%
Often	03	50%
Sometimes	01	17%
Rarely	00	00%
Never	00	00%
Total	06	100%

Table 7: Using vocabulary learning strategies for storing words into memory

The table above shows that most teachers declared that their students use vocabulary learning strategies to store vocabulary items into memory; 02 participants 33% answered ‘always’ , 3 participants 50% answered ‘often’, and one teacher 17% claimed that students use them sometimes. However, none of the teachers answer ‘rarely’ and ‘never’. This indicates that students rely on memory strategies whenever they encounter new words.

Item 8: The role of the teacher is encouraging learners’ autonomy by providing them with strategies that help them work out words’ meaning and memorize them?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	06	100%
No	00	00%
Total	06	100%

Table 8: Teachers’ perception about the item 8

The previous results show that all teachers 100% answered positively. They agreed that the role of the teacher is encouraging learners’ autonomy by providing them with

strategies that help them work out word meaning and memorize it. This indicates that teachers are fully aware of their importance role in promoting students' independence in the learning process by providing them with the appropriate leaning strategies.

Item 9: Are vocabulary learning strategies (Discovery and Consolidation strategies) useful in enlarging students' vocabulary reservoir?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	06	100%
No	00	00%
Total	06	100%

Table 9: Teachers' perception of the usefulness of vocabulary learning strategies

The above reveals that all teachers (100%) believe that vocabulary learning strategies are useful in enriching students' vocabulary stock. Students use those strategies in order to learn new words, to memorize them, and also to recall them when they are needed. Hence, using those VLSs will also develop students' knowledge of vocabulary since they provide them with the different forms, meanings, and uses of the target words.

Section Two: Vocabulary learning strategies and writing improvement

Item 9: Writing is a necessary skill to develop?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	06	100%
No	00	00%

Table 10: the necessity of developing the writing skill

The results shown above reveal that all teachers believe in the necessity of developing learners' writing skill. This indicates that teachers are aware of the importance

of the writing skill in academic setting and particularly in improving the process of learning English language.

Item 11: Do students have difficulties in writing in English?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	06	100%
No	00	00%
Total	06	100%

Table 11: Teachers' perception on item 11

The previous table shows that all teachers 100% claimed that their students have difficulties in writing. This implies that writing skill is a hard task to be mastered by EFL learners especially the beginners due to many factors.

Item 12: What are the most common writing problems you have noticed in your students' writing?

Response	Number	Percentage
Grammar mistakes	00	00%
Poor content/ideas	01	16%
Poor organization of ideas	00	00%
Poor vocabulary	01	17%
All of them	04	67%
Total	06	100%

Table 12: The common students' writing problems

The table above shows that the majority of teachers 67% claimed that students have all the aforementioned problems. However, 16% answered 'poor content', 17%

answered ‘poor vocabulary’, and none of them answered ‘grammar mistakes’ and ‘poor organization’.

This indicates that students have many serious problems when writing which make this skill a difficult task for them. Poor vocabulary is one of the major noticeable difficulties that are encountered by learners when they come to write. The lack of vocabulary may result in poor content since our ideas are shaped in our minds via words. In addition, poor organization may be encountered due to the lack of the conjunctions which are used to make cohesion of the learner’s writing production.

❖ **If others, please mention them**

- No respect of grammatical rules (e.g. verb tense, subject agreement) (one teacher)
- Spelling mistakes (two teachers)
- Coherence and cohesion in the essay and paragraph building in addition to punctuation marks. (one teacher)
- Punctuation, spelling (two teacher)

This indicates that most of teachers have noticed another major problem which is spelling mistakes besides to others. Such mistakes maybe lessened if those learners apply the vocabulary learning strategies that help them to memorize both the meaning and the spelling of the learned words.

Item 13: Do you think that your students have enough vocabulary when facing an exam?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	01	17%
No	05	83%
Total	06	100%

Table 13: Teachers’ opinions on item 12

The table above shows that the majority of teachers 83% answered ‘no’ and just one teacher 17% answered ‘yes’. This implies that teachers noticed the poor vocabulary knowledge of their students especially in exams.

Item 14: Does having a considerable vocabulary reservoir contributes to improvement of writing skill?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	05	83%
No	01	17%
Total	06	100%

Table 14: The contribution of vocabulary reservoir to improving writing

The table above shows that the majority of the teachers 83% claimed that having an appropriate vocabulary reservoir contributes to improving the writing skill. However, only one teacher 17% answered negatively. Their justifications concerning this point are mentioned here:

- Writing depends on generating ideas, and no ideas can be well-expressed without adequate vocabulary reservoir.
- Words are the biggest component of any piece of writing, so we need to have sufficient vocabulary in order to express our ideas effectively.
- Students who lack vocabulary often fail in their writing tasks because they do not have enough vocabulary by which they carry out their abstract ideas. (02 teachers)
- Words are the building block of writing, and no written discourse can be done without having an adequate amount of vocabulary.

The teacher who answered ‘no’, his justification is:

- Only with the appropriate use of the student’s modest linguistic fortune, he can write something perfect when he is precise and concise.

This indicates that having a good vocabulary reservoir helps the learner to improve his writing production since words are the means by which he expresses his ideas; however, he needs to select the appropriate words from hid stock in order for his writing to be effective.

Item 15: Do vocabulary learning strategies contribute to the development of students' writing skill?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	06	100%
No	00	00%
Total	00	100%

Table 15: The contribution of vocabulary learning strategies to developing writing

The previous table shows that all teachers 100% answered positively. All of them claimed that vocabulary learning strategies contribute to the enhancement of the writing skill.

❖ If yes, please justify

- Strategies familiarize students with learning vocabulary and help them enrich writing skill.
- When applying them correctly, students know how to organize their ideas, how to use appropriate vocabulary and how to write (in general) a good, coherent and unified piece of writing.
- Of course, they make the students acquire more vocabulary to be used in their written production, but we must focus on teaching them in context instead of in isolation, it is more fruitful.
- Vocabulary is the essential language aspect for a successful writing.
- To know vocabulary learning strategies and when to use them judiciously would definitely enhance students' writing skills and abilities.
- Vocabulary learning strategies help learners to enrich their vocabulary stock.

The results above shows that vocabulary learning strategies are very useful and helpful in enhancing learners' writing skill since they provide learners with the needed vocabulary items to be used when writing because words are the building block of any piece of writing, so there will be no written discourse unless we have enough vocabulary to be used.

3.1.4. Interpretation of the results of the questionnaire

Based on the analysis of the collected data from teachers' questionnaire, a conclusion can be drawn as follows:

Concerning teachers' assumptions about learning English vocabulary, most teachers appreciated presenting new words each lesson, and supported the idea that learning vocabulary is very essential in learning a foreign language. This implies that teachers are aware of the importance of vocabulary in the process of learning a foreign language. Moreover, the majority of teachers admitted presenting new words through giving their synonyms/antonyms and their definitions. Furthermore, a high percentage of teachers claimed they prefer to train students to get words' meaning by using a dictionary, guessing from context (discovery strategies), and asking the teacher (consolidating strategy). In some cases, the student needs to ask the teacher about an unfamiliar word's meaning even if he guesses its meaning from context or rather checks it in a dictionary because he is not sure that he has grasped the correct meaning, so asking the teacher would make him ensure about the meaning.

However, concerning teachers' assumptions about the writing skill, most teachers affirmed that writing is a necessary skill to develop. This can be interpreted by the importance role of writing not only in the students' education but more generally in their life. Also, it have been argued by all teachers that learners have serious problems in writing skill concerned different aspects and mechanics like spelling, vocabulary, and punctuation. Besides to this, teachers claimed that students lack the sufficient vocabulary when facing an exam. However, teachers affirmed that writing skill could be enhanced with the help of vocabulary learning strategies since they help learners to expand their vocabulary stock and as well to get good vocabulary knowledge.

3.2. The Students' Questionnaire

3.2.1. Administration of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was given to 35 second year students chosen randomly from the Department of English at Mohamed Kheider University-Biskra. This number of students constitutes the sample of this research.

3.2.2. Description of the questionnaire

The learners' questionnaire seeks to gather information about the students' strategies in learning vocabulary, their preferred vocabulary teaching strategies, and their ability to recall the learned vocabulary from different strategies to improve their writing performance. The students were requested to answer the questionnaire by ticking the appropriate answer and making full statements whenever required. The questionnaire consists of 21 questions divided into two sections:

Section one: Vocabulary learning strategies (1→10)

In this section, we investigate what the students do when they encounter new words; the type of dictionary they use, and what they prefer as an answer from the teacher to explain a new vocabulary item. In addition, we investigate whether they keep vocabulary notes, and which contexts, according to learners, require having enough vocabulary in order to perform it effectively.

Section two: Vocabulary learning strategies and writing improvement (11→21)

In this section, we investigate the learners' views about the necessity of developing the writing skill, the level of their ability to write, the major difficulties that they encounter when they come to write, and which vocabulary strategies help them to better remember and recall the learned words and which ones help them to improve writing.

3.2.3. Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

Section One: Vocabulary learning strategies

Item1: When you meet a new word, what do you prefer as an answer to explain?

Response	Number	Percentage
A- Translation to L1	21	60%
B- Definition	09	26%
C- Word in context	01	3%
D- Synonym/antonym	04	11%
Total	35	100%

Table16: Students' preferred way of presenting new vocabulary by the teacher

The table above shows that the majority of students 60% prefer translation to L1 as an explanation of the new items. 09 students with a rate of 26% prefer to be given a definition of those items. This indicates that students would learn better a new vocabulary item if they are provided with its equivalent in their L1 because they make certain association with the familiar word and the unfamiliar word. Also, definition is a good teaching technique since the teacher provides them with the meaning of the target words and their characteristics. However, 3% of our respondents answered word in context, and 11% answered synonyms/antonyms. Grasping a word given in a context requires knowing almost all the words' meaning in the linguistic context and since those students lack appropriate vocabulary knowledge, they find it difficult to learn new items through this strategy.

Item 2: Where do you usually need more sufficient vocabulary?

Statement	Number	Percentage
A-When reading texts for my courses or outside the classroom	04	11%
B-When listening to and watching English language media (e.g.: songs, TV, movies...etc)	02	6%
C-When writing a composition	13	37%
D-When speaking in classroom	10	29%
E-When communicating with native speakers	06	17%

Table 17: Context in which students need an adequate vocabulary

As the table above shows, the majority of the respondents (37%) need sufficient vocabulary when writing a composition. Then, 10 students 29% answered: when speaking in classroom. 4 students 11% claimed that they need more vocabulary knowledge when reading both, for their courses or outside classroom; whereas, 2 students 6% answered: when listening and watching English language media. This indicates that the productive skills, which are writing and speaking, requires from learners to have appropriate amount of vocabulary in order to produce the language effectively and express their ideas appropriately. However, 7 students (17%) show that they need more vocabulary knowledge when communicating with native speakers because natives have a huge

vocabulary knowledge more than second language learners. so learners need to enlarge their vocabulary knowledge in order to communicate with them effectively.

Item 3: In your opinion, do you think that you have good vocabulary reservoir?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	12	66%
No	23	34%
Total	25	100%

Table 18: Students' view of having good vocabulary reservoir

The results shown above reveal that the majority of the respondents have the problem of vocabulary's paucity. So the rate of 66% represents the students who do not have ample vocabulary.

(34%) of our participants said that they have an appropriate amount of vocabulary in the English language, and this is due to their strategies that are followed by those students. Only (08) Students out of (12) who answered and gave the following strategies:

- Reading extensively as short stories, poems, and novels. (one student)
- Watching English movies. (03 students)
- Listening to music. (02 students)
- Chatting with English native speakers. (03 students)

Therefore, having a good amount of vocabulary is not a hard task since one can easily enlarge his vocabulary knowledge through certain daily life practices such as using English language media.

Item 4: When you encounter a new word, how do you usually discover its meaning?

Response	Number	Percentage
A-Asking the teacher to explain	02	06%
B-Check it in a dictionary	22	63%
C-Reread the text and try to guess its meaning from context	08	23%
D-Ignore it	03	08%
Total	35	100%

Table 19: Students' strategies of discovering new words in a text

The table above shows that 63% of the students depend on the use of the dictionary for grasping the meaning from a text. This is evidence that denotes that using the dictionary is a useful strategy for learning more vocabulary items and consequently expanding the vocabulary knowledge. 23% of the participants depend on grasping the meaning of unknown words from the context and this is may be due to the good vocabulary knowledge that they have and which help them to determine the meaning of the target words. However, 03 students with a rate of 8% have said that they simply ignore uncommon words. The rest respondents 6% answered: asking the teacher for an explanation. This latter is avoided by many students because they hesitate from asking the teacher or they feel uncomfortable.

Item 5: What strategy do you find effective for consolidating new vocabulary?

Statement	Number	Percentage
A- Make effort to use the new vocabulary when writing	12	34%
B- Make effort to use the new vocabulary when speaking	04	11%
C- Take notes in class (e.g. add L1 equivalent)	10	29%
D- Communicate with native speakers and try to use the new words	09	26%
Total	35	100%

Table 20: Students' used strategies for consolidating new words

The previous results show that the majority of students prefer consolidating the new learned words through using them when writing (34%) and when interacting with native speakers (26%). This implies that practice of the words' meaning seems to be effective strategy for consolidating and memorizing new vocabulary items. Also, 29% of the respondents depend on taking notes in class as a consolidating strategy.

Item 6: When you come across a new vocabulary item, do you use a notebook?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	22	63%
No	13	37%
Total	35	100%

Table 21: Rate of learners who use a notebook

The previous table shows that the majority of students 63% have affirmed that they make use of the notebook, so they keep vocabulary notebook as they come across new words.

Item 7: If “yes”, is it:

Response	Number	Percentage
Always	05	23%
Sometimes	15	68%
Rarely	02	9%
Total	22	100%

Table 22: Rate of times learners use a notebook

The results shows that the use of the notebook is not an occasional one: 68% of the students sometimes use it, and 23% always use it.

Item 8: Do you use a notebook to:

Statement	Number	Percentage
A- Write the meaning in your mother tongue/or French	08	36%
B- Write the meaning in English using synonym/opposite	10	46%
C- Put it in a sentence of your own	04	18%
Total	22	100%

Table 23: Rate of what learners do in a notebook

The previous table shows that using synonyms and opposites 46% and translation with a rate of 36% are the most preferred techniques by the learners.

Item 9: If you use a dictionary, which type of dictionary do usually you use?

Response	Number	Percentage
Bilingual	14	40%
Monolingual	21	60%
Total	35	100%

Table 24: Students' perception on kinds of used dictionary

The above table shows that most of the respondents with the rate of 60% prefer to use the monolingual dictionary. The monolingual dictionary is widely used by learners because they find it more helpful and useful than the bilingual dictionary; since it provides them with clear explanation, definition, and characteristics of words. However; the rest of the respondents 40% use the bilingual one because they have low level in English.

Item 10: Is guessing from context enough for the development of vocabulary in English?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	12	66%
No	23	34%
Total	35	100%

Table 25: The strategy of guessing from context

In fact, guessing from context is a complex strategy for beginners who are not familiar with their target language, since it needs knowing almost all the words in a text in order to guess and understand the meaning of unknown words successfully. So, 66% of our respondents think that guessing from context is not enough for developing vocabulary knowledge, because they do not have enough vocabulary that help them to get words' meaning through guessing from context. While, the rest of the participants (34%) choose to answer positively, and this is may be due to the good vocabulary knowledge that they have. Therefore, guessing from context is a useful strategy for learning extra vocabulary especially for those who have ample vocabulary, and consequently for developing more and more their vocabulary knowledge.

Section Two: Vocabulary learning strategies and writing improvement

Item 11: Writing skill is necessary skill to improve?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	34	97%
No	01	3%
Total	35	100%

Table 26: The necessity of developing the writing skill

The above table shows that the majority of learners are aware of the importance of developing their writing skill. It indicates that (97%) of them know that writing has an essential role especially in higher education because it is a tool and a means through which students measure their knowledge especially in exams.

Item 12: Your ability to write in English language is:

Response	Number	Percentage
Weak	03	09%
Average	24	68%
Good	08	23%
Total	35	100%

Table 27: Students' ability in writing in English

According to the table above, it is noticed that 68% of the students answered that their level in writing in English is average. And that rate indicates that our respondents are not satisfied with their performance level in writing. However; they are just in their second year. So, they need to consider their difficulties and look for ways to overcome them in order to improve their achievement in this acquired skill.

Item 13: According to you, what is the main difficulty you encounter when writing?

Response	Number	Percentage
Lack of vocabulary	20	57%
Time-consuming	01	3%
Lack of grammar	03	9%
Lack of ideas	11	31%
Total	35	100%

Table 28: Students' main difficulty in writing

The table above shows that the majority of students 57% have a problem of the lack of vocabulary, and 31% have the problem of the lack of ideas. However, 3 students 9% answered ‘lack of grammar’ and only one student 3% answered ‘time-consuming’. This indicates that the major difficulty in writing is due to the limited vocabulary that learners have.

Item 14: Do you think that vocabulary knowledge influence successful writing?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	35	100%
No	00	00%
Total	35	100%

Table 29: The impact of good vocabulary knowledge on successful writing

The table above shows that all the respondents 100% said that having good vocabulary knowledge contributes to successful writing since having rich vocabulary would provide them with the right words when assigning such writing topics in addition to facilitating the ability to write effectively.

Item 15: Which learning strategy helps you better improve your writing performance?

Response	Number	Percentage
A-Translation	09	26%
B-Look up in dictionary	14	40%
C-Study the spelling of a word	07	20%
D-Infer the meaning from context	05	14%
Total	35	100%

Table 30: Students’ perception on item 15

The previous table shows that the majority of the students 40% claimed that looking up in dictionary is the most useful strategy that would enhance their writing performance. Then, translation with a rate of 26%. However, 07 of the students 20% claimed that studying the spelling of the word is helpful in improving writing, and 5 students 14% find that guessing from context is more likely to improve their writing skill.

Using a dictionary is more likely to improve learners' writing since it provides them with the meaning of an unfamiliar word, its grammatical patterns, and its appropriate usage (example sentence). So, this knowledge could be very for learners who intend to use this learned word in their piece of writing. Also, it have been claimed by many learners that translation would help them in writing and this is may be because learners are more likely to easily grasp the target words' meaning an as well to memorize them since they make a link between those target words (unfamiliar words) and the familiar words (the equivalents in Arabic) and consequently to re-use the learned words if there will be a need of them. Although translation may somehow contribute to improving writing, it is not good to depend each time on this strategy when coming across a new item.

Studying the spelling of the words seems to be an effective strategy that would help in improving writing. In the other hand, guessing from context is also a useful strategy that can contribute to enhancing writing since it allows learners to learn more words depending on themselves and as well it

Item 16: Which learning strategy helps you better recall the learned word when writing?

Statement	Number	Percentage
A- I repeat it aloud to my self	12	34%
B- I write it repeatedly	10	29%
C- I create a mental image of the new word to help me remember it	04	11%
D- I make a link between the familiar and unfamiliar words	09	26%
Total	35	100%

Table 31: Students' used strategy for a better recall

The table above shows that the majority of the students 34% claimed that repeating the new words aloud to themselves is the best strategy to be used for better recall of the learned words when they are needed when writing. Then it comes writing the new words repeatedly with a rate of 29%. However, 11% of our respondents find that creating a mental image of the target words is the good strategy to be used for better recall, and 26% of them prefer making a link between the familiar and the unfamiliar words as an effective learning strategy that helps them to recall those learned vocabulary items easily.

This implies that students prefer to use repetition strategy for better recall of the learned words since it helps them to take the target items into memory and to recall them when they are needed as well.

Item 17: If you rely on interaction to memorize new words, do you find it easy to re-use it when needed in writing?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	26	74%
No	09	26%
Total	35	100%

Table 32: Students' perception on item 17

The results above show that the majority of the respondents 74% find it easy to re-use the learned words, which have been consolidated through the use of interaction, when they need it in writing. However, 9 students with a rate of 26% answered 'no'. This indicates that using the consolidating strategy which is interaction with others is a useful strategy to be used in order to facilitate the writing task since it helps them to recall the learned words and re-use they come to produce a piece of writing, so the target words are added to the learner's vocabulary stock and they will be used whatever they are needed.

Item 18: When you rely on dictionary each time you encounter a new word, do you recall it in new context (when writing)?

Response	Number	Percentage
Easily	03	8%
Some how easily	22	63%
Hard	10	29%
Total	35	100%

Table 33: Rate of how easy learners recall the learned vocabulary from dictionary

The results obtained shows that the process of recalling items (words) learned through the use of dictionary is somehow easy for 63% of the respondents and 29% find it hard. This implies that the use of dictionary each time increases the recall ability of vocabulary in new contexts. Hence, using a dictionary is a useful strategy because it helps learners to discover the meaning of unfamiliar words. In addition, learners can recall the learned words somehow easily when they need them when writing.

Item 19: Is having a considerable vocabulary reservoir helpful in improving writing performance?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	35	100%
No	00	00%
Total	35	100%

Table 34: Students' perception on item 191

The previous table shows that all the respondents 100% consider that having an appropriate vocabulary reservoir is helpful in enhancing their writing skill. So, if learners

try to overcome the problem of the lack of vocabulary and expand the limited vocabulary that they have, their writing skill would be enhanced.

Item 20: Do vocabulary learning strategies contribute to writing improvement?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	09	26%
No	26	74%
Total	35	100%

Table 35: The contribution of vocabulary learning strategies to improving writing

The previous table shows that the majority of the students 47% answered positively. They believe in the role of vocabulary learning strategies in improving their writing. However, 09 students (26%) answered negatively. Those whose answer is ‘no’ may be interpreted by the desire of avoiding the ‘how’ question.

Item 21: If ‘yes’, how

This question has not been answered by many students. Some answers are mentioned below:

- The strategies help learners to acquire a large amount of vocabulary that they need in order to write. (5 students)
- Vocabulary learning strategies provide us with knowledge of different words, so we can use those words appropriately when writing. (2 students)
- They facilitate learning more vocabulary. (6 students)
- They help me to memorize meaning of words, so I can use those words whenever I need them. (1 student)
- Dictionary helps me to find the correct form of the word and shows me how to use it appropriately because it gives examples in which the word is used. (1 student)

These answers indicate that there are some students who are really aware of the importance of VLSs in enhancing their writing. The noticeable benefit that students may obtain from using vocabulary strategies and that would improve their writing is acquiring

more vocabulary items and consequently enlarge their vocabulary stock and also expand their vocabulary knowledge.

3.2.4. Interpretation of the results of the questionnaire

According to the results obtained from the students' questionnaire, we can see that: what concerns what learners do when encountering unknown words, they showed their preference to check the dictionary 'bilingual and monolingual' as a primary aid to get words' meaning when they meet them for the first time in addition to guessing from context even if this latter is not a well mastered strategy. Also, in consolidating strategies, students prefer using the new words when writing, when communicating with native speakers despite of their problems of vocabulary since natives have a huge vocabulary in comparison with our respondents, and also taking notes in class. In the other hand, learners prefer their teachers to explain the meaning of unfamiliar words by giving translation to L1 and definitions.

Moreover, the use of the notebook to write down the synonyms/opposites, and translation has proved to be of great use by the students who claimed that they have two major techniques to record the new words: the use of the first language and that of using synonyms and opposites. Furthermore, students have claimed that they have a lack in their English vocabulary. This can be interpreted by their less background awareness towards the steps of vocabulary learning, or because they do not make use of the vocabulary strategies as they come across new items. Hence, teachers are responsible for helping learners to increase their knowledge about how to use the vocabulary strategies especially with beginners, and they should highlight the role of employing those strategies in developing the target language of foreign learners by making students give much attention to them.

As far as writing performance is concerned, the learners are aware of the necessity of developing the writing skill. In addition to this, students are not satisfied with their levels in writing. This is can be explained by the obstacles that they experience and which hinder their writing development. Moreover, students consider that having good vocabulary knowledge and an appropriate vocabulary reservoir is very useful in improving writing. This indicates that our respondents are more conscious of the role of vocabulary in developing their writing competence. Besides to this, students affirmed that using a translation, looking up in a dictionary, and studying the spelling of the words are the most

effective strategies that would help them to improve their writing skill since these aforementioned strategies are useful in expanding learners' vocabulary reservoir as they use them to learn new words; so learners may reduce the problem of the lack of vocabulary. In the other hand, those strategies may also help learners to decrease their spelling mistakes in writing and also to use the learned words appropriately in their written production. Also, our respondents have affirmed that when relying on repetition and using a dictionary to learn new vocabulary, it is somehow easy to call them back when needed. Finally, students have affirmed that VLSs contribute to the development of their writing since they provide them with the opportunity to learn much more words and to have good vocabulary knowledge; hence they would have a chance to produce a good piece of writing.

Conclusion

The results obtained from the analysis of the teachers' and the students' questionnaires reveals that the major points that have been conducted in this research.

The teachers' questionnaire evidenced that the majority of students have problems in their writing skill concerning different aspects such as grammar, vocabulary and content as well as the other mechanics of writing: spelling and punctuation. The lack of vocabulary is one of the difficulties that teachers have noticed in their students' writing especially when facing an exam. This implies that students' low scores in the written exams may be traced to the limit vocabulary that they have, and which are not enough for expressing what learners have in minds in terms of abstract ideas. Moreover, our respondents have affirmed the role that vocabulary learning strategies play in improving writing because VLSs give learners the opportunity to lessen their writing problems especially those who are related to vocabulary mastery. Hence, teachers should improve effective strategies for teaching vocabulary and as well they have to train learners to use the right strategies that would help them overcome their difficulties that are encountered when writing.

The students' questionnaire affirms that the majority of second-year English students have a serious gap in their ability of producing English in order to communicate effectively (writing and speaking). This may be traced to learners' paucity of vocabulary amount and knowledge. Despite of that, we deduce that second-year English students are very conscious about the importance of developing the writing skill. Furthermore, Students have stated that they have difficulties in dealing with different writing aspects like

vocabulary, grammar and content. However, they have affirmed that vocabulary learning strategies could be very useful in dealing with such problems and consequently improving their writing. In addition to this; the findings of this questionnaire will help teachers choose the appropriate strategies for teaching vocabulary that may increase the learners' abilities to enlarge their vocabulary stock.

3.3. Recommendations

According to the analysis of the present study which was about investigating the effect of vocabulary learning strategies in developing learners' writing skill, several recommendations or suggestions can be provided for both students at the first place, and teachers as well. Depending on students' and teachers' questionnaires, we have highlighted some learning and teaching recommendations aiming at helping EFL learners to improve writing skill through teaching and learning the vocabulary strategies.

- **Suggestions for Teachers**

Developing the learners' writing skill can be said to be a crucial aspect in the process of teaching and learning English as a foreign language. The teachers' role lies in providing their learners with different learning strategies involving vocabulary learning strategies. Teachers should make students aware of the value of acquiring the EFL vocabulary through encouraging their autonomy by providing them with strategies that help them work out words' meaning and memorize them in order to enlarge their vocabulary bank. Expanding learners' vocabulary stock gives improvement in their ability to write.

In addition, since studying the words' spelling has been proved to be an effective strategy which has a lot of benefit in grasping the meaning of low frequency through breaking down the words into parts: suffixes, roots and prefixes. So, teachers should teach learners the most common prefixes and suffixes in order to facilitate guessing the words' meaning with the help of these word's parts.

Moreover, since the teachers' claim is that their students have a difficulty with vocabulary's paucity; teachers need to adopt more effective teaching vocabulary strategies and techniques that would help these students to acquire more vocabulary effectively. Hence, learners should be provided with vocabulary learning strategies and also trained to use the right strategies that suit their needs. Besides to this, it would be better to teach

vocabulary as a separate module so there will be a chance and opportunity for students to be exposed to as much words as possible. By this, the students' vocabulary reservoir will be enlarged and their words' knowledge will be improved as well.

- **Suggestions for students**

From the results that we have obtained from the learners' questionnaire, it will be better if we set out some effective implications for learners which can help them to be more independent vocabulary learners in order to expand their vocabulary stock and consequently to improve their ability to write.

The first implication of this study is that learners should have great deal of vocabulary knowledge in order to overcome their difficulties in the different aspects of writing especially the one concerning the vocabulary mastery and paucity. This implies that students must use the English language media like listening to English songs and watching English shows, series, or films on TV. In addition, they have to look for the opportunities to communicate with native speakers. The aforementioned strategies are very effective since they help learners to be exposed to new words, learning vocabulary, and also to develop their vocabulary knowledge since they receive different input in which words are used appropriately so this could give insights about how to use certain words when writing in an efficient way. That is, using these strategies lead learners to get a robust vocabulary which provides them with the right words to use at the right time when writing in a foreign language. Furthermore, students must do a wide range of reading because it allows them to expose to different styles of written works and to acquire more words.

Moreover, teachers should keep vocabulary notebooks in order to review the words and note new information that relate to the words such as adding new meaning, antonym, synonym, and word derivation at any time. By using this strategy, they will become dependent vocabulary learners and that their vocabulary size and knowledge will be developed; hence, this will give improvement to their writing skill.

General Introduction

Although learning vocabulary is a sub-skill of language, it plays a crucial role in language learning and teaching. In fact, learning vocabulary items requires a set of strategies and techniques. In this research work, we have focused on identifying the different techniques and strategies adopted by EFL learners in learning vocabulary items. Mastering vocabulary learning strategies enables learners to take more responsibility for their learning; these strategies also promote learners' autonomy in learning a foreign language. Students need some instruction from their teachers in order to identify the different vocabulary learning strategies. Hence, this will help them to use those strategies appropriately and make them decide upon how exactly they would like to deal with uncommon words.

Writing is a complex skill which entails a series of difficulties. Learning to write accurately is something that learners at different levels never manage. They find it difficult to master, and therefore fail to produce acceptable texts: paragraphs and essays. Although students may deal with the writing skill in different tasks for a long period, they still make mistakes and produce poor writing performance. The problem, we believe, is mainly due to the fact that students do not make use of the vocabulary learning strategies that help them to be more knowledgeable about vocabulary and to increase vocabulary size in order to communicate through writing in an effective way.

In our field of work, the educational setting of this study was the Department of Foreign Languages- English Division- at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra. Teachers of written expression and second year LMD students have received two questionnaires and provide us with their answers that confirm that writing is a challenging task and activity that most of the learners find difficulties when dealing with. They also showed that students have a difficulty with vocabulary's paucity which hinders their writing performance. Moreover, the results of the questionnaires confirm the research hypothesis that developing students' strategies in learning vocabulary will give improvement to their writing skill.

Writing is certainly a crucial productive skill; therefore, our case study aims at spotting the light on the role of vocabulary learning strategies to enhance EFL learners' writing skill. So, we have tried to overview the importance of VLSs to help the foreign language learners enlarge their vocabulary knowledge and size in order to optimize their

level in writing; since this latter is an expressive skill. In other words, in our study, we have focused on the role of using certain effective strategies that seem very simple, but in fact, they are very helpful for foreign language learners, especially the beginners to enlarge their vocabulary stock and knowledge because these latter are two major difficulties that are experienced by many students in their learning process in general and their writing in particular.

Therefore, English learners, especially second-year students should adopt and practice these strategies to enrich their proficiency in English vocabulary in order to enhance their abilities when writing particularly in an academic context. For instance, they have to look for opportunities to interact with native speakers and also they have to use the English language media like watching English movies in addition to making use of dictionary. In the other side, foreign language teachers should encourage learners and make them aware of using VLSs. In addition to this, they should vary and adopt activities and techniques that foster learners' proficiency in English vocabulary and enlarge their vocabulary bank. By doing this, learners' difficulties in writing skill will be lessened.

The findings of the teachers' and learners' questionnaire revealed that second-year LMD students have a difficulty in vocabulary mastery in addition to the lack of sufficient vocabulary, and this-of course- make writing a hard and a challenging task. So, it is up to the teacher to adopt effective teaching strategies, and students should train themselves to use VLSs in order to overcome those difficulties.

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Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

This is a brief questionnaire designed to investigate the effect of vocabulary learning strategies on improving learners' writing proficiency. We would be grateful if you could answer the questions below.

Please put a tick (√) on the option that best suits your opinion (you may tick many answers).

Section one: Teaching and learning vocabulary

Item 1: Do you appreciate introducing new words each lesson?

A- Yes

B- No

Item 2: Learning a foreign language is essentially learning its vocabulary?

A- Agree

B- Disagree

Item 3: Which technique do you prefer to use when presenting new vocabulary?

A- Definition

B- Translation

C- Synonym/Antonym

D- All of them

Item 4: How do you train your students to get the meaning of unfamiliar words?

A- Asking the teacher

B- Guessing from context

C- Using a Dictionary

D- All of them

Item 5: In your opinion, do you think that your students have problems of vocabulary's paucity?

A- Yes

B- No

Item 6: Analyzing word structure is a useful strategy for learning vocabulary?

A- Yes

B- No

Item 7: Students make use of vocabulary learning strategies so as to store into memory those vocabulary items they come across?

A- Always

B- Often

C- Sometimes

D- Rarely

E- Never

Item 8: The role of the teacher is encouraging learners' autonomy by providing them with strategies that help them work out words' meaning and memorize them?

A- Yes

B- No

Item 9: Are vocabulary learning strategies (Discovery and Consolidation strategies) useful in enlarging students' vocabulary reservoir?

A- Yes

B- No

Section: Vocabulary learning strategies and writing improvement

Item 9: Writing is a necessary skill to develop?

A- Yes

B- No

Item 11: Do students have difficulties in writing in English?

A- Yes

B- No

Item 12: What are the most common writing problems you have noticed in your students' writing?

A- Grammar mistakes

B- Poor content/ideas

C- Poor organization of ideas

D- Poor vocabulary

E- All of them

❖ **If others, please mention them**

Item 13: Do you think that your students have enough vocabulary when facing an exam?

A- Yes

B- No

Item 14: Does having a considerable vocabulary reservoir contribute to improvement of writing skill?

A- Yes

B- No

Item 15: Do vocabulary learning strategies contribute to the development of students' writing skill?

A- Yes

B- No

❖ If yes, please justify

Thank you for your cooperation

Students' Questionnaire

Dear Student,

This is a brief questionnaire designed to investigate the effect of vocabulary learning strategies on improving learners' writing proficiency. We would be very grateful if you could answer the questions below.

Please put a tick (✓) on the option that best suits your opinion (you may tick many answers).

Section: Vocabulary learning strategies

Item1: When you meet a new word, what do you prefer as an answer to explain from the teacher?

A- Translation to L1

B- Definition

C- Word in context

D- Synonym/antonym

Item 2: Where do you usually need more sufficient vocabulary?

A- When reading texts for my courses or outside the classroom

B- When listening to and watching English language media (e.g.: songs, TV, movies...etc)

C- When writing a composition

D- When speaking in classroom

E- When communicating with native speakers

Item 3: In your opinion, do you think that you have good vocabulary reservoir?

A- Yes

B- No

❖ If yes, which strategies do follow in order to increase your vocabulary size?

Item 4: When you encounter a new word, how do you usually discover its meaning?

- A- Asking the teacher to explain
- B- Check it in a dictionary
- C- Reread the text and try to guess its meaning from context
- D- Ignore it

Item 5: What strategy do you find effective for consolidating new vocabulary?

- A- Make effort to use the new vocabulary when writing
- B- Make effort to use the new vocabulary when speaking
- C- Take notes in class (e.g. add L1 equivalent)
- D- Communicate with native speakers and try to use the new words

Item 6: When you come across a new vocabulary item, do you use a notebook?

- A- Yes
- B- No

Item 7: If “yes”, is it?

- A- Always
- B- Sometimes
- C- Rarely

Item 8: Do you use a notebook to:

- A- Write the meaning in your mother tongue/or French
- B- Write the meaning in English using synonym/opposite
- C- Put it in a sentence of your own

Item 9: If you use a dictionary, which type of dictionary do usually you use?

- A- Bilingual

B- Monolingual

Item 10: Is guessing from context enough for the development of vocabulary in English?

Section: Vocabulary learning strategies and writing improvement

Item 12: Your ability to write in English language is:

A- Weak

B- Average

C- Good

Item 13: According to you, what is the main difficulty you encounter when writing?

A- Lack of vocabulary

B- Time-consuming

C- Lack of grammar

D- Lack of ideas

Item 14: Do you think that vocabulary knowledge influence successful writing?

A- Yes

B- No

Item 15: Which learning strategy helps you better improve your writing performance?

A-Translation

B-Look up in dictionary

C-Study the spelling of a word

D-Infer the meaning from context

Item 16: Which learning strategy helps you better recall the learned word when writing?

A- I repeat it aloud to my self

B- I write it repeatedly

C- I create a mental image of the new word to help me remember it

D- I make a link between the familiar and unfamiliar words

Item 17: If you rely on using the learned word when interacting with others to memorize it, do you find it easy to re-use it when needed in writing?

A- Yes

B- No

Item 18: When you rely on dictionary each time you encounter a new word, do you recall it in new context (when writing)?

A- Easily

B- Somehow easily

D- Hard

Item 19: Is having a considerable vocabulary reservoir helpful in improving writing performance?

A- Yes

B- No

Item 20: Do vocabulary learning strategies contribute to writing improvement?

A- Yes

B- No

Item 21: If 'yes', how

Thank you for your cooperation

ملخص

تعلم المفردات هو جزء بالغ الأهمية في تعلم اللغة. ربما تكون أعظم الوسائل التي يمكننا إعطاءها للطلبة ليس فقط في تعليمهم ولكن بصفة عامة في حياتهم هي مفردات لغوية غنية و كثيرة. هذا البحث يقدم دراسة حول أهمية الحوصلة اللغوية في انجازات الكتابة لان القدرة على الكتابة بشكل فعال يتوقف على وجود مفردات وافرة و كافية.

تم اجراء هذه الدراسة في قسم اللغات الأجنبية ، كلية الآداب واللغات ، جامعة محمد خيضر- بسكرة-. الغرض من هذا البحث هو دراسة دور استخدام استراتيجيات تعلم المفردات في إثراء وتحسين الحوصلة اللغوية للطلبة، وتأثيرها ته الاخيرة على مهارة الكتابة في اللغة الإنجليزية. تعرض طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية مجموعة من المشاكل اثناء الكتابة ومن بين هذه المشاكل هو نقص الحصيـلة اللغوية و الذي يمنعهم من التعبير عن أفكارهم ، وبالتالي فإننا نفترض وجود علاقة بين استخدام استراتيجيات تعلم المفردات وانجازات الكتابة. من أجل جمع البيانات اللازمة لتحقيق الهدف من هذه الدراسة تم تسليم استبيانين احدهما موجه لطلبة السنة الثانية و الاخر موجه للأساتذة في كلية اللغات الاجنبية قسم الانجليزية في جامعة محمد خيضر. اختيار العينات كان عشوائي : خمسة و ثلاثون طالبا و ستة اساتذة اجابوا على الاستبيان.

النتائج المتحصل عليها في هذه الدراسة اثبتت صحة الفرضية المطروحة و التي مفادها ان الطالب يمكنه ان يتفادى المشاكل التي تواجهه عندما يكتب اذا استعمل استراتيجيات تعلم المفردات و التي تساعده في توسيع حصيلته اللغوية ، و التي بدورها تساهم في تحسين انجازاته في الكتابة ، و في الاخير تم اقتراح بعض التوصيات، بعضها موجهة للطلبة لمساعدتهم على استخدام التقنيات المختلفة في تعلم وتوسيع الحصيـلة اللغوية و البعض الاخر موجه للأساتذة من اجل حثهم على تزويد الطلبة بمختلف الاستراتيجيات التي تساعدهم على تعلم اكبر عدد من المفردات و تطوير معرفتهم اللغوية من اجل تحسين الكتابة.