Exploring Strategies Used By EFL Learners When Memorizing Vocabulary

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Abstract:
Vocabulary is an essential element in English language learning as it paves the way for the development of the other macro- and micro skills; hence, it facilitates communication. EFL learners employ strategies to actively acquire and memorize vocabulary to be used later when needed. The aim of this study is to explore strategies used by EFL learners when learning vocabulary. The focus is on strategies utilized for memorizing words. To attain the previously mentioned objective, this study draws on a questionnaire involving five parts each of which deals with a certain theme related to vocabulary and learning strategies. The participants involved in this study are Algerian EFL university students enrolled in fourth year in Ecole Normal Supérieure of Ouargla. The findings of this study reveals that EFL learners are aware of the importance of vocabulary in learning English language and they also conscious of the strategies they use to actively acquire new words. However, they permanently rely on the same strategies.

Keywords: EFL learners; Vocabulary; Learning Strategies; Memorization; Compensation.

1. INTRODUCTION
English is an important and a global language, transcending borders and cultures, influencing various aspects of our lives: tourism, business, diplomacy, cultural exchange, technology and science. Therefore, people become interest in learning English language in different forms: English as second language, English as a foreign language, English for specific purpose, etc. However, in EFL context, the role of teachers is to enhance learners' communicative competence, so they become able to interact in English language when they are listening, speaking, reading or writing. In fact, developing the previous four skills requires improving vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar and syntax. Despite the importance of pronunciation, grammar and syntax, vocabulary is a crucial aspect of every language; English language is no exception. One cannot engage in a communicative situation without vocabulary, so a limited number of words in a second language impedes a successful communication. Mastering vocabulary is one of the most challenging activity that EFL learners encounter when learning English language because many learners devote a great deal of time on memorizing new L2 words using various strategies.

On other occasion, they become obliged to compensate for the failure to recall already learnt words and/or the lack of lexical knowledge using other strategies. The aim of this study is to explore EFL learners' awareness of learning strategies and the different strategies they use when memorizing vocabulary.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definitions of vocabulary

Many experts suggest different definitions to the term vocabulary or lexicon . Thornburry (2002) views vocabulary as a word that has a meaning and a form. Hornby (2000) states that vocabulary is refer to the set of words in every, including English, language in which all the words are known by someone and used in the books, subject, and so forth. It is described as a system highlighting the interconnectedness of words in a language considering factors like synonyms, antonyms, words families, etc. In fact, vocabulary has a dynamic nature as it evolves over time. It is also defined a cognitive construct emphasizing the mental processes: acquiring, storing and retrieving used by individuals during language production.

2.2. The importance of vocabulary

Lewis (1993) argues, "Lexis is the core or heart of language" (p. 89). Accordingly, mastering English language vocabulary is required for effective communication. Mehta (2009) stresses that the first and foremost important step in language acquisition is vocabulary. Confirming the same view, Wilkins (in Thornbury, 2002) states that one can say nothing without vocabulary. Additionally, Richards and Renandya (2002) emphasize that vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency, and it provides the basis for learners to speak, to listen, to read, and to write. Nation (2001) accentuates that vocabulary knowledge and language are complementary because knowledge of vocabulary helps in language use and, conversely, language use can increase and enrich vocabulary knowledge. Thus, only who have a rich vocabulary can use English language fluently and easily. Vocabulary is required to express their own ideas and understand others' thoughts in English language as Schmitt (2000) confirms: "lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second language" (p.55). Though vocabulary and grammar are aspects of language, Wilkins (1972) wrote that "while without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed" (p.111-112). For Nation (2001), teaching and learning vocabulary comes during learning other language aspects as grammar, syntax and pronunciation.

2.3. Teaching vocabulary

Teaching vocabulary is not just checking words in dictionary and demonstrate them to students. Many scholars showed their interest and proposed their ideas about the effective methodologies for teaching vocabulary. Two major directions towards vocabulary teaching and learning have been the cause of debate among vocabulary researcher. National Reading Panel (2000) proves that teaching vocabulary can be done incidentally through an indirect exposure of EFL learners to words using different activities and/or intentionally through a direct and an explicit teaching of specific selected words to EFL learners. Furthermore, Gower (2005:8) proposes three main stages in teaching vocabulary; they are presenting vocabulary considering

Thorn's (2009:10) major factors: learners' level, the difficulty of the items, their teaching ability and the purpose of learning them either for production or for recognition, practicing because Thorn (2009:20) underlines the popular belief that practice makes perfect and helps in moving words from short-term memory into permanent memory to be used in the final important stage which is revising. However, Anderson (2010) articulates that no method is better than other is. Additionally, Graves (2006) also points that vocabulary instruction should be multifaceted.

2.4. Definitions of learning strategies

The word "strategy" is derived from the ancient Greek word strategia that means steps or actions used to win a war. Though the warlike sense of the ancient Greek word has fortunately less exploited, the goal directedness of that word remain in its modern version "strategy" (Oxford, 2003). For Oxford (1990), learning strategies are "specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques students use–often consciously–to improve their progress in apprehending, internalizing, and using the L2". To explain the purposes for which learning strategies are used, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) view learning strategies as specific thoughts or behaviors that learners utilize when learning, comprehending and retaining new information. Rubin and Wenden (1987) define learning strategies as any plans that involve sets of operations, steps, and routines employed by learners to effectively process information starting from acquiring, storage, retrieval, and the uses. Cohen (1998) stresses that language learning strategies are: "Those **processes** which are consciously selected by learners and which may result in action taken to enhance the learning or use of a second or foreign language, through the storage, retention, recall, and application of information about that language (p. 4)". Based on the previous definitions, it can said that learning strategies are essential ways employed intentionally to improve learning process and to make it more effective and enjoyable. In fact, many technical terms used to describe learning strategies: actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques (Oxford, 1990), thoughts or behaviors (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990), plans (Wenden and Rubin, 1987), processes (Cohen, 1998), etc.

2.5.   Importance of learning strategies

Oxford (1990) vows that there is no good or bad strategy; strategy is essentially neutral until its use is thoroughly considered. Specifically, their value depends on their use. He (1990) stated, "Strategies are especially important for language learning because they are tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence. Appropriate language learning strategies result in improved proficiency and greater self-confidence". This means that language learning strategies assure EFL learners' activity, self-confidence, self-orientation and proficiency which are necessary in developing communicative competence.   Additionally, he (2003) also articulates that learning strategies enable students to be autonomous and lifelong learners. Furthermore, strategies can "make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (Oxford, 1990, p. 8). A strategy is useful if it meets these conditions: (a) the strategy relates well to the L2 task at hand, (b) the strategy fits the particular student's learning style preferences to one degree or another, and (c) the student employs the strategy effectively and links it with other relevant strategies" (Oxford, 2003, p. 8).

2.6.   Features of learning strategies

Oxford (1990) identified twelve key features of language learning strategies as follows:
- ✓ Contribute to the main goal, communicative competence;
- ✓ Allow learners to become more self-directed;
- ✓ Expand the role of the teachers;
- ✓ Are problem-oriented;
- ✓ Are specific actions taken by the learners;
- ✓ Involve many aspects of the learner, not just the cognitive;
- ✓ Support learning both directly and indirectly;
- ✓ Are not always observable;
- ✓ Are often conscious;
- ✓ Can be taught;
- ✓ Are flexible;
- ✓ Are influenced by a variety of factors.

2.7.   Classifications of Learning Strategies

Since, as mentioned by Oxford (1990), "strategies are especially important for language learning because they are tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence", scholars conduct a number of studies to provide classifications to language learning strategies. Some of these studies results are selected and explained in this study.

Bialystok (1978) gave a framework based on four categories to language learning strategies. First, functional practicing strategy, which helps in performing a function, such as completing a transaction at a store or asking for directions. Second, formal practicing strategies and monitoring strategies aid students when practicing, verbal drilling, and noting errors in a formal classroom context. The fourth type is inferencing strategy, which refers to guessing and arriving at answers through context clues. Her model is objected because it focuses only on the cognitive and metacognitive elements of language learning, but it does not take into account social and affective strategies, which play a crucial part in language learning strategy use.

Rubin (1987) conducted a study in which she noted that learners use two different actions when learning. The first was "actions permitting learning", "actions that contribute directly to learning". Accordingly, she proposes two classifications to learning strategies: indirect strategies and direct strategies depending on whether the strategy contributes directly or indirectly to learning. Each group of the strategies consists of other sub-strategies. Indirect strategies include two sub-strategies; they are creating opportunities for practice and production tricks.Direct strategies involve clarification or verification, monitoring, memorization, guessing/inductive inferencing, deductive reasoning, and practice.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) classified learning strategies into three main groups: metacognitive, cognitive, and social/affective strategies. When doing language tasks, metacognitive strategies are used in terms of selective attention to the task, planning, monitoring, and evaluating. In other words, they help one to plan for learning, reflect on the learning process, and monitor his production or comprehension. The second type is cognitive strategies used to process incoming information. These strategies include several categories such as rehearsal, organization, inferencing, summarizing, deduction, imagery, or using a visual

image, transfer, and elaboration process. The third type is affective strategies, which handle over affective aspects during learning the language. Affective strategies are transferred into three specific actions: cooperating, questioning for clarification, and self-talk.

Oxford (1990) formulated a more comprehensive and detailed taxonomy classifying language learning strategies into six categories divided under two broad heads of direct and indirect strategies. Direct strategies, which "involve direct learning and use of the new language, includes memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies; whereas, indirect strategies, which contribute indirectly but powerfully to learning, encompasses metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. For Oxford (1990), memory strategies enable learners to enter information into long-term memory and retrieve information for communication, for example: creating mental linkages and employing actions which are accomplished through different other strategies (see Memory Strategies details in Figure 1). Cognitive strategies are employed by learners to create and to revise internal mental modes, and to receive and to produce messages in the target language; cognitive strategies invloves analyzing and reasoning. These are mental strategies utilized by students for making inferences out of what they have learned. Compensation strategies enable students to overcome the difficulties they encounter when communicating or doing a language task by referring to body language, using circumlocution and making logical guesses to make up for their incompetence and continue their communication. Meta-cognitive strategies permit the students to regulate their learning through planning, organizing, and evaluating their own learning process. Affective strategies control learners' feelings such as confidence, motivations, and attitudes associated to language learning. Social strategies, such as asking questions and cooperation, ease interaction and communication with others.
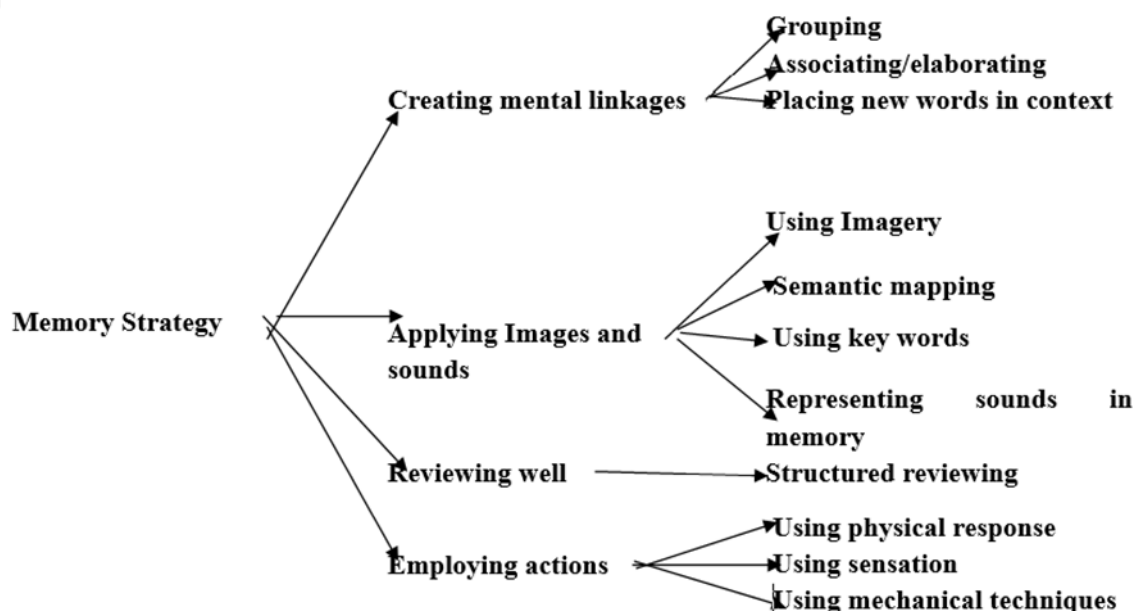

Figure 1. Memory Strategies in Oxford's Classification

The degree and the way of using these strategies when learning language is influenced by many factors: cultural and ethnic background, personality, gender, proficiency, language learning

purpose, cognitive style, the task at hand, etc. (Chamot and Kupper, 1989; Oxford, 1994; Oxford and Ehrman, 1995). As language learning strategies are continuously shaped and reshaped by the previously mentioned factors, the use of language learning strategies reflects differences among learners. However, these strategies are important to good language learning. Thus, recognizing strategies by both teacher and students can enhance the process of language learning. Moreover, the active use of these strategies enable individual learners to adopt or to create a range of effective language learning strategies, and it may encourage teachers to integrate them in their classes. Since vocabulary is central to language learning, excellent teachers should make their classroom a good environment full of factors, specifically learning strategies, that help learners to actively manage their own learning of English vocabulary focusing on memorization of words and compensation in case of they lack English words, so they continue their communication fluently.

The present study aims to explore the language learning strategies used by EFL learners when learning vocabulary focusing on strategies employed to memorize English words using actions in Oxford's Classification.

3. Methodology

Since this study aims to explore strategies used by EFL Learners when Learning Vocabulary focusing on strategies devoted to memorization, it adopts an explorative design. The research instrument utilized to attain the aim of this study is a questionnaire which is distributed to EFL students. Concerning the participants of this study, they are first year students at the department of English at ENS of Ouargla. The sample is a group consisting of forty (40) students. The participants are selected due to certain reasons. First, they are adults and need no parental permission to participate in this investigation. Second, they have studied English language at least for eight years, so they have, if not good, acceptable command of English. The participants are selected by means of non-probability sampling design where the participants are gathered in a process that does not give all of the population equal chances of being selected and they represent only themselves, but not the wider population (Cohen et al, 2007). Therefore, the results obtained cannot be generalized to the entire population. Non-probability sample comes in several forms (Cohen et al, 2007) among which convenience sampling is opted for in this study. Convenience sampling is simply a technique where the participants are selected for they are available and accessible to the researcher (ibid). Though convenience sampling often suffers from a number of biases, and lacks external validity, it is cost- and time-effective technique (Saumure & Given, 2008) and it may improve internal validity (Shuttle worth, 2009).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The richness of the quantitative data collected in this study allowed for a clear understanding of the complex web of attitudes in relation to learning strategies used by EFL learners to memorize vocabulary and to compensate for the lack of English language words.

According to the analysis, a number of key themes emerged, including: 1) general background; 2) EFL learners' awareness of the importance of English vocabulary; 3) EFL learners' challenges when learning vocabulary; 4) EFL learners' awareness of language learning strategies; and 5) EFL learners' Strategies for Memorizing English Words.

4.1. General Background

In this section the participant are asked about their age, interest in, future goals of and difficult areas when learning English. The analysis of the data yielded the following results.
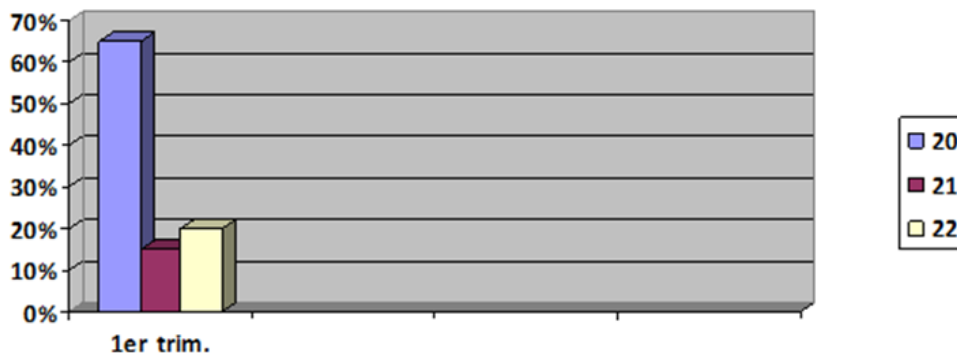
4.1.1. EFL Learners' Age

Figure 2. EFL Learners' Age

Figure 2 represents results of the first question, which is about learners' age. According these results, it seems that the learners are of ages: 20, 21 and 22 years old. They are peers, and they belong to the same level.

4.1.2. EFL Learners' Interest in Learning English Language
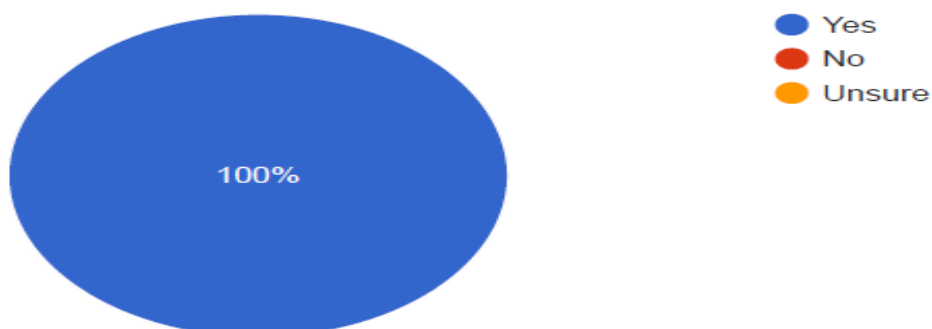
Figure 3. EFL Learners' Interest in Learning English Language

Figure 3 displays statistics about the participants' interest to learning English language. According to the finding shown in the percentage cycle, it seems that all, corresponding to 100%, the participants are interest to learning English language. This interest can be interpreted by the great value of English language that is the international language at different levels.

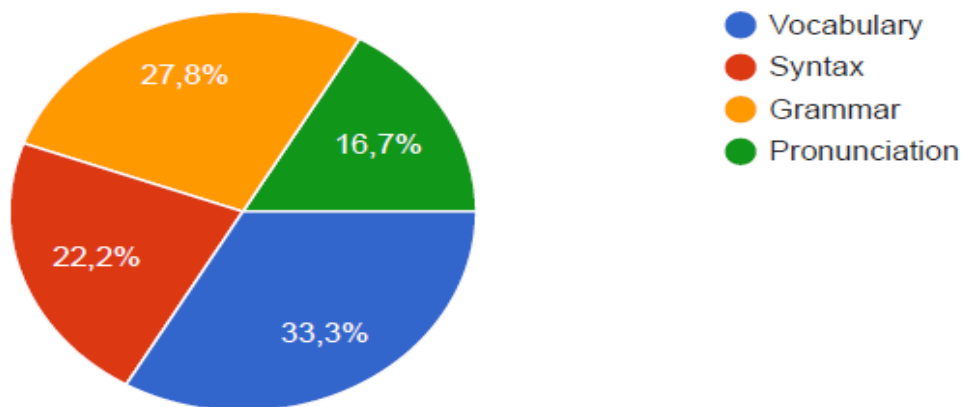### 4.1.3. EFL Learners' Difficult Areas in Learning English Language

Figure 4. EFL Learners' Difficult Areas in Learning English Language

The results shown in Figure 4 are about English language areas in which EFL learners find difficulties when learning. The majority of the participants, corresponding to 33.3%, have problems in acquiring English vocabulary. Vocabulary Issues can be interpreted due to the limited exposure or a difficulty in connecting new words with existing knowledge or concepts. In the second position, 27.8% of the participants find troubles in learning English language grammar. These grammar troubles may be the results of difficulty understanding and using the correct verb tenses, mismatching subjects and verbs in terms of number and person and Incorrect use of definite (the) or indefinite (a/an) articles. In the third position, 22.2% of the participants find problems in writing sentences when they come to learn English. To interpret this result, syntax problems can be caused by the lack of understanding of word order in English language, the interference of syntactic rules from mother tongue, the incorrect use of these grammatical elements can affect sentence structure, etc. Finally, 16.7% of the participants fail to pronounce correctly words in English language. This is caused by the influence of the mother tongue, the difficulty with phoneme discrimination and the lack of exposure to different accents of English language.

4.1.4.   EFL Learners' Future goals in Learning English Language
This question is answered differently by the participants. Their answers classified under four themes:
1) Teaching it in the future
2) Using it inside their country or abroad
3) Improving their competence to be native speaker like

4.2.   EFL Learners' Awareness of the Importance of English Vocabulary
This section contains four questions to measure EFL learners' awareness of the importance of English vocabulary.

4.2.1. The Importance of Possessing a good number of Words in English
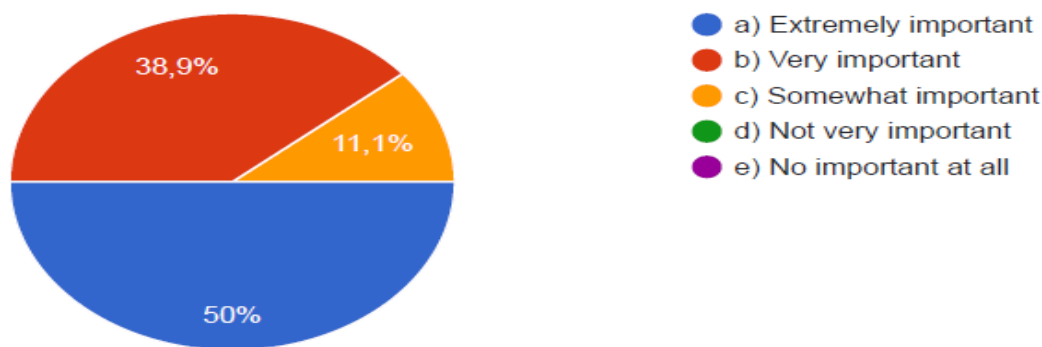
Figure 5. The Importance of Possessing a Good Number of Words in English

Figure 5 displays the participants' answers about the importance of having a good number of vocabulary in English language. According to the results shown in the figure, it seems that the majority of the participants, corresponding to 50%, believe that having a good number of words in English language is extremely important; whereas, the rest of the participants are divided into two parts, corresponding to 38.9% and 11.1%, between very important and somewhat important, respectively. Students' belief in the importance of English vocabulary reflects their recognition of its multifaceted value: the language's role in education, in communication, in culture, and in personal development.

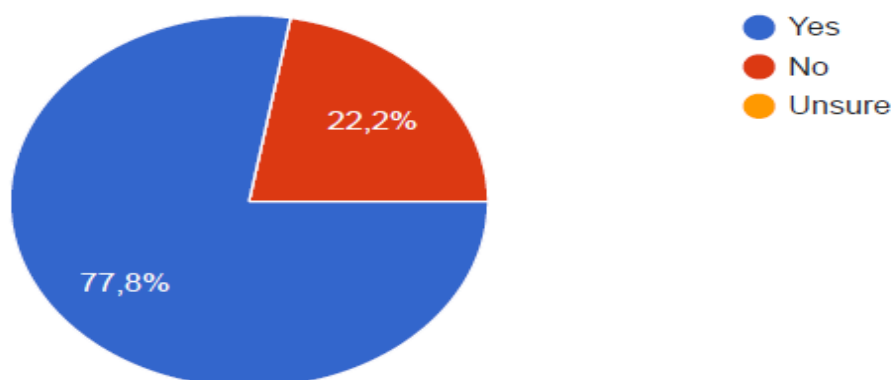### 4.2.2. The Role of Strong Vocabulary in English Communication

Figure 6. The Role of Strong Vocabulary in English Communication

Figure 6 demonstrates the participants' awareness of the role of strong vocabulary in

English communication. According to the results, the majority of the participants, equivalent to 77.8 %, believe that a strong vocabulary is essential for effective communication in English. This can be interpreted by the fact that it empowers one to express himself clearly, creatively, and persuasively, fostering deeper connections and understanding. On the other hand, 22.2 % of the

participants do not believe that a strong vocabulary is essential for effective communication in English.

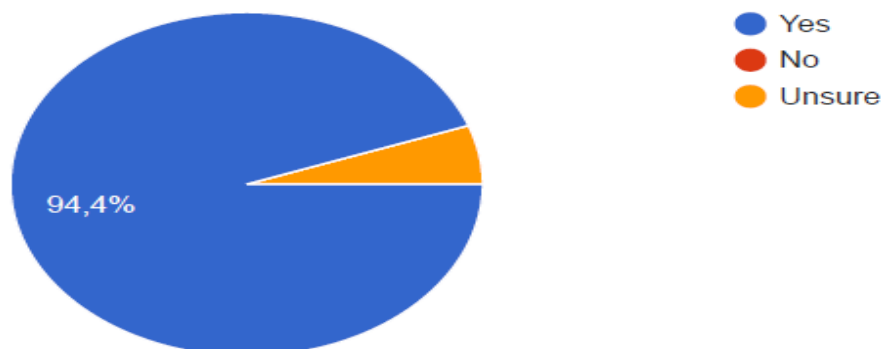### 4.2.3. The Importance of Strong Vocabulary to EFL Learners' Academic Success

Figure 7. The Importance of Strong Vocabulary to EFL Learners' Academic Success

Figure 7 shows the participants' awareness of the importance of strong vocabulary on their academic success. The results prove that the majority of the participants, corresponding to 94.4%, believe that having a strong vocabulary is important in their academic success, but only 5.6 % of the participants believe that a strong vocabulary is not important in their academic success. Thus, this result indicates a strong consensus among the participants regarding the importance of vocabulary to their university achievement.

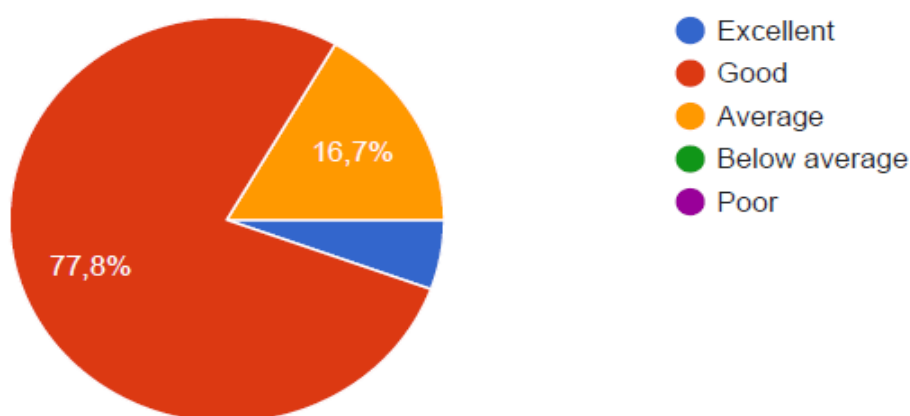### 4.2.4. EFL learners' English vocabulary rate

Figure 8. EFL learners' English Vocabulary Rate

Figure 8 displays results about the participants' English vocabulary rating. The provided data indicates that the majority of participants rated their English vocabulary as excellent (77.8%), followed by good (16.7%), and a smaller percentage rated it as average (5.5%). Accordingly, a

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significant portion of the participants perceived that their English vocabulary is at an excellent level, suggesting positive experiences in learning English, a positive self-evaluation of their language skills; it also indicates that a majority of participants feel confident in their vocabulary.

4.3. EFL Learners' Challenges when Learning Vocabulary
Vocabulary acquisition is a crucial aspect of English language learning. EFL learners encounter significant challenges when expanding their vocabulary. This section contains four questions to determine challenges that EFL learners face when acquiring vocabulary. Their answers yield the following results.

4.3.1. EFL learners' Active English Vocabulary Expansion Frequency
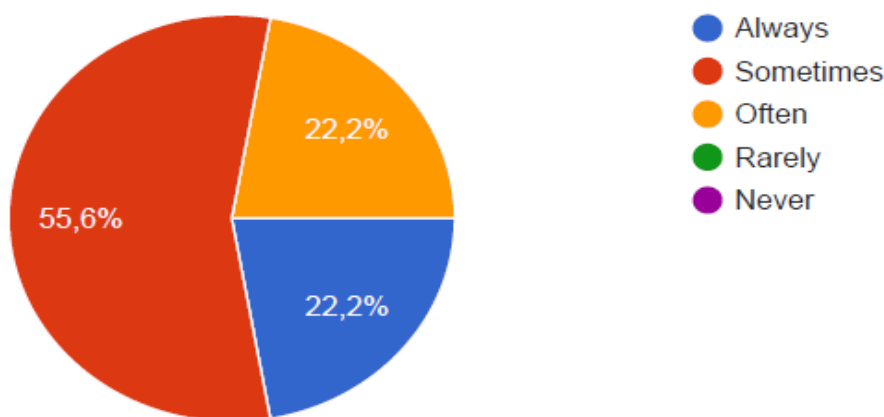

Figure 9. EFL learners' Active English Vocabulary Expansion Frequency

Figure 9 presents the participants' frequencies about active English vocabulary expansion. The provided data shows that participants actively try to expand their English vocabulary with varying frequencies: 22.2% of participants consistently (Always) make efforts to increase their vocabulary, 55.6% of participants occasionally (Sometimes) work on expanding their vocabulary, 22.2% of participants frequently (Often) try to improve their vocabulary. This result implicates that participants who are actively trying to expand their vocabulary have a positive language learning habit, and a high motivation and different ways to vocabulary building, such as using flashcards, reading extensively, or practicing with language partners.

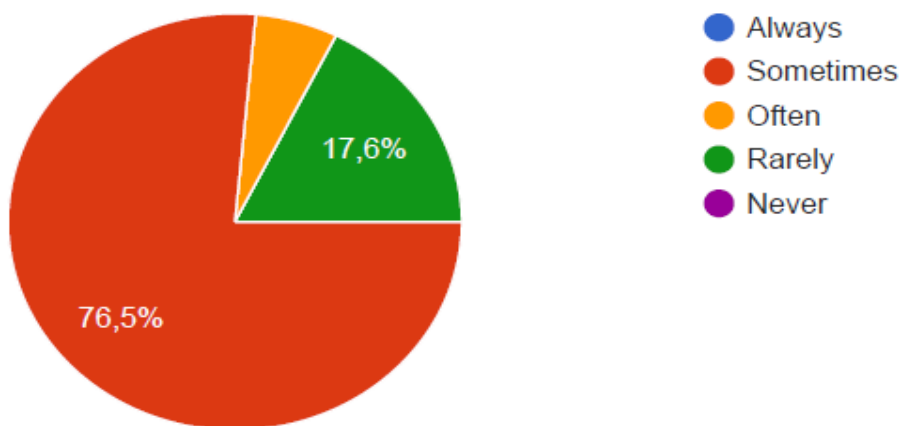### 4.3.2. EFL learners' Difficulty in Memorizing New English Words

Figure 10. EFL learners' Difficulty in Memorizing New English Words

Figure 10 demonstrates frequencies about the participants difficulties in memorizing new English words. The provided data indicates that a significant majority of participants (76.5%) find it sometimes difficult to memorize new English words, while a smaller percentage (17.6%) rarely encounter this difficulty and only 5.9% find it often challenging. Indeed, memorizing new vocabulary is a common hurdle for many English language learners, so it is natural for language learners to struggle with memorizing new vocabulary, especially when encountering unfamiliar words or complex concepts. Additionally, the difficulty in memorizing new words may be influenced by factors such as language learning style, exposure to English, and individual cognitive abilities.

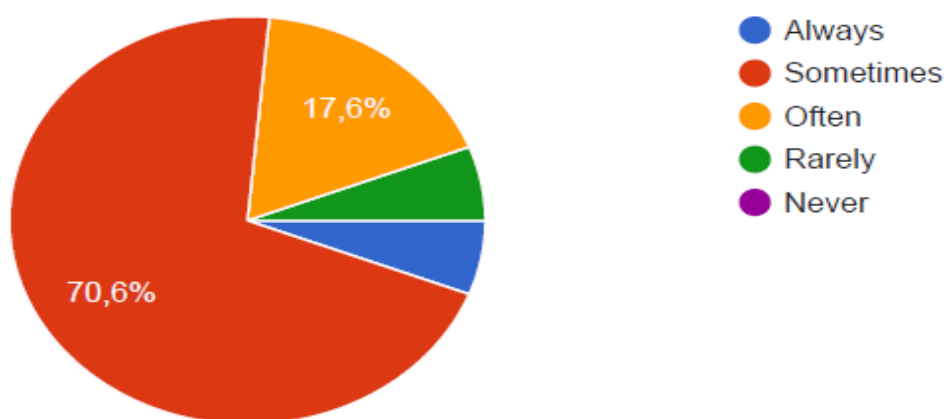### 4.3.3. EFL Learners' Difficulty in Remembering New English Words

Figure 11. EFL Learners' Difficulty in Remembering New English Words

Figure 11 presents the participants' difficulties in remembering new English words. The provided data indicates that a significant majority of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners encounter challenges in remembering new English words. 70.6% of the participants

occasionally (sometimes) struggle with memorization; 17.6% of the participants frequently (often) find it difficult to remember new words; 5.9% of the participants infrequently (rarely) have issues with memorization; 5.9% of the participants reported never having difficulty remembering new vocabulary. While most learners find memorization challenging, there are individual differences in the frequency of difficulty. However, this result proves that memorizing new vocabulary is a prevalent obstacle for many EFL learners.

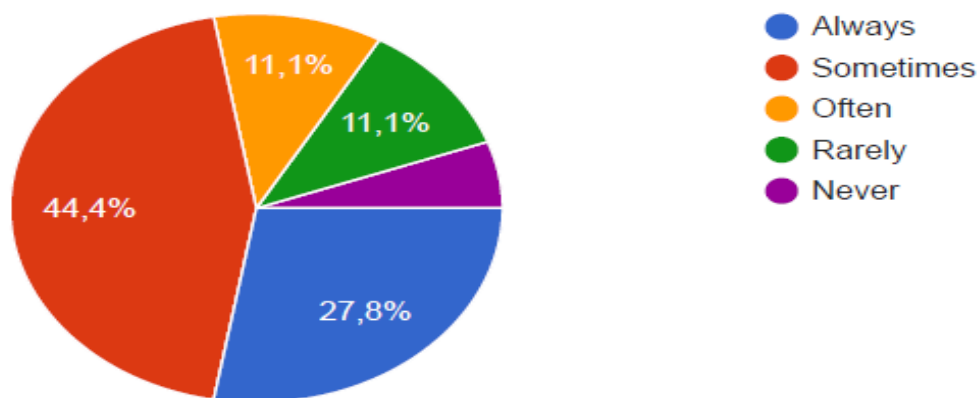### 4.3.4. EFL Learners' Vocabulary Limitations Effect on Their English Communication

Figure 12. EFL Learners' Vocabulary Limitations Effect on Their English Communication

Figure 12 reveals frequencies about the effect of the vocabulary limitation on the participants' English communication. The provided data indicates that a significant portion of participants faces challenges expressing themselves effectively in English due to a limited vocabulary. 44.4% of the participants occasionally (sometimes) struggle with expression due to vocabulary limitations; 27.8% of the participants consistently (always) find it challenging to express themselves effectively due to a limited vocabulary; 11.1% of the participants frequently (often) encounter difficulties in expressing themselves due to their vocabulary; 11.1% of the participants infrequently (rarely) face issues with expression due to vocabulary; 5.6% of learners reported never having difficulty expressing themselves due to a limited vocabulary. Limited vocabulary is a predominant hindrance for many English language learners when it comes to effective communication. Actually, the participants realize that a limited vocabulary can hinder EFL learners' ability to communicate their thoughts and ideas clearly and accurately.

4.4. EFL learners' Awareness of Language Learning Strategies
This section contains four questions to measure EFL learners' awareness of language learning strategies.

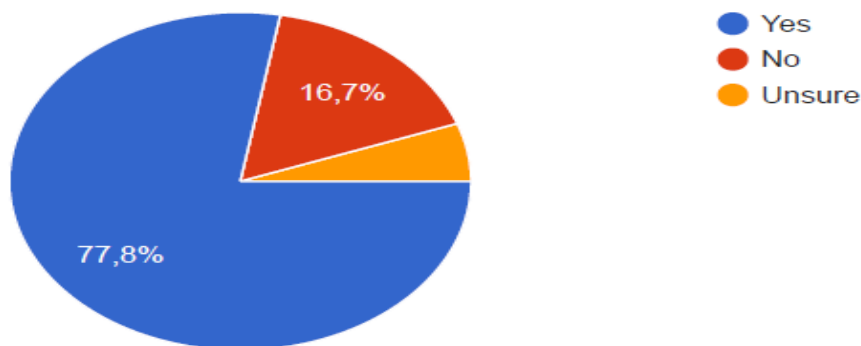### 4.4.1. EFL Learners' Strategies Usage to Learn English Words

Figure 13. EFL Learners' Strategies Usage to Learn English Words

Figure 13 shows the participants' use of strategies when learning English words. The provided data indicates that a significant majority of the participants (77.8%) utilize learning strategies when acquiring new English words; 16.7% of them do not use learning strategies. 6.5% of the participants are unsure about their use of learning strategies. This result indicates that EFL learners recognize the value of learning strategies and actively incorporate them into their language learning.

4.4.2. EFL Learners' Stated Strategies Used When Learning English Vocabulary

EFL learners state the following strategies used when learning English vocabulary

4.4.3. EFL Learners' Strategy Appropriate Selection when Acquiring New English Words
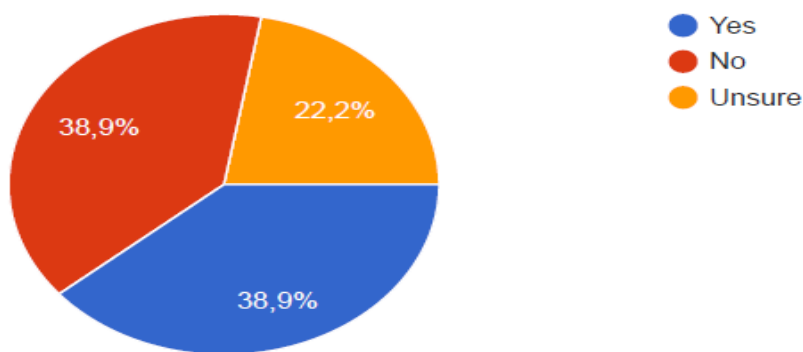
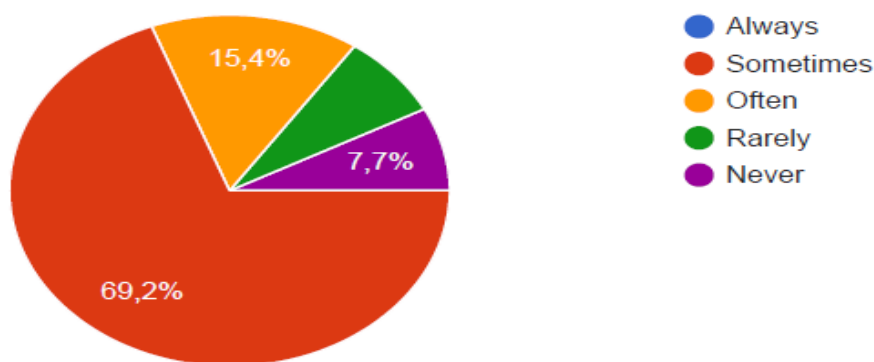**Figure 15. EFL Learners' Strategy Appropriate Selection Frequency when Acquiring New English Words**

Figure 14. EFL Learners' Strategy Appropriate Selection when Acquiring New English Words

Figure 14 presents the participants' appropriate strategy selection when acquiring new English vocabulary. The provided data shows that participants are evenly divided regarding the suitability in strategy selection when acquiring new English vocabulary. If 38.9% of participants believe they select appropriate strategies, 38.9% of participants do not believe they select appropriate strategies. However, the remaining 22.2% of participants were unsure about their strategy selection, indicating potential uncertainty or lack of clarity regarding appropriate strategies. The data suggests that a significant portion of participants may benefit from guidance or instruction on selecting appropriate learning strategies. Additionally, is proves that the participants are able to self-assess their strategy selection; this is a metacognitive skill that may require development and practice. Related to this result, as shown in Figure 15, the participants are asked about the frequency of selecting the appropriate strategy when trying to acquire new words in English language. The provided data indicates that a majority of participants, corresponding to 69.2%, sometimes select appropriate strategies when trying to acquire new English words. In the second position, 15.4% of participants frequently (Often) select appropriate strategies. Next, 7.7% of participants never select appropriate strategies.

Finally, equal number of participants: 7.7% of participants infrequently (rarely) select appropriate strategies. There are individual differences in the frequency of using appropriate strategies, suggesting varying levels of awareness or skill. This results denotes that a significant number of participants could benefit from developing their ability to select consistently appropriate learning strategies and this signifies that their metacognitive skill may be developed. Certainly, understanding individual differences in strategy use can help learners tailor their learning approaches to their specific needs and preferences.

4.4.4. EFL Learners' Strategy Change during English Vocabulary Learning Failure
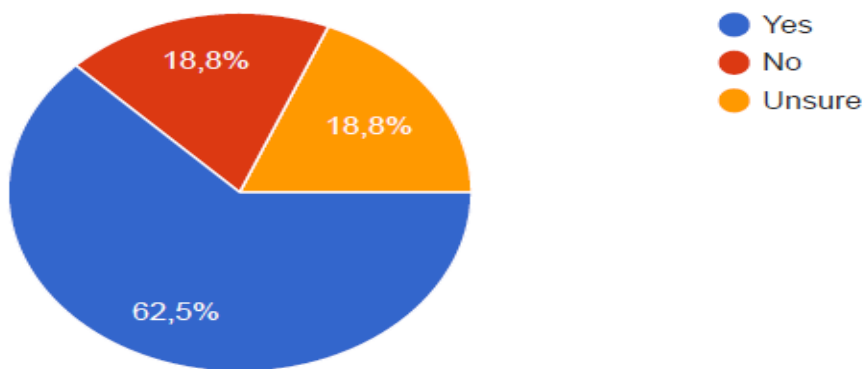
Figure 16. EFL Learners' Strategy Change during English Vocabulary Learning Failure

Figure 16 displays the participants' ability to change their learning strategy in case they fail to learn English vocabulary. The data reveals that a significant majority of participants, constituting 62.5%, actively modify their learning strategies when they encounter difficulties with previously employed methods during English vocabulary acquisition. The remaining number of the participants are divided in two equal part between two answers suggesting a lack of flexibility and/or indicating potential uncertainty or hesitancy: 18.8% of them answered No, and 18.8 are unsure.

4.5. EFL learners' Strategies for Memorizing English Words
This section contains ten (10) statements about the learning strategies that the participants employ in order to memorize English words. Numbers from one (1) to ten (10) in Figure 17 refer to the statements (See appendices).

Figure 17. EFL learners' Strategies for Memorizing English Words

Figure 17 presents results of the participants' answers to statements of fifth section. For the first statement, a significant 70% expressing strong agreement and 30% of respondents agree to a lesser extent. This result highlights the power of contextual learning. By understanding the surrounding words and the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph, learners can grasp the nuances of vocabulary and enhance their retention.
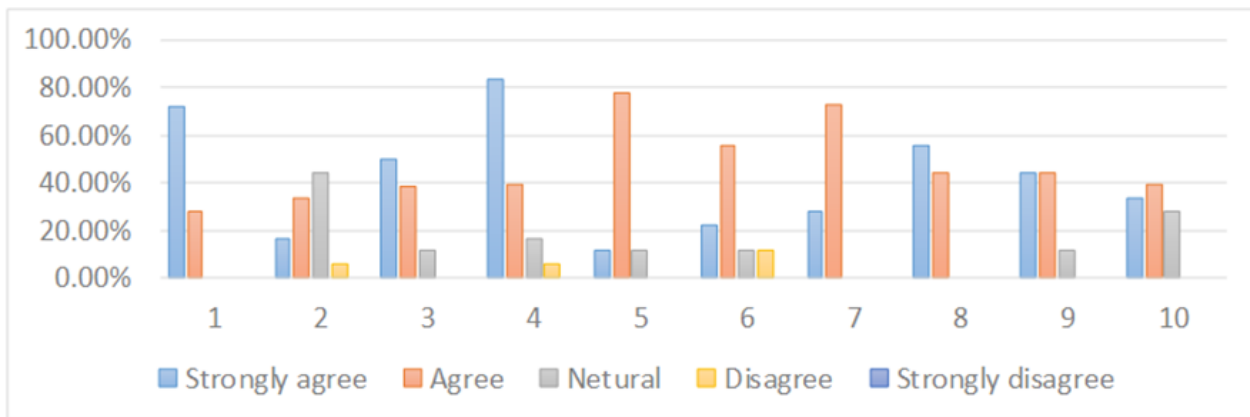
For the second statement, the overwhelming majority of respondents (16.7% strongly agree and 33.3% agree) find it beneficial to break down words into smaller, more manageable chunks to enhance memorization. This approach appears to be a widely adopted and effective strategy for improving memory retention. However, there is a significant portion (44.4%) who are neutral about this technique, suggesting that its effectiveness may vary depending on individual learning styles and preferences. A small minority (5.6%) disagree with this approach, indicating that it may not be universally applicable.

For the third statement, the majority of respondents (88.9%) either strongly agree or agree that they create mental images or pictures associated with words to remember them. This suggests that visualizing words is a common and effective memory strategy for many individuals. While a small percentage (11.1%) reported being neutral, no one disagreed with the statement, further emphasizing the widespread use of this technique.

For the fourth statement, the use of memory aids like acronyms, rhymes, and songs for memorizing words is a popular technique. A significant portion of respondents, totaling 77.8%, either strongly agree or agree with this approach. This suggests that many people find these memory aids to be effective and beneficial for learning and recalling vocabulary. However, a smaller group (16.7) remains neutral, while a small percentage (5.5%) disagrees with the use of such techniques. This indicates that individual preferences and learning styles play a role in the effectiveness of these memory aids.

For the fifth statement, the overwhelming majority of respondents (98.9%) either strongly agree or agree with the statement. This indicates a widespread understanding and implementation of spaced repetition, a well-established learning technique that involves reviewing information at increasing intervals to enhance long-term retention. While a small percentage (11.1%) remains neutral, the lack of disagreement suggests that this strategy is generally recognized as effective for memory consolidation.

For the sixth statement, this result indicates a strong preference for practicing different

types of words together rather than focusing on one word at a time. A significant majority of respondents (77.8%) either strongly agree or agree with this approach, highlighting its potential effectiveness in language learning. While a small minority of respondents (11.1%) disagree, the overall consensus leans towards a more holistic approach to vocabulary practice.

For the seventh statement, the overwhelming majority of respondents (100%) indicated that they prefer active recall over passive review when studying, with 27.8% strongly agreeing and 72.8% agreeing. This suggests a strong preference for a more engaging and effective learning strategy that involves actively retrieving information from memory, rather than simply rereading material. This finding aligns with research demonstrating the superiority of active recall in enhancing long-term retention and understanding.

For the eighth statement, the majority of respondents (55.6%) strongly agree or (44.4%) agree that they connect new words to their existing knowledge base to enhance comprehension. This suggests that learners actively engage in meaningful learning strategies by relating new information to familiar concepts. This approach likely contributes to improved retention and understanding of vocabulary.

For the ninth statement, the majority of respondents (88.9%) either strongly agree or agree that explaining words to others solidifies their own understanding. This suggests that teaching others is a powerful learning strategy, as it forces individuals to articulate their knowledge in a clear and concise manner, identifying any gaps in their understanding. While a small percentage of respondents (11.1%) remain neutral, the strong consensus in favor of this learning strategy highlights its effectiveness.

For the last statement, this result indicates that a significant portion of respondents (72.2%) either strongly agree or agree with the practice of repeating words out loud to enhance memory. This aligns with the concept of the "production effect," which suggests that speaking and hearing oneself can positively affect memory retention. While 27.8% remain neutral, no respondents disagreed with this strategy, further highlighting its perceived effectiveness among the surveyed population.

5. CONCLUSION

In the last decades, it is proved that language-learning strategies influence L2 and FL acquisition; thus, this topic has become one of the primary research areas in the domain of language learning. In fact, EFL learners use strategies when they come to learn English language micro- and macro-skills, specifically vocabulary. To this aim, this study has raised a question about the learning strategies, focusing on memorization strategies, utilized by EFL learners when acquiring and storing English vocabulary. It attempts to answer the aforementioned question through theoretical as well as empirical research on language learning strategies.

The study findings underscore the critical role of vocabulary in English language learning. The majority of participants strongly believe that a robust vocabulary is essential for effective communication, academic success, and overall personal development. This consensus highlights the multifaceted benefits of a strong vocabulary, from enhancing comprehension and expression to facilitating intercultural exchange.

The findings of this study also provide valuable insights into the challenges and strategies related to vocabulary acquisition among English language learners. While a significant number of participants actively engage in vocabulary expansion activities, memorization remains a

common obstacle. The impact of vocabulary limitations on effective communication is also evident, as many learners experience difficulties expressing themselves due to a limited word bank.

The findings of this study provide important visions into the effective strategies employed by English language learners and their ability to adapt and modify strategies in response to challenges is a crucial metacognitive skill. While a majority of participants utilize learning strategies, there is room for improvement in terms of strategy selection and flexibility because of their occasional or infrequent use of appropriate strategies

The findings of this study provide significant results about the vocabulary learning strategies employed by English language learners. The results consistently highlight the importance of active engagement and meaningful learning. Participants overwhelmingly favor techniques such as contextual learning, breaking down words, creating mental images, using memory aids, and spaced repetition. These strategies align with cognitive science principles and have been shown to be effective in enhancing memory and comprehension. Furthermore, the study underscores the benefits of active recall, connecting new words to existing knowledge, and explaining concepts to others. These strategies promote deeper processing and better retention.

While individual preferences and learning styles may influence the effectiveness of specific strategies, the overall consensus suggests that a combination of active engagement, meaningful connections, and strategic practice is crucial for successful vocabulary acquisition. By incorporating these findings into language learning practices, educators and learners can optimize their vocabulary development and achieve greater language proficiency.

In essence, this study implies some essential recommendations for teachers to raise their learners' awareness of the importance of acquiring vocabulary of English language and the importance of using and selecting appropriately strategies when memorizing English words, and consequently to assure better conditions of vocabulary teaching and learning. EFL teachers can raise their learners' awareness through:

1. Teaching EFL students language-learning strategies and guiding them to learn new strategies and refine existing ones.
2. Informing them about the importance of language learning strategies and their positive effect on vocabulary acquisition and their academic achievement.
3. Teaching them how actively select and implement appropriate strategies for different learning contexts and how to tailor strategy use to their needs and preferences.
4. Give them vocabulary tasks and ask them about their preferred learning strategies to be used to acquire words of the task under examination.

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Appendices

Student's Questionnaire

Dear students

The purpose of this questionnaire is to explore strategies used by EFL learners when learning English vocabulary. The focus is on those strategies employed when memorizing English words and strategies used to compensate for the lack of a limited vocabulary in English language. Please read carefully the following questions and answer them accurately. We thank you for the kind cooperation.

Section one: Background information
1. Your age: ……………….....
2. Are you interest in learning English?   A) Yes   B) No   C) Unsure
3. In which one among these areas do you mostly find difficulties when learning English?
A) Vocabulary   B) Syntax   C) Pronunciation   D) Grammar
4. What is your future goal for learning English language?
………
Section two: EFL learners' awareness of importance vocabulary when learning English
1. How important do you think it is to have a strong vocabulary in English?
  a) Extremely important
  b) Very important
  c) Somewhat important
  d) Not very important
  e) Not important at all
2. Do you believe that a strong vocabulary is essential for effective communication in English?
a) Yes   b) No   c) Unsure
3. Do you think a strong vocabulary is important for academic success?
a) Yes   b) No   c) Unsure
4. How would you rate your own English vocabulary?
  a) Excellent
  b) Good
  c) Average
  d) Below average
  e) Poor

Section three: EFL learners' challenges when learning vocabulary
1. How often do you actively try to expand your English vocabulary?
a) Always   b) sometimes   c) often   d)Rarely   e) Never
2. Do you find it difficult to memorize newly learnt words of English language?

a) Always   b) sometimes   c) often   d)Rarely   e) Never

3. Do you find it difficult to remember new English words?

a) Always   b) sometimes   c) often   d)Rarely   e) Never

4. Do you find it challenging to express yourself effectively in English due to a limited vocabulary?

a) Always   b) sometimes   c) often   d)Rarely   e) Never

Section four: EFL learners' awareness of language learning strategies

1. Do you use strategies to learn English words?

a) Yes   b) No   c) Unsure

2. If yes, state three strategies you actively use them when learning new English words

   1- ……………………......   2- ………………………………   3- …………………..……………

3. Do you select the appropriate strategy when trying to acquire new words in English language?

a) Yes   b) No   c) Unsure

If yes, how often?

a) Always   b) sometimes   c) often   d) Rarely   e) Never

4. Do you change your strategy when you fail to learn a word in English language?

a) Yes   b) No   c) Unsure

Section five: EFL learners' Strategies for Memorizing English Words

Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1-5,

1= Strongly Disagree   2= Disagree 3= Neutral   4=Agree   5=Strongly Agree

1. I put word in context to remember it better.   …..

2- I break down words into smaller, more manageable chunks to make it easier to remember. …..

3- I create mental images or pictures associated with words to remember it.   …..

4- I use memory aids like acronyms, rhymes, or songs to memorize words.   …..

5- I review words at increasing intervals to reinforce my memory.   …..

6- I practice different types of words together, rather than focusing on one word at a time. …..

7- I try to actively recall word from memory, rather than passively reviewing it.   …..

8- I connect new words to what I already know to make it more meaningful.   …..

9- I Explain words to someone else to solidify my understanding.   …..

10-   I repeat word out loud or to remember it better.   …..