



Exploring English Vocabulary Learning Strategies to Develop Students Language Skills in Libyan Secondary Schools

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Abstract

Vocabulary learning strategies are an important part of English language learning. This field has been especially productive during recent years, while the learning and teaching of English has increased in many countries. This study explores the learning vocabulary strategies employed by students at Sabratha secondary schools in Libya. It aims to develop the learning vocabulary strategies used by Libyan students in order to develop their English language skills. A structured questionnaire was used to collect the quantitative data to answer the research question of the study. The findings show that the students who are studying in Sabratha secondary schools were frequently used the vocabulary learning strategy because most of the students were not aware of a lot of vocabulary learning strategies. And the highest average of the most other strategies was less than 50 per cent. Thus, it is important for teachers to bear in mind that learning new words is not at all a simple process and so FL students should be aware that they may use various strategies to learn meanings of unknown words. Moreover, this study opened new doors for new researcher to study the use of vocabulary learning strategies in different ways.

Keywords: Vocabulary learning strategies, learning English, Types of Vocabulary Strategies

1. Introduction

This study deals with an important issue in the field of teaching and learning English as a foreign language, namely students' vocabulary learning strategies. This paper does not aim to devalue the importance of grammar in language learning, but to show that vocabulary is an important aspect of language learning which should be considered the core of language learning and teaching. Indeed, Vermeer (1992: 147) stresses the importance of vocabulary in terms of practice. Recently, increased attention has been paid to vocabulary learning by researchers, material designers and teachers, who have been trying to find answers to questions such as which strategies are the best for



learners to use to acquire or remember new words. Most learners tend to use simple memorization, repetition and taking notes about vocabulary (Schmitt, 2000). They often favour these simple strategies over complex ones which involve significant effort for manipulating information (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). Moreover, some learners may be unaware of the various vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) they can use in order to develop their vocabulary acquisition. Therefore, the current study is going to investigate the VLSs used by EFL students while studying English. It attempts to answer the following question:

- What are the learning vocabulary strategies employed by students at Sabratha secondary schools in Libya?

This study enriches the theory and practice of vocabulary learning in a non-native English speaking setting. It shows how vocabulary is an important aspect of language learning, which should in fact be considered the core of language learning and teaching. In order to understand the value of this study, there are different procedures and some main sections are presented bellow.

2. Literature Review

This section describes the definition of vocabulary learning strategies. Then, it deals with exploring some strategies for learning vocabulary. Moreover, it reviews the background about learning vocabulary strategy in Libya.

2.1. Defining Vocabulary Learning Strategy

Vocabulary learning strategies help learners who want to learn a second language in many ways. Some researchers have tried to create a definition of what vocabulary learning strategies mean. Schmitt (1997) mentions that a vocabulary learning strategy is the process by which information is obtained, stored, retrieved, and used. According to Nation (2001: 56), "These strategies are very useful as a first step towards the deeper processing of words". Moreover, Wenden and Rubin (1987:12) state that "many sets of operations, steps, plans, and routines used by learners to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval and use of information". According to (Oxford, 2017: 244)"L2 vocabulary learning strategies are teachable, dynamic thoughts and behaviours that learners consciously select and employ in specific contexts to improve their self-regulated, autonomous L2 vocabulary development for effective task performance and long-term



proficiency" Thus, we can be argued that vocabulary learning strategies are useful ways that are used by learners to learn or acquire new words. In addition, these strategies can help learners to increase their ability to learn more words using different methods.

2.2. Types of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

The literature shows that VLS are classified into different groups. The discovery category includes determination and social strategies. The consolidation category includes social, memory, cognitive, metacognitive strategies and using dictionary. Although Oxford's taxonomy is generally suitable, it fails to categorize "vocabulary-specific strategies" (Schmitt, 1997:205) in many respects. Most importantly, Schmitt states that in Oxford's taxonomy there is no category describing the kind of strategies a learner uses when s/he first encounters the meaning of a new word. Therefore, Schmitt adds a new category for these strategies called 'determination strategies'. The five categories of strategies defined by Schmitt (1997) are as follows:

2.2.1. Determination strategies

Determination strategies are "used by an individual when faced with discovering a new word's meaning without recourse to another person's expertise" (Schmitt, 2000: 205). This can be, for example, through guessing from their knowledge of language learning, guessing from their mother tongue, guessing from context, or consulting reference materials (ibid). Moreover, Nation (2001:63) mentioned, the term "the learning burden of a word" which means the understanding of what needs to be learn about a word.

2.2.2. Social Strategies

Certain social strategies are used by learners as consolidation strategies, where learners learn and practice vocabulary as a group. Dansereau (1988) mentions some of the advantages of group learning: it encourages active processing of information; the social context motivates the participants to learn; learning in groups can promote team activities, even outside the classroom; and due to less intervention from teachers, students have more opportunity to use the target language in class. Halliwell S (1993) findings who argued that due to the creative language skill young learners bring into the classroom, teachers have to provide them with a communicative atmosphere where they could express themselves. Learners can also ask teachers to check their vocabulary lists for accuracy. This strategy is less frequent (Schmitt, 1997) because learners usually



create their vocabulary lists outside of class. Wright et al., (2005) argued that active teachers make classes entertaining and sustain effort and interest. Thus, the learning which involves such strategies can be considered independent learning. The use of strategies has been found to be extremely limited in general, according to the findings of studies such as O'Malley and Chamot (1990).

- *Asking Teachers for the Meaning of New Words*

In Schmitt's (2000) view this is a social strategy, using interaction with other people to improve language skills. Students need to use this strategy, because they can readily learn new words by asking their teacher or classmates. "One can ask teachers or classmates for information about a new word" (Schmitt, 2000:135). Thus, teachers should encourage students to work in groups in order to acquire new words. Also, students should ask their teachers for the meaning of words because this leads to help them to learn more easily. Moreover, "the vocabulary class is a place where meaning is negotiated between teacher and learner" (McCarthy, 1990:121). In this regard, it can be argued that teachers should make more effort to teach students how to work in groups and pairs to help them acquire new words.

2.2.3. Memory Strategies

Memory strategies (traditionally called mnemonics) entail linking the word to be learned with some previously learned knowledge, "using some form of imagery and grouping" (Schmitt, 2000: 135). This integration of new knowledge with existing knowledge that has been previously learned requires attention and processing of the newly learned item, which is essential for long-term retention according to the Depth of Processing Theory (Craik and Lockhart, 1972; Craik and Tulving, 1975). Laufer (1998) argues that vocabulary means the knowledge of a word. According to this knowledge, it does not only indicate a definition, but implies how a word appears in a context. Moreover, using such memory strategies is important and helps students to learn English vocabulary very quickly and increase their interest in the subject, and supplement verbal explanations of the teacher (Tiwari; 2008: 221). Therefore, it becomes a part of his language reservoir 'vocabulary bank' (McCarthy, 1990:31). Research on VLS has identified a considerable number of memory strategies; Schmitt's taxonomy includes 26 memory strategies, from which he includes 18 into the initial list



of his survey of Japanese learners. This paper uses some of the terms he uses for the discussion of subcategorized memory strategies.

- ***Pictures/Imagery***

Language learners can make pictures in their minds of the new word's meaning. Since imagery has been proven to be more effective for learning than just repetition and reading passages (Schmitt, 1997), it can also be successfully applied in vocabulary. It helps when new words are similar to the learners' L1 vocabulary in pronunciation or the like.

- ***Related words***

Using sense relationship, learners can link what they already know, in terms of words, to newly learned words. This linking can be through coordination (dog – other kinds of animals, cats or wolves), synonymy (beautiful - gorgeous), or antonym (hot – cold). Using scales for gradable adjectives is another strategy for linking words to each other. Putting such adjectives in a scale (huge, big, medium, small) can help learners remember them (Schmitt, 1997).

- ***The orthographical or phonological form of words***

Other memory strategies that help learners remember words focus on the orthographical and/or phonological form of the word. VLS often involve explicitly studying the spelling or sound of a word, as pronunciation can make remembering words easier (Schmitt, 1997). Alternatively, learners can make an image of the form of the word and/or say the word aloud when studying. Nation (2001) calls these processes 'noticing'. The keyword method is another strategy that can help learners to remember new words. This strategy involves finding an L1 word that sounds like the L2 word, for example. The English word 'farmer' matches the Arabic phrase *far mar* (a mouse passed by). Combining two concepts, such as a farmer watching a mouse pass by his farm, can help the learner to remember the word because "when the L2 word is later heard, the sound similarity invokes the created image which prompts the L2 word's meaning" (Schmitt, 1997: 214).

- ***Other memory strategies***

One VLS, namely paraphrasing the meaning of a word, can be multifunctional in that it can be used as a strategy for teaching the meaning of new words, or as a communication



strategy to compensate for a lack of productive vocabulary. Furthermore, it can be used as a memory strategy "which improves recall of words by means of manipulation effort involved in reformulating the word's meaning" (Schmitt, 1997:15). Vocabulary acquisition can be developed by initially learning the words of an idiom (e.g. proverbs) together, i.e. memorizing proverbs and then analyzing them as individual words. Each idiom can be used as a mnemonic device for helping learners memorize individual words (ibid). Another helpful strategy for consolidating meaning is using newly learned words in sentences. L1 learners can intentionally create their own sentences using newly learned words.

2.2.4. Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive strategies are defined as those which "are more directly related to individual learning tasks and entail direct manipulation transformation of the learning materials" (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990: 8). These strategies include verbal and written repetition of a new word over and over, which is one of the most familiar strategies used all over the world (Schmitt, 1997). Therefore, the words become so deeply rooted in the learner's mind that s/he resists giving them up to utilize other ones (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990).

Learners can also make their own lists of new words and keep vocabulary notebooks for expanding rehearsal. Making lists is a method usually used when learners first discover a word meaning, but most learners keep using the method for reviewing and studying later on. However, according to Laufer (1997), L2 learners' use of word lists depends on their proficiency level; when learners think that they have arrived at a stage of learning that enables them to learn through exposure to L2, they might discontinue using word lists.

- *Memorizing*

Memorizing includes particular strategies that learners use to remember words, such as repetition, translation equivalent, using pictures and key words, and so on. According to Carter (1987). This strategy considers as one of the Cognitive Strategies (Nation, 2001). Therefore, it can be argued that memorising new words is important for the learners who want to learn a new language and help them to overcome one of the principal difficulties in learning a foreign language. However, "memorization is only



useful as one of a wide range of actively used strategies” (Nation, 2001: 227). Libyan students use some of these strategies to learn new words. For example, when the teacher writes new words on the board, they asked them to repeat these words loudly to memorise them. “Memorization is one part of the direct learning strand” (ibid).

- *Repetition*

Repetition is only one of a number of factors affecting vocabulary learning, and that it is not easy to fix the particular number of repetitions needed for learning (Nation, 2001). This strategy is necessary for vocabulary learning. As Carter (1987: 153) puts it that “Quantities of initial vocabulary can be learned both efficiently and quickly by methods such as rote learning which are not always considered to be respectable”. It may be dangerous to underestimate such a capacity. In addition, Nation (2001) states repetition is essential for vocabulary learning. Students need to repeat new words in order to acquire their meaning and pronunciation; repeating words aloud helps their retention far better than silent repetition. This strategy of learning was followed by the Libyan teachers. They write new words on the board and repeat them many times and then encourage their students to read them. Thus, teachers should encourage the repetition of words in the classroom so that in order to help the students become familiar with them. This strategy has been researched by Crothers and Suppes (1967) who found that most items in their vocabulary learning experiments were learnt after six or seven repetitions. Kachroo (1962) also found that words repeated seven times or more were learnt.

2.2.5. Metacognitive Strategies

The metacognitive strategies category is the fifth category of Schmitt's (1997) divisions of VLS. According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 8), metacognitive strategies: "involve thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring for comprehension or production while it is taking place, and self evaluation after the learning activity has been completed".

We highly value the importance of these strategies and call students who do not use metacognitive approaches to practice it. O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) state that advising students to listen to radio or watch TV programs increases their English vocabulary and helps teaching vocabulary because it is a complicated process. It requires that the learner has to be able to pronounce and spell a word when he/she uses



it in speaking or writing activities (Schmitt & McCarthy, 1997:241). If the language being learnt is English, then using different sources of L2 media - like watching English TV channels (e.g. movies, songs, documentaries), listening to English radio programs, reading English newspapers and magazines, or using computer programs (e.g. internet websites) can help develop learners' vocabulary, since these facilities offer more opportunities for learners to maximize exposure to L2. In order to speak and write English, students need to learn one to two thousand words (Cameron, 2001). Moreover, using the media a teaching tool makes students more motivated. Dörnyei and Csizér (2005: 203) argued that "without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals, and neither are appropriate curricula and good teaching enough to ensure student achievement".

- *Dictionary use*

Dictionaries are very useful tools for learners seeking to learn new words, giving them the independence to learn without a teacher. "Dictionaries can help learners with understanding and producing text with vocabulary learning" (Nation 2001:283). we believe that using the dictionary as a strategy to learn vocabulary is an important activity by which students can understand the meaning of words, grammar, check pronunciation, and whether the part of speech of the words. It is useful for learners to use different kinds of dictionaries that might help them overcome the problem of learning new words. For example, students could use electronic dictionaries, or those on a computer. When learners look up some word in a dictionary, the dictionary can increase the learner's vocabulary and at the same time, help them to check the meaning of other words on the same page. While learners are looking up words in a dictionary they spend time reading other words on the same page, which helps them to improve their reading skills. Knight (1994) sees this as a way in which learners with access to a dictionary can gain higher comprehension scores.

- *Word parts*

Nation (2001) mentions that most content words can change their form by adding prefixes and suffixes. Students can learn new words by analysing the words and their affixes and roots. "Knowing a word can involve knowing it is made up of affixes and a stem" (Nation, 2001:46). This strategy helps learners to learn a word family. For



example, the words *interest*, *interests*, *interesting* and *interested*, and allows them to know the meaning and uses of a word. Nation (2001) has said that the word part strategy for learning new complex words involves two steps:

- Breaking the unknown word into parts.
- Relating the meaning of the word parts to the meaning of the word.

This step requires learners to be able to express the dictionary definition of a word to include the meaning of its prefix and, if possible, its stem and suffix. Also, it requires learners to know the meaning of the common word parts.

- **Technology**

There are several ways in which technology can be used to improve a student's English language vocabulary. Stempleski (1990: 362) states that using "The video provides a rich resource for language learning". Using videos as a source of learning vocabulary helps the students to learn new words through watching the video and also they learn its pronunciation because they listen to native speakers. Moreover, they practice listening and interested in watching the video. "Video offers the chance of achieving the important goals of motivating students' interest and providing realistic listening practice" (Richards& Renandya, 2002: 364). Using a computer for this purpose will improve the student's vocabulary. Nation (2001:108) mentions that a "computer provides a very good way of putting many of the principles of good vocabulary learning into practice". Our view is that learners need plenty of opportunities to acquire new vocabulary, and using technology in the classroom can help this enormously. This strategy helps learners to acquire a greater vocabulary more effectively.

3. Methodology Used in This Study

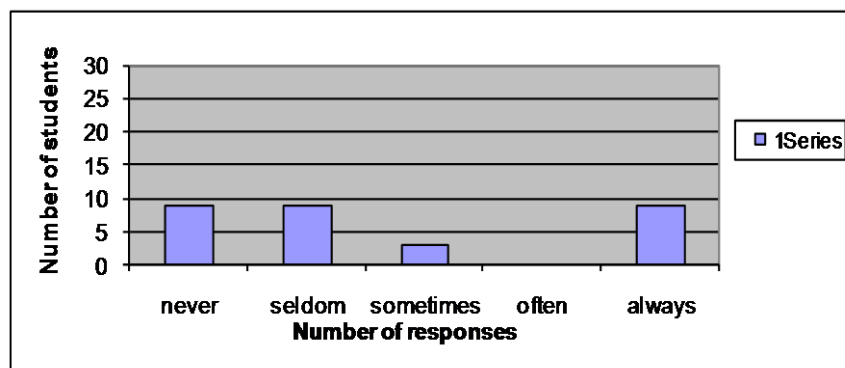
This section presents the methodology used in this paper. It is very important for researchers to identify the research design of their studies, because it has implications on both data collection procedures and data analysis (Cohen et al., 2007). The data collection method was a questionnaire that was given to students to complete. The aim of this was to collect quantitative data. A questionnaire is defined by Bell and Harris (1994: 64) as "a collection of written questions which are generally answered in the absence of the person who is collecting the information". The questionnaire was used tool in order to answer the research question.

Regarding to selecting sample, ‘convenience’ or ‘opportunity’ sampling was used in this study, which means that the convenience of the researcher is an essential criterion affecting selection. Convenience sampling involves selecting the closest subjects and continuing the procedure until the researcher gets the required number of participants (Cohen and Manion, 1994). Dormyei (2003) states that in this type of sampling, which is very common for L2 research, the researcher intentionally selects a sample due to the ease of accessibility, and the participants have the characteristics required for the investigation. The data collected are analysed by Excel software as the following. In this respect, the questionnaire items were frequently revised by the researchers, the several colleagues. In addition, a pilot study was conducted in order to know how the questionnaires worked. Moreover, the collected data was analysed by Excel software.

4. Data Analysis

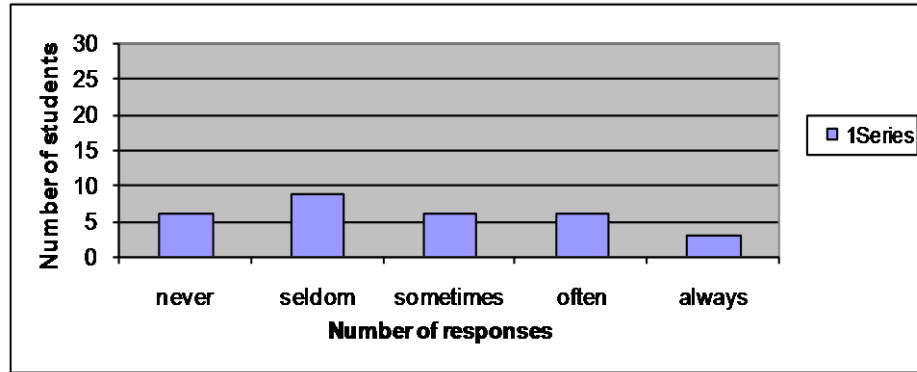
In conducting this research by questionnaire, an amount of data was collected. Thirty questionnaires from thirty- seven had been collected from the respondents. The main findings from the questionnaires are presented separately for each statement, by means of a graph. A brief description is provided for each.

4.1. I guess the meaning of new words from the context.



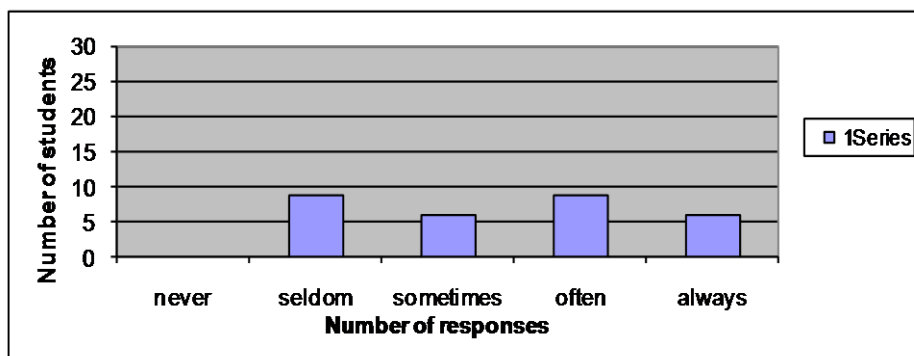
The above figure shows whether students used guessing the meaning of new words as a strategy. (n = 9, 30%) of students stated that this strategy is ‘never’ relevant, (n = 9, 30%) chose ‘seldom’, also (n = 9, 30%) of them chose ‘always’. Whereas (n = 3, 10%) of them stated that this strategy is ‘sometimes’ relevant. but no one chose ‘often’.

4.2. I check the meaning of a new word in a dictionary.



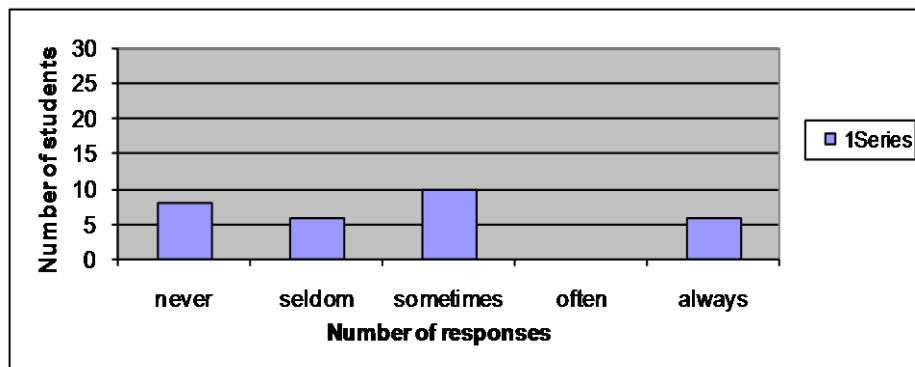
The above graph shows whether the students used checking the meaning of other words in the dictionary while checking the meaning of new words. (n = 6, 20%) of the students 'never' use this strategy. (n = 9, 30%) of the students use it 'seldom'. (n = 6, 20%) of them 'sometimes' use this strategy, also (n = 6, 20%) of them 'often' use this strategy, while (n = 3, 10%) of them 'always' use this strategy.

4.3. I add a prefix to words in order to get new words.



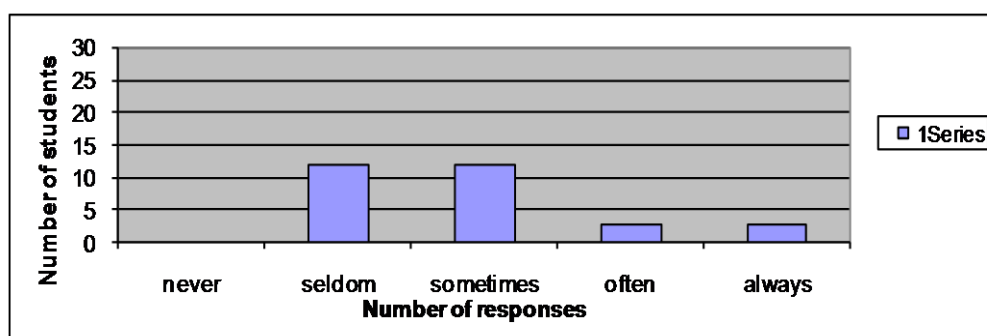
The above figure shows that the students used adding prefixes to find new words. (n = 9, 30%) of the students use it 'seldom', while (n = 6, 20%) of them 'sometimes' use this strategy, also (n = 9, 30%) of them 'often' use this strategy, while (n = 6, 20%) said they 'always' use this strategy.

4.4. I add a suffix to words in order to get new words.



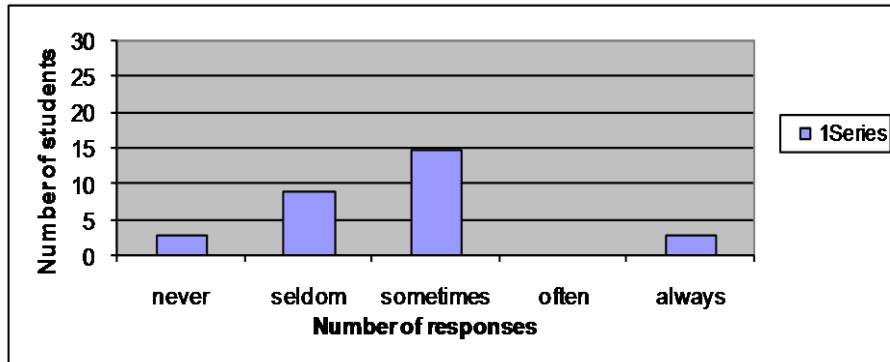
The above figure shows that the students used adding suffixes to words to get new words. While (n = 8, 26.6%) of the students 'never' use this strategy (n = 6, 20%) of the students use it 'seldom', and (n = 10, 33.3%) of them 'sometimes' use this strategy, while (n = 6, 20%) of them 'always' use this strategy.

4.5. I omit the prefix to find the meaning of new words



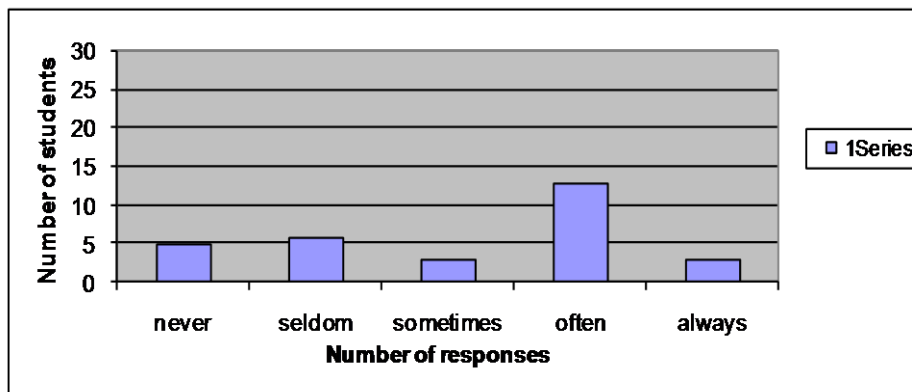
The above figure represents whether the students omit the prefix to find the meaning of the word. (n = 12, 40%) of the students use this strategy 'seldom'. (n = 12, 40%) of them 'sometimes' use this strategy. (n = 3, 10%) of them 'often' use this strategy. (n = 3, 10%) said they 'always' use this strategy.

4.6. I omit the suffix to find the meaning of new words.



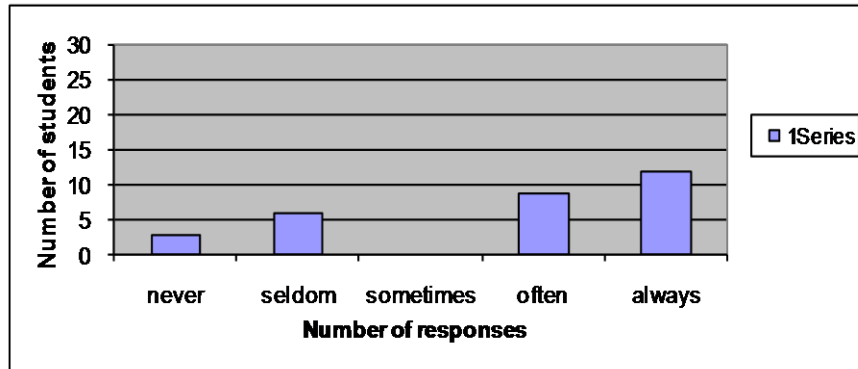
The above figure shows whether students omit the suffix to find the meaning of the words. (n = 3, 10%) of the students 'never' used this strategy. (n = 9, 30%) of the students use it 'seldom'. (n = 15, 50%) of them 'sometimes' use this strategy. (n = 3, 10%) said they 'always' use this strategy.

4.7. I check the meaning of a new word I also check its synonyms.



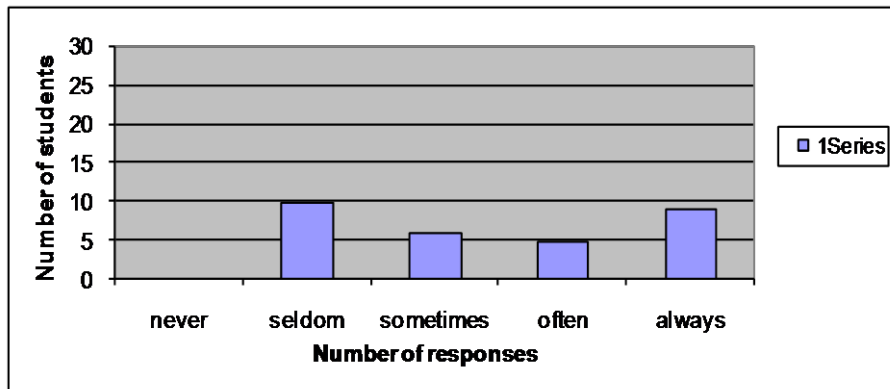
The above figure shows whether students check the meaning of a new word and its synonyms. (n = 5, 16.6%) of the students 'never' use this strategy. (n = 6, 20%) of the students use it 'seldom', (n = 3, 10%) of them 'sometimes' use this strategy. (n = 13, 46.6%) of them 'often' use this strategy. (n = 3, 10%) said they 'always' use this strategy.

4.8. I check the meaning of a new word I also check its antonyms



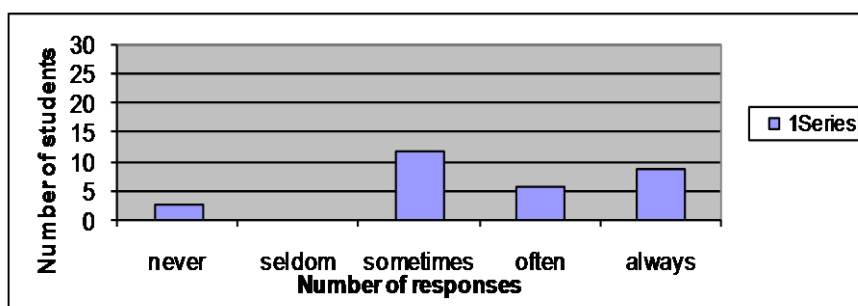
The above figure shows whether students check the meaning of new words and their antonyms. (n = 3, 10%) of the students ‘never’ use this strategy. (n = 6, 20%) of them ‘seldom’ use this strategy. (n = 9, 30%) of them ‘often’ use this strategy. (n = 12, 40%) said they ‘always’ use this strategy.

4.9. I practice using new words in full sentences.



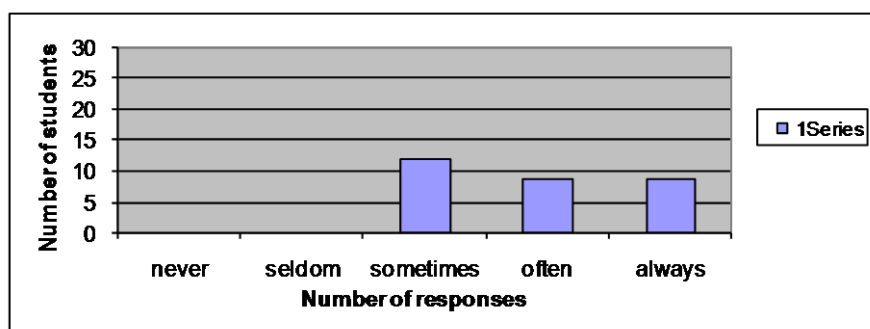
The above graph represents whether students practice the use of new words in full sentences. (n = 10, 33.4%) of the students ‘seldom’ use this strategy. (n = 6, 20%) of them ‘sometimes’ use this strategy. (n = 5, 16.6%) of them ‘often’ use this strategy. (n = 9, 30%) said they ‘always’ use this strategy.

4.10. I listen to the radio and watch TV to develop my vocabulary.



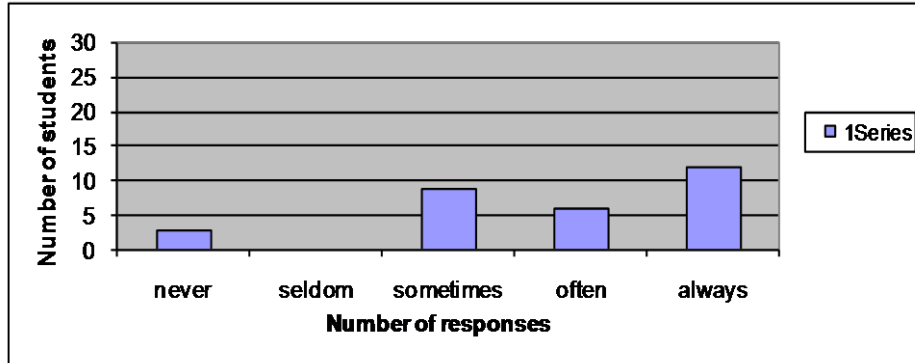
The above graph shows whether students use listening to the radio and watching TV as a means to develop vocabulary. (n = 3, 10%) of the students 'never' use this strategy and (n = 12, 40%) of them 'sometimes' do. (n = 6, 20%) of them 'often' use this strategy, while (n = 9, 30%) said they 'always' use this strategy.

4.11. I read newspapers or magazines to develop my vocabulary.



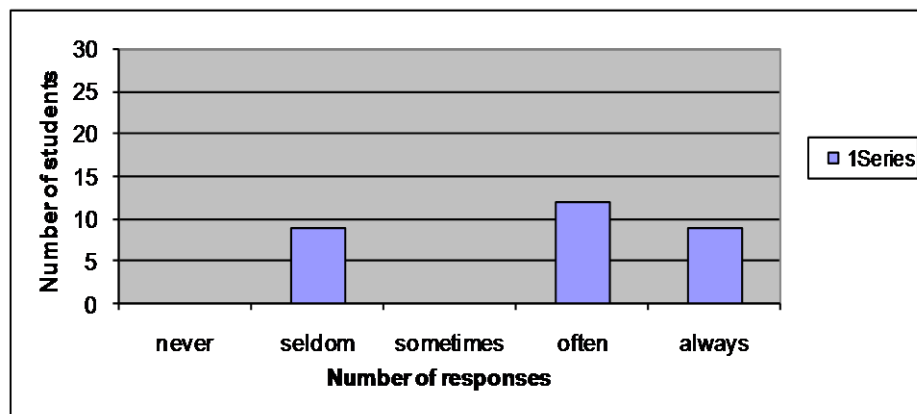
The above graph represents whether students read newspapers or magazines to develop vocabulary. (n = 12, 40%) of the students 'sometimes' use this strategy. (n = 9, 30%) of them 'often' use this strategy. (n = 9, 30%) said they 'always' use this strategy. However, 'never' and 'seldom' were not chosen.

4.12. I write words down many times to memorise them.



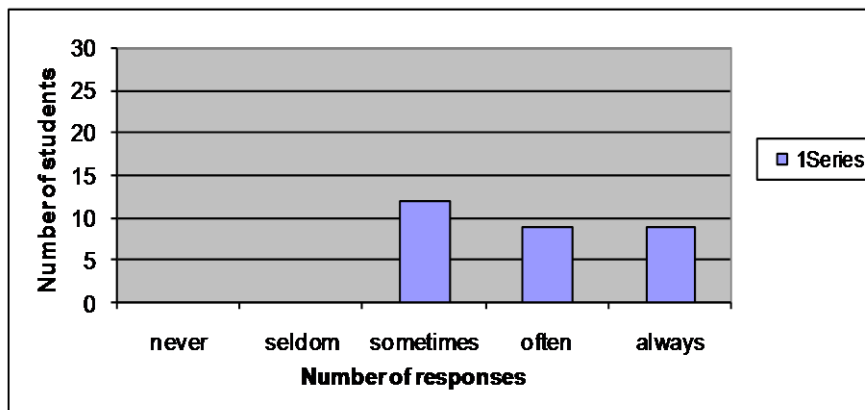
This graph represents whether the students used writing words many times to memorise them. (n = 3, 10%) of the students 'never' use this strategy. (n = 9, 30%) of them 'sometimes' use this strategy. (n = 6, 20%) of them 'often' use this strategy, while (n = 12, 40%) said they 'always' use this strategy.

4.13. I repeat words orally many times in order to memorise them.



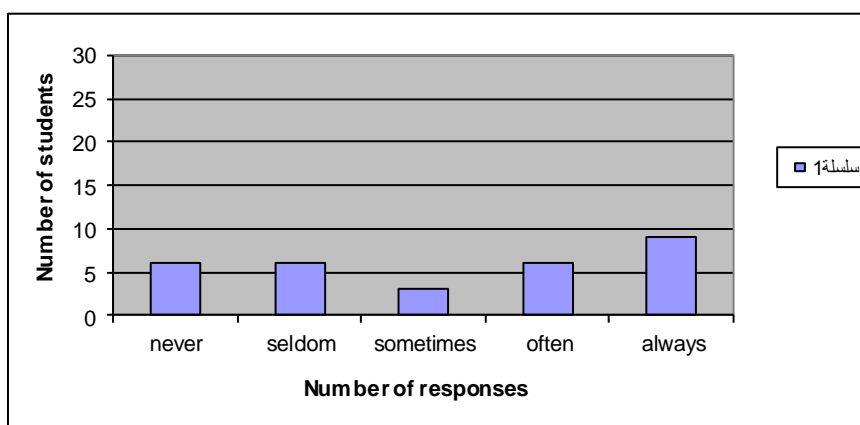
The above graph represents whether students used repetition of words many times to memorise them. (n = 9, 30%) of the students use this strategy 'seldom'. (n = 12, 40%) of them 'often' use this strategy. (n = 9, 30%) said they 'always' use this strategy whereas neither 'sometimes' nor 'never' were chosen.

4.14. I study the spelling of new words.



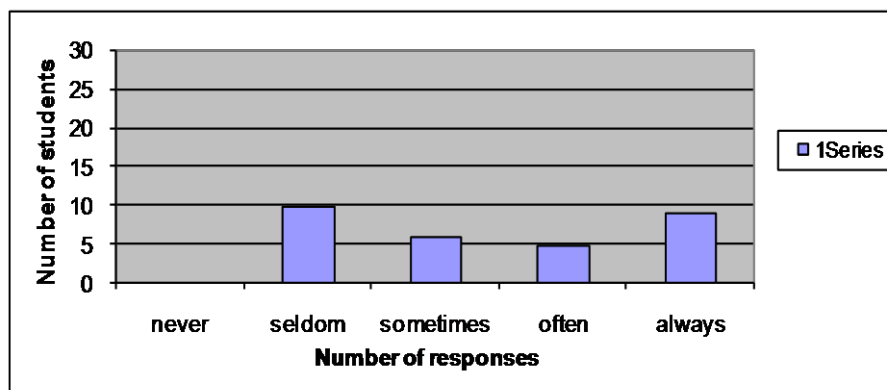
The above graph shows whether students study the spelling of new words. ($n = 12$, 40%) of the students 'sometimes' use this strategy and ($n = 9$, 30%) of them 'often' use this strategy, while ($n = 9$, 30%) said they 'always' use this strategy. Neither 'seldom' nor 'never' were chosen.

4.15- I ask my teacher for the meaning of new words.



This graph shows whether students ask their teachers for the meaning of new words. ($n = 6$, 20%) of the students 'never' use this strategy. ($n = 6$, 20%) of the students use it 'seldom'. ($n = 3$, 10%) of them 'sometimes' use this strategy. ($n = 6$, 20%) of them 'often' use this strategy. ($n = 9$, 30%) said 'always' use this strategy.

4.16. I make my own lists of new words.



This graph shows whether students ask their teachers for the meaning of new words. (n = 10, 33.4%) of the students 'seldom' use this strategy. (n = 6, 20%) of them 'sometimes' use it. (n = 5, 16.6%) of them 'often' use this strategy. (n = 9, 30%) said 'always' use this strategy.

5. Discussion of findings

This section discusses of the main findings of the questionnaire survey, distributed to thirty-six students. The respondents were all from secondary schools at Sabratha. This data is discussed for the purpose of answering the research question. The questionnaire was divided into different group of the strategies; determination strategy, social strategy, media strategy and memory strategy. The results are shown as the following:

5.1. Determination strategy

The analysis of the questionnaire data shows that EFL students in Sabratha secondary used various determination strategies with different frequency degrees. The most frequent strategies were; *I guess the meaning of new words from context, checking the meaning of other words in the same page in the dictionary, check the meaning of a new word and its antonyms, check the meaning of a new word and its synonyms, I make my own lists of new words and adding prefixes to find new words.* These strategies of teaching vocabulary seemed to be leading to active learning. This is because using these strategies encourages students to think and to check to find the meaning of the new



vocabulary by themselves. This indicates that these students were suffering from lack of theoretical knowledge of learning vocabulary. This lack might be similar to what Nation (2001:63) mentioned, the term “the learning burden of a word” which means the understanding of what needs to be learn about a word.

5.2. Social strategy

The findings of the questionnaire revealed that only one social strategy was used by students in Sabratha secondary. The average of the students who *ask the teacher about the meaning of new words* as a strategy was about less than 50 per cent. This low frequency percentages of using this strategy confirmed that the students were not used them to much in their classes. This finding is against Halliwell S (1993) findings who argued that due to the creative language skill young learners bring into the classroom, teachers have to provide them with a communicative atmosphere where they could express themselves. Both students and teachers will benefit from including games during class time. In this case, it can be argued that the teachers’ keened to use traditional strategies which lead to teaching deductively where the teacher is active and the students are passive. However, Wright et al., (2005) argued that active teachers make classes entertaining and sustain effort and interest. Thus, vocabulary teachers should use and create more social strategies which lead to increased students’ English vocabulary through interactive activities in their classes.

5.3. Using Memory Strategies

Memory strategies were found to be not highly frequently used by secondary school students. The most frequent strategies were repetition of words many times to memorize them. *adding an affix to words, omitting the affix to find the meaning of new words, checking for its antonym* Then strategies have the same average, study the spelling of new words and writing words many times to memorize them. After that, practice the use of new words in full sentences. This indicates that these students were not aware of the importance of using these memory strategies to learn English vocabulary. It means that this finding is against Laufer’s (1998) argument, when he stated that vocabulary means the knowledge of a word. According to this knowledge, it does not only indicate a definition, but implies how a word appears in a context. Moreover, using such memory strategies is important and helps students to learn English vocabulary very quickly and



increase their interest in the subject, and supplement verbal explanations of the teacher (Tiwari; 2008: 221). Therefore, a learner is required to encounter a word many times before he/she knows it very well and be ready to use it; therefore, it becomes a part of his language reservoir 'vocabulary bank' (McCarthy,1990:31).

5.4. Using Metacognitive Strategies

These strategies were found to be used by the Libyan student most of time. The most frequent strategy not just in media strategy but in all the strategies. The metacognitive strategy was '*I listen to radio or watching TV to develop my vocabulary*'. The average of this strategy was less than 50 per cent of the students who chose 'always'. Listening to the radio as a means to develop vocabulary and Reading newspapers or magazines to develop vocabulary was used by about less than 50 per cent of students. This means that some students did not pay attention to the importance of the metacognitive strategy. In this case, these students were not in line with O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) advice. Advising students to listen to radio or watch TV programs increases their English vocabulary and helps teaching vocabulary because it is a complicated process. It requires that the learner has to be able to pronounce and spell a word when he/she uses it in speaking or writing activities (Schmitt & McCarthy, 1997:241). In order to speak and write English, students need to learn one to two thousand words (Cameron, 2001). Moreover, using the media a teaching tool makes students more motivated. Dörnyei and Csizér (2005: 203) argued that "without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals, and neither are appropriate curricula and good teaching enough to ensure student achievement".

6. Conclusion

To sum up, it is clear that conducting research on vocabulary learning strategies is not easy, as vocabulary is both widely variable and significant to learning. A small research project such as this can not cover every aspect and hope to come up with perfect conclusions. This fact needs to be stated before making any further comment on the things that have been found during this research. Based upon these findings, it is concluded that students who are studying in Sabratha secondary schools were frequently used the vocabulary learning strategy because most of the students were not aware of a lot of vocabulary learning strategies. The most frequently used strategy was, omitting



the suffix to find the meaning of new words to develop their vocabulary. And the highest average of the most other strategies was less than 50 per cent. And the rest of the strategies infrequently used by the students. This is because they did not know or heard with these strategies before.

6.1. Implications and Recommendations

- Students should be aware of the whole vocabulary learning strategies. This would help eliminate the constraints that are related to vocabulary, moreover some of the strategies should be taught to the learners.
- It is recommended that more research be carried out on this subject, in a larger and deeper investigation by which a more accurate picture might be obtained.
- Students with low vocabulary knowledge should maximize their vocabulary size as much as possible with direct vocabulary learning using word lists or vocabulary games.
- Teachers should also be more realistic and focus their learners' attention on more intentional learning of vocabulary by providing courses which mainly focus on vocabulary like morphology and reading comprehension courses which are reported to be beneficial for learners in terms of vocabulary learning. This is so that learners build a good vocabulary repertoire.
- Since learners were found to vary in their use of strategies, teachers should raise their learners' awareness of a range of strategies to satisfy their different expectations; Meara (1993) suggests that textbooks should be based on multi-methods of vocabulary learning to satisfy different learners' expectations. He adds that teachers should also encourage learners to take control of their learning and be more independent by using whatever suits them.
- In addition, the Education Authority should encourage learning English vocabulary, by providing the education system with new materials that will help students to be more successful in learning vocabulary.

6.2. Limitations of the study

This research was conducted in a small number of students in one narrow geographical area. Time limited had an obvious impact upon the data collection which makes the researcher used only questionnaire.



6.3. Further Research

Further experimental studies could be conducted to test the impact of strategy training to see if the use of such strategies influences learners' vocabulary knowledge. Other researchers can analyze other aspects in vocabulary and other skills in English language and the result of this study may be used as early information to conduct further research.

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