Factors Determining Saudi Learners' Difficulties in Attaining EFL Vocabulary

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Declaration

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Mohammed Albousaif

(Signed): ............................................................ (Candidate)

Date: 30 September, 2011
Dedication

To my mother, Mariam Addesmal, and my father, Abdulaziz Albousaif

whose prayers and encouragement have given me the hope and strength to pursue my professional dreams.

To my lovely wife and my best university colleague, Athari Almuraikhi

who never lost hope and patience, but unselfishly sacrificed her time and pleasure to support me throughout this journey.

To my two sons, Abdulaziz and Abdurrahman,

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Abstract

Vocabulary learning is one of the fundamental parts of acquiring any language. Almost all L2 learners start their L2 education by learning primary words without which they cannot communicate using the L2 language. Vocabulary learning is a major challenge for foreign language learners. This research concentrates on the difficulties encountered by Saudi EFL learners in their vocabulary learning, which weaken their general EFL performance. Practically, it investigates what vocabulary learning strategies are most effective and the reasons for using or not using those strategies in each stage of vocabulary learning.

The main aim of this study is to explore which strategies Saudi EFL learners use at each stage of vocabulary-learning (Encountering new words - Getting the word form - Getting the word meaning - Consolidating word form and meaning in memory - Using the word). This study also gives special attention to the ways learners can be made more aware of the significance of autonomous vocabulary learning. The research aims to generate findings that could encourage Saudi EFL educators and authorities to support the use of more efficient vocabulary learning strategies.

The study employs two methods for collecting information: a structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The research investigates Saudi learners’ experiences via a structured questionnaire, which was administered to 200 Saudi EFL students. This was followed up with interview sessions involving 20 of the participants. The purpose of the study is to identify the vocabulary learning strategies that Saudi EFL students do and do not use in every academic grade and the actual reasons for using or not using those strategies in every stage of the five essential vocabulary-learning stages; to measure how eager those students are to learn more effective vocabulary-learning strategies; and to explore the extent to which Saudi EFL teachers encourage their students to use more effective vocabulary learning strategies.

It is hoped that the results of this study can be beneficial to all ESL/EFL learners worldwide and to the field of linguistics in general since the issues Saudi EFL learners encounter are similar to those encountered by ESL/EFL learners worldwide.

Key words: Saudi EFL learners, EFL vocabulary, vocabulary-learning strategies, vocabulary autonomous learning
Chapter one: Introduction

1.1 Overview of the thesis

This thesis consists of eight chapters:

Chapter 1:

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the background and significance of the present study. Particularly, this chapter presents the problem of EFL vocabulary learning in Saudi Arabia and the objectives of investigating this topic, which helped in formulating the questions of the research. It also shows the scope of the factors on which this study aims to focus.

Chapter 2:

Focusing on the current state of EFL vocabulary research and EFL vocabulary teaching/learning in Saudi Arabia, this chapter reviews the related theoretical literature and conceptual framework concerning vocabulary knowledge and its aspects. A wide range of empirical studies on the importance of vocabulary knowledge in receptive and productive skills are considered in this chapter. The literature review also addresses questions like how many words L2 learners need to know, and why it is important to encourage autonomous vocabulary learning. A major focus in the chapter is to identify vocabulary learning strategies that the literature evaluates as helpful to be used throughout the five stages of the vocabulary-learning process. The chapter concludes with the reasons that led to formulating the instruments used in this study to answer the research questions, summarising what gaps this study can fill and thereby contribute to the EFL/ESL field.

Chapter 3:

This chapter describes the research design, selection of participants, procedure for data-collection, and data analysis of the 200 participants’ responses. It outlines the instruments and procedures used in this study, the methodology used for data-collection and what research questions each instrument can answer. This study is mixed
quantitative-qualitative by design: the two instruments used here are questionnaire surveys and semi-structured interviews.

**Chapters 4 & 5:**

These two chapters present the data analysis and results of the methods used in the study. Grouped under the five areas of vocabulary learning discussed in chapters 2 and 3, the data from the questionnaire surveys are presented in chapter 4 while the data from the semi-structured interviews are presented in chapter 5. Responses to the questionnaire survey questions helped in answering questions 1, 3, and 4 of the research questions while the responses of the interviewees in chapter 5 helped in answering research questions 2 and 5. Each chapter concludes with a discussion of the results with particular attention to the research questions it answers.

**Chapter 6:**

The purpose of this chapter is to bring together what has been found in the results of the questionnaire survey and the interviews, and to relate these findings to the relevant literature. Reviewing what has been discussed above with specific reference to how these insights could be applied by Saudi EFL students, teachers, educators, and education policy-makers helped in developing the suggestions and recommendations presented in chapter 7. This chapter recapitulates with a summary of all the findings emerging from the study.

**Chapter 7:**

Conclusions and recommendations of the study are presented, with particular reference to the contribution that its findings may be able to make to the understanding of English vocabulary acquisition. The recommendations and pedagogical implications this chapter presents are aimed at assisting ESL/EFL students, teachers and educationalists, curriculum developers, and education policy-makers, as well as academics interested in the nature of vocabulary knowledge not only in Saudi Arabia but also in any other place where English is used as a second or foreign language. The final part summarises the limitations of the present research and identifies areas for further research.
This is followed by an alphabetical list of all the references used in the thesis. The style used in formatting the bibliography is the American Psychological Association (APA 5th). EndNote X2.0.1 was used to produce the references.

1.2 Background: Why study English vocabulary-learning?

Is the acquisition of vocabulary important in second-language learning? If so, how important is it, and why? Much of the cutting-edge research in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) has focused on the acquisition of language structures (Barcroft, 2004; Walters & Bozkurt, 2009; Brown, 2011; Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2000). This commendable work has led to a perception among some researchers that vocabulary is less important, and that it is relatively simply slotted into the grammatical structures, once they are acquired. The present study challenges such views, and proceeds instead from the position that vocabulary refers to the words we must know to communicate effectively and “In order to live in the world, we must name it. Names are essential for the construction of reality for without a name it is difficult to accept the existence of an object, an event, a feeling” (Spender, 1980, p. 163). Words are our tools to communicate with others, as well as explore and analyse the world around us. Simply put, “the heart of language comprehension and use is the lexicon” (Hunt & Belglar, 2005, p. 2).

Vocabulary is critical to each of the four English language skills that build up learners’ proficiency, i.e. speaking, listening, reading, and writing, and is a major and essential part of language learning. Without vocabulary, learners cannot understand what is said, or exercise the receptive skills of listening and reading; nor are they able to convey their ideas to others through the productive skills of speaking and writing (Folse, 2004; Stehr, 2008; Zhang & Anual, 2008). Lewis (2000, p. 8) concludes that “the single most important task facing language learners is acquiring a sufficiently large vocabulary” as it can lead to success in all language skills. It is not surprising, therefore, that educators and researchers have discovered a strong connection between vocabulary knowledge and the ability to read and write proficiently. As Anderson and Freebody have pointed out, almost all such researchers have recognised that poor readers are the ones who “do not know the meanings of many words” (1983, p. 244).
In foreign-language education, vocabulary plays a vital role in attaining the target language (TL). Learners of a second language (L2) need to have an adequate vocabulary size to listen, speak, read, and write naturally and effectively. If learners of English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL), for example, do not acquire an adequate amount of vocabulary, they will not be able to communicate well in English even if they master the English grammar (Folse, 2004), but ESL/EFL vocabulary learning has many obstacles and there are difficulties facing ESL/EFL learners and teachers alike (Ma & Kelly, 2009). Bright and McGregor (1970, pp. 15-16) support the idea that many problems and difficulties encountered by ESL/EFL learners are a result of inefficient vocabulary-teaching methods (see Doughty, 2003; Hunt & Belglar, 2005; Laufer, 2005; Nation, 2005; Read, 2004). Such difficulties have multiple causes, such as similarity in form and morphology, deceptive morphological structure, different syntactic patterning in the native language, differences in the classification of experience in the first and second languages, abstractness, specificity, negative value, connotations non-existent in the native language, differences in the pragmatic meaning of near-synonyms and L1 translation equivalents, the learning burden of synonyms, and what Laufer (1990, pp. 147-156) called the “apparent rulelessness” of collocations.

A recurring theme in Saudi EFL research, reflected in most of the studies discussed below, is that vocabulary learning is an area of weakness for Saudi EFL learners – perhaps more so than for learners from Indo-European L1 backgrounds, with a higher level of shared vocabulary stock. There is a fairly broad consensus among Saudi applied linguists that if students know more words, they will better understand the questions in proficiency tests such as TOEFL, IELTS, TOEIC, and hence obtain better proficiency scores. Moreover, vocabulary knowledge is also important in each of the main language proficiency skills; both for the passive skills of listening and reading, and the active skills of speaking and writing.

Students of English in Saudi Arabia, like many other EFL learners, encounter numerous difficulties in attaining English as a foreign language generally, and in attaining vocabulary particularly, resulting in weakness of fluency and overall performance in English. There is widespread agreement that when Saudi students finish their secondary (high) schools, they only know a few grammatical rules and have memorised just a small number of words. Studies on the subject of teaching English in Saudi Arabia,
including Abughararah (1986), Alamr (1998), Albadawi (2007, pp. 81-84), Albanyan (2003 pp. 49-64), Alfalaj (1998), Alhammadi (1998), Almazroou (1988), Al-Shammary (1984), and Saifulrahman (2006, pp. 52-59) show this weakness in the EFL learning and teaching process. While these earlier studies attributed the weakness to a range of factors, perhaps the most important was ‘learning strategies and teaching methods’. They concentrated on factors like: the weak points of the Saudi English syllabi, which do not sufficiently encourage the Saudi learners’ vocabulary building, lack of cooperative in-classroom activities; and long-standing customary methods of EFL teaching that are believed to be inadequate to build the learners’ EFL vocabulary (see also Al-Awad, 2002; Al-Otaibi, 2004; Al-Qurashi, 2002; Al-Wahibee, 2000; Fageeh, 2003; Syed, 2003).

The current research project builds on the study of Albousaif (2008), which is a pilot investigation of factors underlying Saudi learners’ difficulties in attaining EFL vocabulary. The preliminary investigation found a somewhat paradoxical situation where the Saudi EFL students surveyed expressed awareness of the importance of good vocabulary learning strategies, but simultaneously indicated that they did not make very effective use of such strategies.

The principal aim of the research reported here is to explore the determining factors behind the difficulties experienced by Saudi learners in attaining EFL vocabulary. The main focus of this research will be on which vocabulary-learning strategies are most effective in each stage of the vocabulary-learning process. It will be demonstrated through a thorough literature review that this topic has not been sufficiently investigated, especially not in Saudi Arabia. One of the leading vocabulary researchers puts it rather mildly when she states: “In foreign language teaching, vocabulary has for a long time been a neglected area” (Taylor 1990, p. 1).

1.3 EFL teaching and learning in Saudi Arabia

Before discussing the problem of EFL vocabulary learning in Saudi Arabia, this is a brief summary of the state of EFL teaching and learning there. When the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia formally became a nation in 1932, education was largely limited to
instruction for a select few in Islamic and Arabic language schools. Today, public education from primary education through high school is open and free to every citizen. The school system is composed of elementary, intermediate, and secondary (high) schools. In addition to public education, free higher education has expanded rapidly with large numbers of universities and colleges. For example, the country’s first University, King Saud University, was founded in 1957, in Saudi Arabia’s capital, Riyadh. Nowadays, there are 23 universities, 117 technical- and vocational training institutes, and thousands of public schools in Saudi Arabia. In 2005, King Abdullah implemented a government scholarship program to send young Saudi men and women to Western universities for undergraduate and postgraduate studies. The program offers funds for tuition and living expenses up to four years. As a result, more than 120,000 students were sent to study at universities in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Switzerland, France, and Germany.

Primary education in Saudi Arabia lasts six years and children enter the first grade of primary education at the age of six. In order to move on to intermediate education, children have to pass the examination at the end of Grade 6 of primary school and obtain the Elementary Education Certificate. Intermediate and secondary (high) schools last three years each. Secondary education is the final stage of general education. Generally, higher education in Saudi Arabia lasts four years in the field of humanities and social sciences and five to six years in the other fields like medicine, pharmacy, and engineering.

Even before the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was founded by King Abdul-Aziz in 1932, there were many British troops and a few English schools in the area. Therefore, some Arabs from the Arabian Peninsula found it important to learn English. After the Saudi oil was discovered by the American oil companies, many American families came to work and live in Saudi Arabia. The Arabian American Oil Company (Saudi Aramco) established schools and English TV channels and publications in Saudi Arabia, which increased the Saudis’ awareness of the importance of learning English. According to Al-Sugayyer (2006), teaching English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia began about 80 years ago. Starting in 1927, teaching EFL has gone through four developmental stages and gradually developed to its current state mentioned above. This was a result of the great effort and the huge financial support of the Saudi government.
Since it was established, the Ministry of Education has maintained a number of general goals for teaching English in Saudi Arabia. According to the Ministry of Education, the main objectives for teaching EFL to Saudi students are: to contribute to students’ intellectual, personal, and professional growth; to enable Saudi students to acquire basic language skills; to develop their awareness of the importance of English as a means of international communication; to develop their positive attitudes towards learning English; to enable them to acquire the necessary linguistic competence required in various life situations; to enable them to acquire the linguistic competence required in different professions; to develop the linguistic competence that can help them present and explain Islamic concepts and issues; to enable them linguistically to present the culture and civilization of their nation; to enable them linguistically to benefit from English-speaking nations, which is hoped to enhance the concepts of international cooperation to develop understanding and respect of the cultural differences between nations; and to provide them with the linguistic basis to help them participate in transferring other nations’ scientific and technological advances in order to enhance the progress of the Saudi nation. To reach these goals, the ministry has been designing and developing EFL curricula for each educational level, providing EFL teachers with all necessary books and other teaching aids.
In the beginning, English was only taught to students from intermediate and secondary grades; they were given approximately 800 hours of English exposure in total. Nowadays, learning English is obligatory in the 5th and 6th primary grades. Saudi students from primary throughout secondary schools study EFL four hours a week. Each student receives free textbooks and workbooks. The books are designed in a way that is tailored to the students’ Islamic and Arabic cultures. Moreover, the Ministry of Higher Education has built many EFL colleges and established many foreign languages departments, in almost every Saudi university, to provide the Ministry of Education with qualified EFL teachers.

In spite of the tremendous efforts of the Saudi government in teaching EFL to its people, there have been many difficulties and obstacles in the way of reaching that goal, especially in the beginning. It is generally known that Saudi Arabia is mainly desert and...
it is commonly listed as the world's 14th largest state; the government, therefore, could not possibly provide education to all Saudi citizens, especially not the Bedouins, who live in the desert and far away from central cities (see the map above). In the past, the majority of those people refused to send their children to schools to learn a ‘foreign’ language other than Arabic -- the language of the Holy Quran, as it is described there. Many of them believed English to be the language spoken by non-Muslim people; and hence, that it should be rejected (see Aldossary, 1992). Gradually, some of them started bringing their children to schools where they could study English along with other Arabic and religion subjects. Until the 1960s, a majority of the population was nomadic; but presently more than 95 per cent of the population is settled, due to the rapid economic and urban growth in the country.

In addition to the above-mentioned obstacles, many Saudi students encounter several difficulties when learning English and it is considered a difficult foreign language, i.e. a language that they never use at home with their families or friends. Fear and opposition to the language are attributable in part to the way English is presented to those students. One possible reason is the teaching methods some Saudi EFL teachers use, which are considered inefficient by many students there. Those methods depend mostly on teaching long lists of vocabulary and difficult grammar rules. For example, Al-Sugayyer (2006, pp. 118-121) observes that Saudi students merely know a few grammatical rules and can remember just a small number of words by the time they finish high school. He found that many students find it difficult to start a short conversation in English, comprehend a short English text, or write a short essay (see also Al-Guayyed, 1997). Moreover, the Saudi English syllabi have weak points with regard to teaching essential skills that Saudi students need when learning EFL (Al-Hajailan, 1999; 2003; Al-Jaser, 1989; Al-Saif, 2005; Madkhali, 2005). Faced with this unsatisfactory situation, we find ourselves needing to know exactly where the weaknesses lie and what factors have led to such a poor record of language achievement. This discussion of issues in EFL teaching and learning in the Saudi context is based mainly on these studies and government documents, but draws also on the researcher’s 17 years of experience as a Saudi educator teaching EFL at secondary school and university levels in Alahsa, Saudi Arabia. Some discussion of relevant issues is also found on the Saudi Ministry of Education website (www.moe.gov.sa).
Generation after generation, many Saudi students form a belief that learning a foreign language is something that is too difficult to achieve, as new students start studying English with the idea that many former students have failed. Such self-defeating assumptions from the very start may promote a psychological predisposition to academic failure. Psychological readiness plays a major role in the success or failure of the experience of learning English. Negative perception could make students narrow their focus to collecting the minimum amount of language that would allow them to go to the next level course, which could also result in worse academic performance at subsequent levels. As learning English is obligatory in Saudi Arabia, many students probably study English just to overcome the final test and to continue their education at university and get a good career in the future. This suggests that there is still a large proportion of Saudi students who are not aware of the importance of learning English, and they are not doing enough to improve their English.

Another reason causing lack of interest in studying English could be the Saudi EFL curricula, which tend to overemphasise memorisation. The associated textbooks are in great need of more interactive activities and helpful pictures to promote students’ engagement with the English language. These textbooks lack, to a great extent, the practical side of the language as they do not encourage linguistic communication in the actual situations where students need to use the language, that is, outside the classroom. Therefore, many students find it difficult to express themselves using English in real-life situations. The Saudi EFL curricula do not concentrate on the topics and issues related to the students’ present state and future affairs either, and they do not show any logical progression in the level of difficulty of topics.

In addition to the curricula, the class time devoted to teaching/learning English in Saudi schools is not sufficient to guarantee good language learning. The exposure to the language is only four periods per week, 45 minutes each. This could make a negative impression on the students if they feel that there is no connection between what they study at school and what they practise outside. Furthermore, students do not have the chance to make use of many educational aids, such as good English short stories or software programs. For example, the EFL cassettes designed and produced by the Ministry of Education come only with a teachers’ book and only teachers can use them during the class time.
Besides the above-mentioned obstacles, the EFL programs and departments at many Saudi universities concentrate on teaching ‘future EFL teachers’ a great amount of not directly relevant material such as courses related to British and American literature, translation, and so on. Unfortunately, those students only have a chance to do practicum EFL teaching in the last term of their university study. Many Saudi EFL departments do not concentrate on teaching EFL methodology courses that provide their students with the latest and most up-to-date theories of teaching L2 in general and EFL in particular. As a result, many of the graduate EFL teachers can use the language, but cannot effectively teach it to their students.

Lately, though, the trend has changed and many Saudi students have started to appreciate the importance of learning English to modern life, as it is considered an international language. Many Saudi students now know that English is their only means to talk to others, either in face-to-face communication or through the internet and other modern technical means. In addition to the Americans who work in the oil companies, there are currently more than eight million people of different nationalities living in Saudi Arabia. According to Alriyadh.com, about 31 per cent of the population of the entire country is made up of foreign nationals living in Saudi Arabia. A large portion of the expatriate population is South Asian or of South Asian ancestry, including Indians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis. These peoples mainly use English when they communicate with Saudis, which has made learning English more necessary for many Saudi learners. The number of the private language schools and English institutes has dramatically increased during the last decade in many Saudi cities. Al-Jarf (2007) asserts that many Saudi secondary school students are motivated to learn English and have a great tendency to study EFL at university. Moreover, high-status university programs such as medicine are increasingly delivered through the medium of English.

To tackle the nation’s educational problems, the Saudi government is aiming to modernise the education system through the ‘Tatweer’ reform program. This program is reported to have a budget of approximately US$2 billion and focuses on moving teaching away from the traditional Saudi methods of memorisation and rote learning towards encouraging students to analyse and problem-solve. To encourage Saudi students to learn English, EFL is going to be taught to fourth-grade students starting from 2012, which will, in theory at least, mean that young students will have fewer
difficulties in learning the language in future. It is hoped that this study will contribute further insight and support toward the improvement of EFL teaching at all levels (see also Al-Sugayyer, 2006). It is hoped that these reforms will continue to move EFL teaching in Saudi Arabia further in the direction of communicative language teaching. While that is not a focus of the present study, the vocabulary learning strategies examined here are compatible with such an approach. Similarly, recent research on task-based instruction, although beyond the scope of this study, could potentially be applicable in the Saudi context, with its problems of limited instructional time to devote to EFL.

1.4 The problem of EFL vocabulary learning in Saudi Arabia

Research within Saudi Arabia has asserted that the majority of Saudi students encounter many difficulties in attaining EFL vocabulary, leading to general weakness in the fluency of their English and their overall performance. Al-Guayyed (1997, pp. 62-69), in his evaluation of previous studies that assessed the Saudi students’ level of English, commented on those students who were sent to the USA to undertake bachelor degrees after finishing their secondary (high) school in Saudi Arabia. The TOEFL results of these students in the period 1978 to 1980 were little short of startling. Al-Guayyed said that out of the 474,000 candidates from 143 different countries who applied for the TOEFL exam in the period of 1978 to 1980, the overall average results of the Saudi students were fifth from the last in the comparative scale of TOEFL results. This was despite the fact that those students were supposed to be the best among all Saudi students as they received government scholarships in order to complete their study in the USA. What is worse is that the weakness of the Saudi students was evident in all of the four language skills covered by the TOEFL exam.

Since vocabulary connects the four skills of English language, many researchers including Alfallaj (1998), Alhammadi (1998), Almazroou (1988), Saifulrahman (2006, pp. 52-59) assert that if students know more words, they will understand the questions of the exam and they will be able to do well in all language skills. Al-Sugayyer (2006, pp. 118-121) declares that high-school graduates simply memorise some vocabulary
items, short phrases, and explicit grammatical rules, which are not adequate to communicate convincingly and reasonably, and asserts that there must be crucial defects in the learning- and teaching processes, since those students have spent more than 508 hours on English study annually for seven consecutive years. It is a fairly obvious conclusion that there must be some specific, identifiable factors operating to determine these well-established difficulties experienced by Saudi learners in attaining EFL in general and EFL vocabulary in particular (see Al-Otaibi, 2004; Al-Wahibee, 2000).

Investigations of this problem have concentrated on grammar, and some on other individual skills, but few of them devote much attention to the factors that cause difficulties with vocabulary learning/teaching. Such factors have not been sufficiently investigated, especially not in the current situation where the Saudi English curricula have been developed and significantly improved recently, and the Saudi Ministry of Education has now introduced English in the 5th and 6th elementary grades in all Saudi schools. This situation warrants more theoretical explanation, and the factors causing difficulties in learning EFL vocabulary need to be examined methodically. Among the studies that have examined vocabulary, the majority are about vocabulary-teaching methods, rather than learning strategies that help EFL students become autonomous learners when learning EFL vocabulary. Quite a few studies have dealt with vocabulary empirically, as will be further discussed in the following chapter, but with relatively little theoretical depth. Thus, more comprehensive studies related to the effectiveness of autonomous vocabulary-learning strategies are needed.

1.5 Significance of the study

The research undertaken here has clear implications not only for Saudi EFL learners, but for all ESL/EFL learners because it concentrates on a crucial element of L2 acquisition, the aim being that this study would yield results that would enable the use of most effective EFL vocabulary-learning strategies and generate data that would support Saudi educators to help their students become more autonomous learners when learning new vocabulary. A particular focus was to increase our understanding of the relationship between what is known from previous research about vocabulary-
acquisition processes, and what is actually being done by EFL learners in each stage of vocabulary learning. The study aims to contribute to a better understanding of the concept of ‘vocabulary knowledge’ and why it is important.

One of the main foci of the research was to investigate what the best vocabulary learning strategies are, according to Saudi EFL learners, and to see whether these could be used as a key to exploring what learning strategies are used or not used by learners, and what learning strategies do and do not engage the learners cognitively in ways that contribute to their overall SLA. The study probed further into the learners’ reasons for using/not using those strategies, and tried to shed some light on how to draw the ESL/EFL learners’ attention to the significance of autonomous vocabulary learning.

1.6 Objectives and research questions

The indications from the author’s 2008 study were that vocabulary teaching above elementary levels was generally limited to presenting new items as they appeared in reading or listening, which is not sufficient to ensure vocabulary growth and development. This study takes as a starting point the position that vocabulary teaching should be part of the syllabus and taught on a regular and well-planned basis. It maintains that vocabulary should be at the centre of language teaching for the reason that “language consists of grammaticalised lexis, not lexicalised grammar” according to Lewis (1993, p. vi). Therefore, the research should have implications for avoiding the inefficient vocabulary-learning strategies applied by some Saudi EFL learners, and enable them instead to focus more on helpful and effective strategies. This study thus aims to provide a new explanation of the underlying causes of the EFL vocabulary-learning difficulties, and in so doing, to contribute new understandings to the field of second-language acquisition.

In its quest to identify the factors determining the difficulties experienced by Saudi learners in attaining EFL vocabulary, this project focused on the following specific questions:
1. How do Saudi learners learn EFL vocabulary? Are they using the most effective methods in their vocabulary learning?

2. How do Saudi L2 learners (and their teachers) understand the concept of ‘vocabulary knowledge’?

3. What are the vocabulary-learning strategies that are most preferred and most utilised by Saudi EFL learners?

4. What are the learners’ reasons for using/not using those strategies? Which learning strategies might be the most effective and the most motivating for students in ways that contribute to their overall SLA?

5. To what extent are Saudi EFL learners aware of the significance of autonomous vocabulary learning?

The following chapter will trace how these questions were developed, through an examination of the research literature on vocabulary learning in second language acquisition.

### 1.7 Scope of the study

This research focuses specifically on the factors related to learners’ knowledge and use of appropriate vocabulary-learning strategies. It does not attempt to encompass other factors in vocabulary learning, such as those related to morphological structure, classification of experience in the first- and second languages, abstractness, specificity, negative value, connotations, synonyms, or pragmatic meanings. Important as these things may be, they cannot be investigated here. Rather, the focus of this research is entirely on students’ and teachers’ perceptions of vocabulary-learning strategies.
1.8 Definition of terms

The aim of this section is to explain basic terms used in this research. These terms are presented in an alphabetical list and defined:

- **Academic vocabulary**: there is a group of 570 words that are very important for learners who will study academic subjects through the medium of English. These words account for around 10 per cent of the words in academic text; compared with around four per cent of the words in newspapers. For those learning the target language in educational contexts, these are the next words to learn after the high-frequency words. For a list of academic words, see Appendix 4 in Nation & Gu (2007, p. 174).

- **EFL**: English as a Foreign Language: used to describe the learning of English in countries where it is not the national language.

- **ESL**: English as a Second Language: often used to describe the learning of English by immigrants to English-speaking countries, but more broadly applicable to all contexts where English is being acquired as a second language.

- **HA**: higher achieving students whose marks were between 71–100 in English.

- **High-frequency vocabulary**: includes the very common wide range of words of the language and consists of around 2000 words, of which around 175 are function words like articles, prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns, numbers, auxiliary verbs, and adverbial particles. The remaining 1825 or so are content words: nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. These high-frequency words are needed in all uses of the language (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). High-frequency words make up from 80 per cent to 90 per cent of the words in a text. (Nation & Gu, 2007, p. 173).

- **L1**: for all EFL learners in this study, the first language is Arabic.

- **L2**: for all EFL learners in this study, the second, or target, language is English.

- **LA**: lower achieving students whose marks were between 50–70 in English.

- **LL**: lower level learners who are aged 12-15 and studying at elementary and intermediate levels.
• Low-frequency vocabulary: almost all the rest of the vocabulary (apart from high frequency, academic, and technical words) is low-frequency vocabulary. There are thousands of these words. To study at university, a learner would need a total vocabulary of around 5000-6000 words to do undergraduate study, and around 9000 words to do doctoral study. About 2500 of these are high-frequency and academic vocabulary. (Nation & Gu, 2007, p. 174).

• Proficiency: the measurable attainment of basic language skills in the target language, specifically: speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

• Saudi EFL learners: Saudi students who study English from the fifth elementary level up to the university/college level (Albadawi, 2007).

• SLA: the field of Second Language Acquisition research, theory, and practice, and, more broadly, a learner’s acquisition of a second language through instruction or exposure or both.

• Technical vocabulary: the words that are used in a specialised area and usually not so commonly used outside that area. Technical vocabulary is important for someone studying in a particular subject area because learning technical vocabulary is very closely related to learning the subject content (Nation & Gu, 2007, p. 175).

• TL: the target language that is being acquired -- in this case, English.

• UL: upper level learners who are aged 16-20 and studying at high schools, colleges, and universities.

• Vocabulary learning stages: according to Hatch and Brown (1995, p. 383), vocabulary learning goes through five stages: encountering new words → getting the word form → getting the word meaning → consolidating word form and meaning in memory → using the word.
Chapter two: Literature review

2.1 Vocabulary knowledge in L2 learning

Vocabulary refers to the words we must ‘know’ to communicate effectively in any language. To understand what is meant by vocabulary ‘knowledge’, we should, initially, be aware of the word ‘vocabulary’ and its aspects as it includes the knowledge of words, meanings, and words usage in productive and receptive forms. This introductory section presents a range of contrasting definitions of that concept and it highlights the different notions of each aspect supported by previous studies of many researchers in the field of vocabulary teaching/learning in order to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of ‘vocabulary knowledge’. This section also presents an overview of the current state of EFL vocabulary research, and EFL vocabulary teaching/learning in Saudi Arabia.

2.1.1 Defining vocabulary knowledge

There is no one specific definition for the word ‘vocabulary’. Here, we focus on the concept of vocabulary from an applied perspective, as this is most relevant to the purposes of this study, and it is complex enough without going into definitions of ‘the lexicon’ and ‘the mental lexicon’ from differing perspectives in linguistic theory. For example, vocabulary is defined by Lehr, Osborn, and Hiebert (2004) as the kind of words that students must know to read progressively demanding text with comprehension. On the other hand, Jackson and Amvela (2007, p. 2) define ‘vocabulary’ as “the total word stock of the language,” where a word is the “usual traditional sense of a sequence of letters bounded by spaces.” Moreover, the fact is that we know words at varying levels of familiarity; from no knowledge, to some knowledge, to a thorough and full knowledge, so that we know what words we should use when we produce language (Dale, 1965). Additionally, each individual has a unique word schema that includes active vocabulary (words that we know well and habitually use when communicating using productive skills) and passive vocabulary (words that we know and can identify but do not use frequently). Depth of knowledge is
another key dimension in vocabulary: a recent study by Harmon and Wood (2008) found that for some words, students need to have a deeper understanding to comprehend a passage successfully, while for other words, they may only need to have a general understanding to keep comprehension intact (see also Graves, 2006; Jackson & Amvela, 2007).

To define vocabulary further, Graves (2006, p. 11) considers four different categories: “receptive-oral”, “receptive-written”, “productive-oral”, and “productive-written” where receptive is defined as the “words we understand when others use them” and productive are the “words we use themselves.” Therefore, it should be decided first what vocabulary we need to define, in order to know what is meant by vocabulary knowledge. We should also take into account the breadth/depth of vocabularies and if those vocabularies are receptive or productive, where ‘depth’ refers to the number of words and their principal meanings that a learner knows, while ‘breadth’ refers to the knowledge level a learner has with regard to morphology and associations of words (see 2.1.3).

Generally, English dictionaries define vocabulary as ‘all the words of a language’, but does that mean we know a language if we memorise the dictionary? Definitely not, since vocabulary is not only a list of words that are defined or translated. It is more complex than such general definitions suggest. Knowing the meaning of a language vocabulary does not guarantee good vocabulary knowledge. As the following literature review will show, vocabulary knowledge involves knowing several aspects beyond the basic meanings of the words including their morphology, the meanings of polysemous words depending on the context in which they are used, how the words are used, collocations of those words as well as their roots and affixes, and so on (see Folse, 2004; Laufer, 2005; Moras, 2001; Read, 2004; Taiwo, 2007). Although there have been some studies defining vocabulary knowledge, few studies have focused systematically on the aspects involved in vocabulary knowledge. This could be a result of the fact that studies on vocabulary are fairly recent according to Meara (2002).

Vocabulary knowledge is also classified into different categories when defined, according to varying types of classification. For example, at least three of the leaders in the field divide vocabulary knowledge into receptive and productive, where receptive knowledge includes understanding a word when reading or listening and the other
division includes the knowledge of producing a word i.e., when speaking and writing (Nation 2005, pp. 584-585; Read, 2000, p. 154; Schmitt, 2000, p. 4; see also Aizawa, Ochiai & Osaki, 2003; Webb, 2005). Other researchers classify the notion of vocabulary knowledge in terms of ‘size’ and ‘depth’ or the number of words and their principal meanings that a learner knows and the knowledge level a learner has with regard to morphology and associations of words (Nakanishi & Shimamoto, 2003, p. 32). Qian (2002) proposes four dimensions of vocabulary knowledge: vocabulary size, depth, lexical organisation, and automaticity of receptive-productive knowledge.

Vocabulary knowledge as described by Nagy and Scott (2000, pp. 269-284) entails the different types of knowledge involved in knowing a word. They suggest that vocabulary learning is incremental for the reason that there are various aspects of vocabulary knowledge; and they see the semantic interrelationships among different meanings of a single word as one of the key areas of learning. Taking a broader linguistic perspective, Wood and Harmon (2008) see that vocabulary knowledge should include the use of the new words in oral and written language, correct grammar usage of words or syntactical knowledge, semantic and morphological competence. They also assert that learning a word meaning is inextricably related to the knowledge of other related words, as we do not learn word meanings in isolation from other words and concepts. A related point was made earlier by Saville-Troike (1976), who affirms that we must understand a great deal more than the dictionary meanings.

For Richards (1976, pp. 77-90) and Taylor (1990 pp. 1-4), knowledge of a word means knowledge of frequency, morphology, collocation, register (i.e., the boundaries between conceptual meanings), semantics, and polysemy of that word and the equivalent word in the L1 (see also Al-Homoud, 2007; Bahns & Eldaw, 1993; Folse, 2004; Laufer, 2005; Moras, 2001; Pigada & Schmitt, 2006; Read, 2004; Schmitt, 2008; Thornbury, 2004). As Brown puts it, “vocabulary researchers have long argued that knowing a word means learning much more than just its meaning, with the word’s form, associations, collocations, and grammatical patterns among other things also needing to be acquired” (2010, p. 254). For these reasons, Harley (1996, p. 3), rightly describes vocabulary knowledge as multi-faceted—“a disarmingly simple term for a complex multidimensional phenomenon”—pointing out that because of such complexity, L2
learners must take a more wide-ranging approach towards vocabulary-learning in order to reach a higher quality and quantity of L2 output.

2.1.2 Aspects of L2 vocabulary knowledge

Vocabulary knowledge can be better understood by examining all its related aspects. Folse (2004, pp. 10-18) proposes that vocabulary knowledge includes seven aspects: polysemy, denotation and connotation, spelling and pronunciation, part of speech, frequency, usage, and collocation. Other researchers have added some additional aspects to Folse’s list. For example, Moras (2001, pp. 1-2), basing his research on the work of Gairns and Redman (1986), includes six additional aspects on which an advanced student will need to work: boundaries between conceptual meaning, homonymy, homophony, synonymy, style, register, dialect, and translation. Taylor (1990, pp. 1-4) categorises the aspects of vocabulary knowledge as follows: frequency of occurrence, word register, collocation, morphology, semantics, polysemy and the relationship of sound to spelling, and knowledge of the equivalent of the word in the mother tongue. Nation (2001, p. 27) classifies the aspects of vocabulary knowledge in three main categories: 1) ‘form’ including spoken form, written form, and word parts; 2) ‘meaning’ including form and meaning, concept and referents, and associations; 3) ‘use’ including grammatical functions, collocations, and constraints on use. In fact, many researchers believe that knowing these aspects can effectively develop depth of vocabulary knowledge. Schmitt (2000, p. 5) cites Nation’s list of the knowledge aspects a learner needs to master to know a word including word meaning, written and spoken form, morphology, collocations, register, associations, and frequency (see also Brown, 2011; Qian, 2005; Schmitt, 2000; Thornbury, 2004).

None of this withstanding, this field of the study is largely neglected by many ESL professionals. Schmitt (2000, p. xi) states that although lexical knowledge and competence are central to communication, few ESL professionals are aware of what students need to know about words and how to go about helping them acquire sufficient breadth and depth of lexical knowledge. Brown (2011), and Walters and Bozkurt (2009) believe that vocabulary teaching should go beyond presenting word lists to help learners appreciate and realise what vocabulary knowledge means. To answer the research
questions and understand vocabulary knowledge more comprehensively, this study takes into consideration the aspects introduced below.

**Denotation**

Denotation, known also as the cognitive or referential meaning, is described as “the most basic or specific meaning of a word” (Folse, 2004, p. 16). It is also known as the central meaning of a word or lexeme. Yet, teaching/learning this aspect of vocabulary knowledge does not assure vocabulary growth. Despite its obvious importance in vocabulary knowledge, the majority of researchers in the field of vocabulary assert that learning the literal meaning of a word by itself does not guarantee good vocabulary knowledge, as “when we consider what learners need to know about a word in order to use it appropriately in productive communicative situations, we can readily see that making a link between form and meaning is simply the first step in vocabulary learning” (Schmitt, 2010, p. 1).

**Mother-tongue equivalence**

Contrary to previous beliefs about the independence of L1- and L2 knowledge, contemporary research suggests that “there is plenty of research evidence to show that using the first language is an effective way compared to other ways like using second language definitions or pictures… [especially] in the early stages of language learning” (Nation & Gu, 2007, p. 116). Taylor (1992, p. 3) had earlier suggested that “[t]ranslation can aid understanding… [i]t also has a role to play in raising cultural awareness”; through awareness of similarities and differences between the foreign language and the learners’ native language. Although the use of the L1 used to be discouraged, it is now recognised that discussing and comparing how the same thing can be said in different languages is important. Burden (2000, p. 6) and Pachler and Field (2001, p. 101) underline the importance of increasing the amount of L1 as it can guarantee learning among the students. Neglecting the L1 as a resource in L2 teaching may have a negative effect and simply add to the student’s frustration. However, the use of L1 in class should be used wisely and in a way that does not conflict with the main
goal of L2 vocabulary teaching. Such conflict can arise if, for example, a teacher spends much time talking in the L1 about the meanings of L2 words, instead of giving the students practice actually using the words appropriately in their L2 context (see Laufer & Girsai, 2008; Paribakht, 2005).

**Sound-spelling**

The ability to recognise and reproduce items in speech is a fundamental aspect of vocabulary knowledge. Knowing the meaning of a word entails knowing its form as well, including pronunciation and spelling (Thornbury 2004, p. 15). In English, there is no direct relationship between some of the letters and the pronunciation of the word. As Taylor (1992, p. 3) points out, “[t]here is no simple one-to-one relationship between the letters of the English alphabet and the way they are pronounced”. For example, a word like *through* is pronounced like *threw*, which could make teaching such words a real problem if they are not taught within the correct context. Nonetheless, teaching/learning the pronunciation and spelling of the new word is essential for L2 education.

**Morphology**

Knowing the morphology of a word entails learning the rules that help build different forms of that word. It involves the knowledge of “the underlying form of a word and the derivations that can be made from it”, i.e. the affixes and roots within the words and their meanings (Taylor 1992, p. 4). Nation (2001, p. 26) affirms the view that knowing a word entails “recognizing that it is made up of the parts and being able to relate these parts to its meaning.”

**Collocation**

Knowledge of collocation is one of the significant aspects of vocabulary learning. Folse (2004, p. 16) defines collocation as “a word or phrase that naturally and frequently occurs before, after, or very near the target vocabulary item”. Taylor (1992, p. 4) elaborates that “knowledge of collocation involves knowing the network of associations
between the given word and other words in the language. It also involves knowing which other words can stand alongside the given word in a sentence.” This is part of the knowledge referred to by Nation (2001, p. 26), in saying that knowing a word entails “knowing what the word means in the particular context in which it has just occurred.”

As Harmon, Hedrick, Soares, and Gress (2007) explain, “Knowing a word means knowing not only the meaning, but knowing the contexts in which that word is used; it means knowing related words and ideas; it means knowing when and where to use the word.” (p. 138).

**Connotation**

Folse (2004, p. 16) defines connotation as an idea that is suggested by or associated with a word (e.g. slender, thin, skinny); it could be positive, negative, or neutral. Taylor (1992, p. 5) recognises that teaching/learning this aspect of vocabulary knowledge is very important as it “gives an extra dimension to its [the word’s] literal meaning.” Again this is related to Nation’s view (2001, p. 26) that knowing a word entails “knowing the concept behind the word which will allow understanding in a variety of contexts.”

**Homophony**

Teaching/learning the homophones of a word can greatly promote vocabulary knowledge, as it can help avoid misunderstanding, especially when homophones are taught within context and a variety of examples. Based on the work of Gairns and Redman (1986), Moras (2001) asserts the importance of mastering homophony to learn English words.

**Homonymy**

Homonymy is one of the aspects of vocabulary knowledge that involves knowing the different meanings associated with a word, and “distinguishing between the various
meaning of a single word form which has several meanings which are NOT closely related” according to Moras (2001, p. 2).

**Synonymy**

Vocabulary knowledge involves the ability of “distinguishing between the different shades of meaning that synonymous words have” according to Moras (2001, p. 2). Richards (1976), Gairns and Redman (1986), Nation (1990), and Taiwo (2007, pp. 207-208) all assert the importance of learning the aspect of synonymy in order to have complete command of a word.

**Style, register, and dialect**

Knowing these aspects involves having the ability to differentiate between the differences in geographical variation, the effect of different contexts and topics and the different levels of formality as well. Nation (1990, p. 31) asserts that knowing a word entails mastering style, register, and associations of that word. According to Moras (2001, p. 2), knowledge of the register of the word or the use of the word may be limited according to its function and the situation.

**Frequency**

Knowledge of the frequency of a word in the language is one of the important aspects of vocabulary knowledge, not only for teachers and curriculum planners, but also for learners. To know how often is the word used in speech or in print is crucial in ESL/EFL education for the reason that some lexical items in English are far more frequent in speech than in writing, while other items may only occur in the written language: “[k]nowledge of the frequency of the word in the language is knowing the likelihood of encountering the word in speech or in print” (Taylor, 1992, p. 4). According to Nation (1990, p. 31) and Schmitt (2000, p. 5), a learner needs to become aware of the frequency of the new word in order to master it. A learner who masters this
aspect of vocabulary will, for example, be less likely to inappropriately overuse lower frequency words.

2.1.3 Current state of EFL vocabulary research

Vocabulary plays a crucial role in learning any language. In addition to sound system and grammar, L2 learners must learn the vocabulary of that language to be able to function in it. As Laufer (1997) affirms, vocabulary is at the heart of language-learning and language use and without it, speakers cannot communicate. McCarthy (1990, p. i) argues that vocabulary knowledge is essential for L2 learners, since “no matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wide range of meanings, communication in an L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way.” Therefore, English vocabulary learning is one of the most crucial activities of EFL learners. In the Saudi context, Al-Jarf (2007, par. 2) affirms that “vocabulary knowledge is an important element in second language (L2) acquisition. By learning new words, students can increase their listening, speaking, reading and writing vocabularies and can improve comprehension and production in L2.” Egbert (2005, p. 21) asserts the importance of vocabulary knowledge in reading proficiency, for example. Functional L2 reading proficiency (Groot, 2000) requires mastery of a considerably large number of words (see also Bongaards & Laufer, 2004; Cenoz, Jessner, & Hufeisen, 2003; De Groot & van Hell, 2005; Lengyel & Navraecsics, 2007; Meara, 2002).

The literature suggests that vocabulary teaching and learning were only given little priority in L2 programs in the past, according to Decarrico (2001) and Richards and Renandya (2002), as for many decades L2 teaching was largely restricted to the teaching of grammatical, phonological, and orthographic competence, but there has been a growing interest in the field of vocabulary acquisition in the past quarter century since it is central to language acquisition. “After years of relative neglect, the importance of vocabulary for developing proficiency in a second language (L2) is now generally acknowledged by researchers and theorists.” (Bult, Housen, Pierrard, & Van Daele, 2008, p. 277). By 2001, Decarrico (2001, p. 285) had formed the view that “[t]here is now general agreement among vocabulary specialists that lexical competence
is at the very heart of communicative competence.” The increased focus on teaching vocabulary recently is seen by Thornbury (2004, p. vi) partly as a result of “the development of new approaches to language teaching, which are much more ‘word-centred’”.

Recent research has been focusing on topics like defining vocabulary and what vocabulary knowledge involves (Brown, 2010; Jackson & Amvela, 2007; Taiwo, 2007), difficulties L2 learners encounter when attaining EFL vocabulary (Cummins & Man, 2007; Jahangard, 2007; Lessard-Clouston, 2008; Wei, 2007), activities and vocabulary-teaching methods enhancing vocabulary knowledge (Brown, 2010; Morgan & Rinvolucri, 2004; Schmitt, 2008), issues related to size and depth of vocabulary and how many words L2 learners should know (Coxhead, 2006; Nation, 2008; Nation & Gu, 2007; Schmitt, 2008; Zimmerman, 2009), incidental versus intentional word learning (Al-Homoud, 2007; Laufer, 2005; Pigada & Schmitt, 2006; Read, 2004; Schmitt, 2000; Thornbury, 2004), number of exposures and frequency of the word in learning and teaching new vocabulary (Graves, 2006; Meara & Miralpeix, 2007; Pigada & Schmitt, 2006; Wang, 2007; Webb, 2007), and vocabulary learning strategies and autonomous vocabulary learning (Hsu & Chiu, 2008; Hsu & Hsu, 2007; Hunt & Belglar, 2005; Keshavarz & Salimi, 2007; Liao, 2006; Walters & Bozkurt, 2009).

Amidst this recent flourishing of vocabulary research in SLA, this present review focuses on the aspects most directly related to the concerns of EFL teaching in the context of this study. Having looked at various definitions of the notion of vocabulary knowledge and its aspects, and the importance of vocabulary knowledge in receptive and productive skills, we proceed to consider how many words L2 learners need to know, and why it is important to encourage autonomous vocabulary learning. Most importantly, we explore a number of vocabulary-learning strategies that are identified as helpful in each stage of the five vocabulary learning stages.

Notwithstanding its importance in L2 learning and the growing interest about it, vocabulary could be an obstacle for many L2 learners. In the global educational context, Jahangard (2007), Lessard-Clouston (2008), Ma and Kelly (2009), Wei (2007) and Yang (2005) point to the struggles that ESL/EFL students have with attaining vocabulary, especially when learning English for academic purposes. “Acquiring academic language is challenging for all students,” for the reason that “academic
language proficiency includes knowledge of the less frequent vocabulary of English as well as the ability to interpret and produce increasingly complex written and oral language” (Cummins & Man, 2007, p. 801). Consequently, Jahangard (2007), Wei (2007) and Yang (2005) affirm that ESL/EFL students need to have a good amount of vocabulary to succeed in their academic studies.

Another obstacle in the way of good vocabulary knowledge is the use of ineffective vocabulary-teaching methods. Some ESL/EFL teachers, for instance, focus mainly on teaching spelling and meanings when presenting new words. In a recent study, Brown (2011) examined how textbooks approach the teaching of word knowledge, and found that there was shortage in the treatment of other aspects of word knowledge. No textbook provided sustained activities that targeted all of the aspects of word knowledge; this could mean that students may not be receiving exposure to all of the different aspects of word knowledge even in an awareness-raising capacity. It also implies that an important opportunity for recycling vocabulary through a range of word knowledge-related activities is being missed. Investigating the attention given to vocabulary by classroom teachers, Horst, Collins, and Cardoso (2009) found that out of 786 language-related episodes in the classroom talk, over 70 per cent were concerned with teaching meaning, 25 per cent were concerned with form of the new word, and only 3 per cent with collocation. Hence, all the other aspects of word knowledge were neglected, which clearly shows that most of ESL/EFL vocabulary teaching has been focused on meaning while other aspects of word knowledge are largely ignored. Taiwo, (2007, p. 207) concludes that the goal of the teachers, therefore, should be to motivate learners to learn the appropriate vocabulary. The teacher’s motivation is based on an awareness of the learners’ needs and preferences. EFL learners will learn when they are motivated and when their teachers provide them with better ways to learn vocabulary (Alqahtani, 2009, p. 2).

Another critical issue many researchers have been focusing on is how many words L2 learners need to know. Before this question is answered, we need to know what is meant by the number (size) of the words L2 learners should know. Vocabulary knowledge is further divided by Schmitt (2000) into size and depth, where size refers to how many words are known with a primary meaning, and depth refers to the degree to which word
aspects other than the primary meaning are known including associations, affixes, and so on.

In academic learning contexts, four types of vocabulary have been identified in lectures, namely: high-frequency, academic, technical, and other, low-frequency vocabulary (Coxhead, 2006; Nation, 2008; Nation & Gu, 2007; Vidal, 2003; Zimmerman, 2009). Nation and Gu (2007, pp. 173-175) explain that high frequency words (around 2000 words) make up from 80 per cent to 90 per cent of the words in a text; academic vocabulary accounts for around 10 per cent of the words in academic text, but around 4 per cent of the words in newspapers. They estimate that about 5000-6000 words of low-frequency vocabulary are needed to do an undergraduate degree at university and around 9000 words to do doctoral study, while technical vocabulary includes the words that are used in a specialised area and usually not so commonly used outside that area. They go on to consider the pedagogical implications of this: “Quite a large vocabulary of around 8000-9000 words is needed to read newspapers, novels and academic texts. Because it takes several years to reach this vocabulary size, the use of specially graded reading material is essential if learners are to have comprehensible input for reading” (Nation & Gu 2007, p. 44). When compared to reading, listening skill does not entail mastering a huge quantity of vocabulary; the authors estimate that “[m]ost listening activities require a smaller vocabulary than reading activities- around 6000-7000 words for unsimplified material” (Nation & Gu 2007, p. 44.).

Other well-informed estimates are of the same general scale. According to Schmitt (2008), a large vocabulary is needed to function in English, 8000–9000 word families for reading and about 5000-7000 families for oral discourse. Nation (2006) estimates that learners need 6000-7000 word families to understand spoken discourse and 8000-9000 word families to understand written discourse. Furthermore, Groot (2000, p. 62) claims that an L2 learner needs to know vocabulary of at least 7000 words for an adequate understanding of academic texts. The average size of receptive vocabulary a skilful college-educated ESL/EFL learner has is 13,500–20,000 base words, which is similar to the average of a college-educated English native speaker (Cervatiuc, 2007). Therefore, a rich vocabulary is essential for success in language production and for mastering receptive skills, as word knowledge is strongly linked to academic achievement. Luppescu and Day (1993) report a positive correlation between learners’
level of language proficiency and their knowledge of vocabulary. In addition to size, research has also examined the depth of vocabulary knowledge, as L2 learners also need to know a great deal about each word in order to use it well (see also Al-Nujaïdi, 2003; Chujo & Utiyama, 2005; Shimamoto, 2000; Stæhr, 2008). This brings us to consider the degree to which vocabulary aspects other than the primary meaning are known. (See 1.8 for definition of terms related to types of vocabulary).

Many such aspects of word knowledge have been identified as needing to be mastered by ESL/EFL learners when learning new words. Gairns and Redman (1986), Nation (1990), and Taiwo (2007) include aspects such as the spoken form, written form, grammatical behavior, collocational behavior, frequency of usage, stylistic register and constraints of the conceptual meaning, and the association of the word with other related words. They conclude that L2 learners must possess those aspects both receptively and productively in order to have complete command of a word. Folse (2004, pp. 10-18), Moras (2001, pp. 1-2), and Taylor (1990, pp. 1-4) have focused on specific aspects like boundaries between the conceptual meaning of the new word, polysemy, homonymy, homophony, synonymy, affective meaning, style, register, dialect, translation, chunks of language, pronunciation, and grammar of vocabulary. Schmitt (2008) concludes that knowledge of meaning, form and grammatical properties can all benefit from explicit teaching, while the other aspects of word knowledge, especially those depending on context of use can be best learned through a combination of explicit awareness-raising and implicit learning through extensive exposure. Nation (2001, p. 27) has described a wide range of the word knowledge aspects that should be known by ESL/EFL learners asserting that focusing on the use of other aspects of vocabulary knowledge can consolidate the meaning, form, grammatical use, and collocation of the new word in memory (see also Al-Homoud, 2007; Bahns & Eldaw, 1993; Laufer, 2005; Nation, 1990; Pigada & Schmitt, 2006; Read, 2004; Thornbury, 2004).

Unfortunately, much vocabulary teaching has tended to be mostly incidental; it has assumed that vocabulary expansion will happen through the practice of reading or listening. Brown (2010, p. 254) confirms that teachers and textbooks tend to focus on just one aspect of word knowledge (meaning) when teaching vocabulary and neglecting many other aspects –despite the fact that vocabulary researchers have long argued that knowing a word means learning much more than just its meaning, with the word’s form,
associations, collocations, and grammatical patterns among other things also needing to be acquired. Brown (2010) also points out the need for teachers to take responsibility for looking at other aspects of word knowledge in the classroom.

Another central issue investigated in the research is whether vocabulary should be learned incidentally or intentionally. Intentional vocabulary acquisition involves memorising words with their literal translated meanings directly from a list. This type of learning could be quick and easy for learners, but it is also considered superficial as it, again, concentrates on merely one aspect of vocabulary knowledge. On the other hand, incidental vocabulary acquisition can be a good technique for overcoming the latter disadvantage since it involves learning vocabulary as a result of doing other things such as reading or listening. Besides, encountering new words together with syntactic information can help ESL/EFL learners use words accurately in an idiomatic way (see Al-Hadlaq, 2003; Hulstijn, 2001; Yoshii, 2006). Schmitt (2000, p. 116) identifies two main processes of vocabulary acquisition: ‘explicit learning’ through the focused study of words, and ‘incidental learning’ through exposure, when attention is focused on the use of language, rather than the learning itself. He goes on to point out that “incidental learning can occur when one is using language for communicative purposes, and so gives a double benefit for time expended, but it is slower and more gradual, lacking the focused attention of explicit learning” (p. 120).

Decarrico (2001, p. 286) describes a discussion emerging from the current vocabulary studies, as to “whether effective vocabulary learning should focus on explicit or implicit learning” (see also Ellis, 2005). It is now widely recognised in the SLA field that L2 learners need both intentional and incidental learning. Some categories of words, like the most frequent words in a language, and technical vocabulary, make excellent targets for explicit attention. On the other hand, Schmitt (2000, pp. 120-121) suggests that infrequent words in general English are probably best left to incidental learning. Nation and Meara (2002) present a more integrated view of explicit vocabulary teaching and implicit vocabulary teaching, as they list several types of deliberate vocabulary teaching including collocation activities, pre-teaching of vocabulary, post-listening/reading vocabulary exercises, second-hand cloze, and word detecting practices (p. 43).
After learners have acquired the core meaning, they usually extend their learning of the target word using other aspects such as additional exposure to that word used within its context, how far the meaning can be extended, and where the semantic boundaries are. According to Schmitt (2000, p. 123), “this is an ongoing process, as each exposure to a novel usage of a word further defines its boundaries.” Consequently, learning can be eased by repeated exposure to the words that go together. Graves (2006, p. 12) asserts that vocabulary researchers and specialists commonly have come to an agreement that “words can be known at various levels.”

A number of exposures to the new word are necessary to promote incidental learning (Pigada & Schmitt, 2006; Waring & Takaki, 2003; Webb, 2007; Zahar, Cobb, & Spada, 2001). Rott (1999) found that six exposures led to better learning than two or four exposures, while Waring and Takaki (2003) assert that it takes as a minimum of eight repetitions for learners to have about a 50 per cent chance of recognising a word form/meaning. Zahar, Cobb and Spada (2001) propose that 8–10 reading exposures can give learners a reasonable chance of learning a preliminary receptive knowledge of words; however, they argue that the proficiency level of the learners may affect the number of encounters needed to learn a word as more advanced learners need fewer encounters when acquiring new words.

The use of effective vocabulary-learning strategies can help resolve many of the difficulties ESL/EFL learners encounter when attaining English vocabulary, which can in turn enhance vocabulary-learning autonomy (Cheung, 2004; Hunt & Belglar, 2005; Li, 2005; Lip, 2009; Lo, 2007; Schmitt, 2000; Wu, 2005). For example, it is worth examining how the use of monolingual dictionaries can help ESL/EFL learners effectively learn the form and meaning of the new word. The findings of many studies reveal that ESL/EFL learners using monolingual dictionaries yield better results in retention of the words. Another important and well-explored strategy is making use of collocational knowledge, due to its importance in facilitating language learning, comprehension, and production (Hsu & Chiu, 2008; Hsu & Hsu, 2007; Keshavarz & Salimi, 2007; Sung, 2003; Thornbury, 2004). Teaching/learning the new words along with their collocations can foster vocabulary knowledge growth. Moreover, there is renewed interest in how the use of L1 may be helpful as an aid in L2 vocabulary instruction (see Hemchua & Schmitt, 2006; Liao, 2006; Nesselhauf, 2003).
All in all, there are many vocabulary-learning strategies identified in the literature as helpful and effective; however, it is very important to take into consideration the other factors surrounding L2 learners and the entire educational process, including class time, amount and frequency of L2 exposure, teachers’ support, and so on. Gu (2003) suggests that the strategies a learner uses and the effectiveness of these strategies depend on the learners themselves, the learning task at hand, and the learning environment. Therefore, this study will focus on a number of vocabulary-learning strategies that can be used in each stage of the five vocabulary-learning stages.

2.1.4 EFL vocabulary learning in Saudi Arabia

Although the official language is Arabic, English is widely used in Saudi Arabia. The existing situation and literature show that there is a growing tendency, especially among Saudi students from high schools and universities to learn and use English. A study conducted on Saudi students from secondary (high) school showed that they were instrumentally motivated to learn English (Al-Jarf, 2007; Surur, 1981). Surur (1981, p. 9) concluded that secondary-school students desired to speak English fluently as they considered the English language as a necessity for the Arab World and further that they would like to see it in the curriculum, suggesting that many Saudi students are motivated to learn and use English. In his study investigating the development of 600 Saudi intermediate and secondary students’ motivation to learn English as a foreign language, Al-Shammary (1984) found that the attitude toward learning English in the Saudi school context was generally more favourable in the upper levels (high schools). Al-Jarf (2007) reports that many high-school graduates in Saudi Arabia, especially females, show a great interest in joining languages and translation colleges. Admission to those colleges has become highly competitive, even for students with low GPAs at high schools (see also Al-Otaibi, 2004; Al-Wahibee, 2000).

As a result of recent developments in the Saudi English curricula, and the introduction of the English course in the 5th and 6th elementary grades in all Saudi schools, education researchers in Saudi Arabia are discussing issues like whether teaching English at early stages would be effective, whether early exposure to the language would help in the development of positive attitudinal and motivational outlooks, and so
on. Al-Jarf (2009), examining whether English should be taught to Saudi children under the age of six, found that many Saudi parents were wondering about the optimal age for teaching English to young children. Parents were questioning if they should send their children to a kindergarten that uses English as a medium of instruction, one that teaches English as a subject, or one that teaches Arabic only. They also wondered if teaching English to young Saudi children might affect their acquisition of Arabic and their academic achievement in later stages.

In an earlier exploratory study of teaching English in the Saudi elementary public schools, Abdan (1991, p. 253) concluded that if English were to be recommended for introduction into the Saudi public elementary schools, this recommendation should be based on two factors: providing greater exposure to EFL and exploiting younger children’s affective characteristics related to language-learning. To achieve the desired results of teaching EFL in Saudi elementary schools, though, this would need to be combined with good-quality exposure. Abdan (1991, p. 263) found no difference between teaching English six or four times per week in terms of achievement. It can be argued from this that the length of formal exposure available in schools is not enough to produce the desired EFL achievement. In addition to other factors, this could be also attributed to poor quality of teaching. This again confirms the picture of numerous difficulties facing Saudi EFL students when learning English, resulting in low English performance.

Another issue being discussed currently is the effectiveness of the EFL teacher preparation program in Saudi Arabia. This program, designed specifically for educating future EFL teachers, is often described as non-systematic and inadequate. Al-hazmi (2003, pp. 343-344) concludes that Saudi Arabia urgently needs to improve its initial teacher education and its professional development programs for EFL teachers throughout their careers, and that current weaknesses in pre- and in-service TEFL education programs should be dealt with. Zaid (1993) asserts that Saudi universities and colleges prepare students to be English or English-Arabic translation specialists not necessarily English teachers. However, Al-hazmi (2003, p. 342) reported that the Ministry of Education had organised in-service teacher education in collaboration with the US Embassy and the British Council to acquaint Saudi English teachers with
modern teaching methods and to identify obstacles to effective English teaching over the two years prior to his evaluation.

The issues discussed by Saudi researchers point to a number of vocabulary-related obstacles hindering effective EFL education. One of those is that the Saudi EFL education system, including the curricula, teaching methods, and so on, gives insufficient consideration to vocabulary. In spite of its importance in building learners’ literacy, vocabulary has been a neglected area for a long time in Saudi Arabia. Alqahtani, (2009) emphasises the importance for Saudi EFL learners of focusing on learning English vocabulary, as it can foster their academic achievements in English courses. She states: “In Saudi Arabia, one of the critical aspects in foreign language learning is the learning of vocabulary. Increasing vocabulary knowledge is a basic element in education. A lack of this knowledge is considered a serious problem for EFL learners.” (p. 3). But in Saudi Arabia, as elsewhere in the world, an emphasis on grammar teaching has been accompanied by a situation where vocabulary teaching above elementary levels has generally been limited to presenting new items as they appear in reading or listening, which is not sufficient to ensure vocabulary growth and development.

Based on classroom observational studies in a variety of educational contexts, Horst, Collins, and Cardoso (2009), Sanaoui (1996), and Swain and Carroll (1987) found that teaching vocabulary was focused on meaning, with other aspects of word knowledge largely ignored. In an analysis of almost 900 activities in nine General English course-books, Brown (2011, p. 256) found that more than half of the activities involved form and meaning. Grammatical functions and spoken form received some attention, while the other six aspects received very limited amounts of attention and were not found at all in some of the course books. Likewise, vocabulary teaching in Saudi Arabia faces similar problems. Al-Jarf (2006, p. 2) considers that “vocabulary teaching and learning constitute a major problem for EFL instructors and students”, which could stem from factors including “difficulty in pronouncing, recognizing the meaning of, using and spelling English words.”

Khan (2011, p. 107) asserts that Saudi EFL learners encounter many difficulties with spellings, silent letters, consonant phonemes and pronunciations. In his opinion, “[p]ronunciation or sound system is the first and the foremost aspect of the target
language in which the learners face difficulties” (p. 107). He adds that “an Arab learner of English will face difficulties in discriminating the sounds like [t] or [d], [s] or [z], [f] or [v], [p], [b], [s], [c], and [ʧ] or [ʤ]” (p. 107), as the feature [voice] is not phonemic and the sounds [ʧ] and [ʤ] do not exist in Arabic.

Moreover, Saudi learners have difficulties learning the synonyms and antonyms of many English words. Khan (2011) states that Saudi EFL learners “face [this] problem due to the fact that they are not even at home in using or differentiating the actual meaning in their native language, and the translation of the same in to the target language. Most Saudi students use the adjective ‘beautiful’ even for describing a man’s charm and smartness. However, in their mother-tongue as well there are words that are used differently in given situations” (p. 110). According to Alqahtani, (2009, p. 4), English vocabulary-learning in Saudi Arabia is one of the more serious problems many EFL students face, especially at lower levels where many students have difficulty using the words they have already learned due to the students’ inability to understand their meanings and because of lack of teacher support.

A review of the literature shows that many Saudi EFL students encounter multiple difficulties in attaining English vocabulary. Albadawi (2007, pp. 81-84), Albanyan (2003 pp. 49-64), and Saifulrahman (2006, pp. 52-59) all agree that these difficulties can result in a general weakness of the students’ English level. In a pilot investigation of factors underlying Saudi learners’ difficulties in attaining EFL vocabulary, Albousaif (2008) found intriguing evidence relating to weakness in the EFL vocabulary learning and teaching processes. On the one hand, Saudi EFL teachers affirmed that they made use of various vocabulary teaching methods and that they willingly encouraged their students to use many effective vocabulary-learning strategies when they learned or memorised EFL vocabulary. On the other hand, they blamed their students for lack of enthusiasm in learning EFL in general. The results suggested that there was a great discrepancy between the amount of effort that teachers reported investing in training their students in using vocabulary-learning strategies, and the rate at which students took up those strategies.

A number of Saudi sources indicate that lack of good vocabulary-learning strategies could be one of the big reasons for such difficulties (Abdulwahab, 1997). Al-Sugayyer (2006) claims that the Saudi English curricula do not sufficiently encourage the Saudi
learners’ vocabulary development, and that many Saudi EFL teachers do not use effective vocabulary-teaching methods sufficiently. Al-Sugayyer (2006, pp. 118-121) reports that after studying English for six years, the high-school graduates he studied had only memorised some vocabulary items, short phrases, and explicit grammatical rules, which is not adequate to communicate convincingly and reasonably. He attributes this to crucial defects in the learning- and teaching processes (see also Al-Arfaj, 1996; Al-Asmary, 2007; Alfallaj, 1998; Syed, 2003; Zaid, 1993).

There is a growing need to explore more deeply the factors underlying the difficulties experienced by Saudi learners in attaining EFL vocabulary. The topic of what vocabulary-learning strategies are most effectively helpful in each stage of vocabulary-learning has not been sufficiently investigated, especially not in the Saudi Arabian context. It has to be said that not much has changed in the 20 years since Abdan (1991, pp. 253-254) commented on the lack of literature on many issues related to teaching English in Saudi Arabia.
2.2 The importance of vocabulary for L2 learners

This section of the literature review draws attention to the significance of vocabulary knowledge for L2 learners in receptive and productive skills. It also investigates how many words L2 learners need to know so as to communicate well, and discusses one of the most critical issues for almost every EFL/ESL educator; that is, how to help students become independent learners. The topic of autonomous vocabulary-learning is an opening for the following five sections or ‘the five essential steps’ in vocabulary learning: encountering new words, getting the word form, getting the word meaning, consolidating word form and meaning in memory, and, finally, using the word. The last point of this section highlights the importance of learning a variety of strategies that can be used in every vocabulary-learning stage.

2.2.1. Teaching and learning vocabulary

As mentioned above, ‘vocabulary’ refers to the words we must know to communicate effectively, as words are our tools to communicate with others, as well as to explore and analyse the world around us. As Wilkins (1972, p. 111) so concisely puts it: “without grammar very little can be conveyed; without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.”

There is a strong relationship between vocabulary knowledge and all other language abilities due to the fact that vocabulary is centrally involved in each of the four English language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) that build up learners’ competence (Stæhr, 2008). Great differences in word knowledge can be noticed among students. In the learner’s first language, such differences could start at very young ages, according to Hart and Risley’s influential work (1995), and are likely to continue affecting students’ learning as they move through school. Therefore, The National Research Council (1998) in the USA asserts the importance of learning vocabulary and concludes that vocabulary development is an essential aim for students, especially in the early school grades (see also Webb, 2008; Zheng, 2009).
In spite of its significance, the issue of teaching and learning vocabulary is considered to have been a neglected area before the 1980s (Maiguashca, 1993; Meara, 1980). Laufer (1986) reviewed a number of books during the 1970s on language learning and teaching and found that there were only few studies, mainly articles, about vocabulary teaching and learning. According to Salebi (2003, p. 148), “until recently, teaching English vocabulary has received scant attention. It is only with the advent of the communicative approach [that] it starts to receive its due emphasis” (see also Brown, 2011; Schmitt, 2000). Vocabulary-teaching beyond the elementary levels was generally limited to presenting new items as they appeared in reading or listening, i.e. what is called ‘indirect teaching of vocabulary’. Some EFL teachers assume that growth of vocabulary will happen automatically through the practice of other language skills. But it is more widely accepted, nowadays, that vocabulary teaching should be part of the syllabus and taught in a regular and well-planned way. Lewis (1993), for example, emphasises that vocabulary should be at the centre of language teaching.

According to Nation (2001), vocabulary-learning involves the ability to understand receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge. Accordingly, we proceed now to consider the importance of vocabulary knowledge in receptive and productive skills.

**Vocabulary knowledge in receptive skills**

Learning a second language is not that different from learning the mother-tongue, insofar as listening precedes speaking, and reading precedes writing. The skills of listening and reading are the two areas of receptive language skills, where students are receiving and processing information.

Listening comprehension in L2 is described by Wolvin and Coakley (1996, p. 69) as the process of receiving, attending to, and assigning meaning to aural stimuli involving a listener, with prior knowledge of the topic, the aural text, cognitive processes to the listening task, linguistic knowledge, and the interaction between the listener and speaker. Fischer and Farris (1995) characterise listening comprehension as a process through which students actively build a mental representation of an aural text based on
prior knowledge of the topic and the information in it (see also Nation, 2006; Stæhr, 2008; Webb, 2005). Students need good vocabulary knowledge to master such listening skills, as without sufficient vocabulary they would not understand what they are hearing. Hiebert and Kamil (2005) point out that vocabulary is a bridge connecting the word-level process of phonics and the broader cognitive process of comprehension. Cooper, Roth, Speece, and Schatschneider (2002) propose that mastering vocabulary can help achieve communicative competence in English through understanding conversations, talks, discussions, and so on. Moreover, good vocabulary knowledge can help L2 learners guess the meaning of new vocabulary using the collocations of unfamiliar and context clues.

For reading comprehension, even more vocabulary is required, according to the vocabulary-size estimates discussed earlier, which are on the order of around six to seven thousand words for listening, and eight to nine thousand for reading newspapers, novels and academic material (Nation & Gu, 2007, p. 44). A rich vocabulary is important to successful reading comprehension, for the reason that word knowledge is strongly linked to academic accomplishment. For second-language learners, just as in the mother tongue, an extensive vocabulary can help students not only in reading fluently, but also in comprehending and discussing what they have read and learned. (See Hart & Risley, 1995, 2003; Akase, 2005; Al-Nujaidi, 2003; Nation, 2006; Nation, 2008; Webb, 2005)

**Vocabulary-knowledge in productive skills**

Speaking and writing are the two areas of productive language skills. When they speak and write, students have to produce new language; yet, a student’s receptive vocabulary is much larger than his/her productive vocabulary. As Nation and Gu (2007, p. 60) point out, “[i]t is possible to cope effectively with speaking and writing using a much smaller vocabulary than is needed for listening and reading, probably around 3000 words … learners can control what they produce but have little control over what they have to listen to or read.” Obviously, good vocabulary-knowledge is needed to talk, participate in a conversation or discussion. According to Zimmerman (2004, p. 17), “[s]tudents
have a productive knowledge of the word if they are able to produce the appropriate word when speaking or writing (productive skills)” (see also Stæhr, 2008; Webb, 2005)

Likewise, L2 learners need good vocabulary-knowledge to write, as having sufficient vocabulary can help them produce clear communication of their ideas and thoughts (Muncie, 2002). Lee (2003, p. 538) identifies the lack of vocabulary as an important contributor to writing difficulty for foreign-language learners, as “vocabulary is one of the most important features that determine writing quality.” In writing, learners use their already-known vocabulary with new words, which encourages the growth of vocabulary knowledge. An important study by Coomber, Peet, and Smith (1998) concludes that a learner’s writing vocabulary is the highest level of cognitive development, indicating that students would greatly benefit from learning to use new vocabulary with an emphasis on writing. A writing vocabulary requires a student to have a long-term memory for new words. This requires that students become “actively involved in the words they are learning” according to Coomber, Peet, and Smith (1998, p. 49).

Using vocabulary in writing effectively is the highest step in vocabulary mastery. Nation (2008, p. 44) states that learning a word for productive use entails more learning than for receptive use. If learners have a reasonably large receptive vocabulary, but are unable to put enough of this to productive use, then the teacher needs to concentrate on activities that enrich the learning of known words and improve the access to them. To encourage vocabulary knowledge through writing, especially for L2 beginners, Nation and Gu (2007, pp. 60-61) suggest that copying text is an important learning activity, for the reason that learners need to look at a phrase in the text and then try to hold it in their memory and then consolidate it in their memory by writing it in their copybooks, for instance, without looking back to the text (see also Nation, 2008, pp. 85-88).

Generally speaking, the wider vocabulary-knowledge L2 learners have, the more they are able to understand what they hear and read; and the better they are able to say what they want to say or write (see August, Carlo, Dressler, & Snow, 2005; Nizonkiza, 2011; Zareva, Schwanenflugel, & Nikolova, 2005).
2.2.2. How many words do L2 learners need to know?

L2 learners need a great deal of vocabulary for effective communication. Obviously, students need to acquire a large enough vocabulary to reach what is often referred to in the literature as the “lexical threshold” (Laufer, 1997, p. 31), but the actual number of words needed to reach the ‘threshold’ varies somewhat from one study to another. Several estimates have already been mentioned above. Each of the four areas of vocabulary identified by Nation and Gu (2007, pp. 2-5) (i.e. high frequency, low frequency, academic, and technical) has different characteristics, requiring different teaching- and learning approaches. According to Nation and Newton (1997, p. 239) to be able to study at university level where the medium is English, an ESL/EFL learner needs 2000 words of high-frequency, 800 of academic vocabulary, 2000 of technical vocabulary, and 123,200 words of low frequency, which can total up to 128,000 words.

Nation and Gu (2007, pp. 4-5) take the view that low-frequency vocabulary learning should not be specifically taught, but that learners should be given the strategies to deal with these items as they occur. According to Nation (2001, p. 8), “a word family consists of a base word and its inflected forms and derivations”. Vocabulary sizes necessary for good ESL communication are 2000–3000 word families for basic everyday conversation, 3000 word families to begin reading authentic texts, 5000–9000 word families to independently read authentic texts, and 10,000 word families to allow most language use (see Adolphs & Schmitt, 2003; Chung & Nation, 2003; Hazenberg & Hulstijn, 1996; Hirsh & Nation, 1992; Laufer, 1988, 1992; Nation, 2006). Nation (1994) had earlier suggested that 2,000 word families were enough: “[t]hese 2,000 words [actually “word families’] are used so often that they make up about 87% of the running words in formal written texts and more than 95% of the words in informal spoken texts” (p. 3).

A college-educated native English speaker’s receptive vocabulary size has been estimated at about 17,000 word families, about 40 per cent more than first-year college students, who know about 12,000 word families (Zechmeister, Chronis, Cull, D'Anna, & Healy, 1995). A slightly higher figure is given by Nation and Waring (1997), who estimate that the receptive vocabulary size of a college-educated native English speaker is about 20,000 base words; and a more recent study by Cervatiuc (2007) deduces that
an average receptive vocabulary size of a skillful college-educated ESL/EFL learner ranges between 13,500 and 20,000 base words, which is similar to the average of a college-educated English native speaker (see also Chung & Nation, 2003, 2004; Coxhead, 2000; Nation, 2006; Nation & Gu, 2007).

2.2.3. Importance of autonomous vocabulary learning

Autonomous learning is defined as a process of education whereby learners acquire knowledge by their own efforts, which makes them learn independently and develop their abilities in critical thinking (Winch, 2006). Autonomous education can develop students’ self-awareness, freedom of expression, and practicality, according to Candy (1991, p. 13). Recent language-teaching literature encourages educators to involve their students in environments that foster autonomous vocabulary learning instead of having them presented with long lists of words taken from the syllabus (see Errey & Schollaert, 2005; Reinders, 2010; Reinders & Balcikanli, 2011; Winch, 2006). According to Marshall and Rowland (1993), teachers should gradually reduce direction as their students increase in confidence and maturity. Candy’s (1991) summary of the advantages of autonomous learning is as applicable to L2 vocabulary as to any other area of learning: it helps learners “set their own learning aims, make choices over learning modes, plan and organize work, decide when best to work alone, work collaboratively and when to seek advice, learn through experience, identify and solve problems, think creatively, communicate effectively orally and in writing, assess their own progress in respect of their aims.”

As learners are individually different, they use differing strategies when learning new vocabulary. Learners may utilise strategies like random word lists, translation into their L1, vocabulary exercises to acquire new vocabulary, or other vocabulary learning strategies. Accordingly, autonomous vocabulary-learning can effectively help L2 learners make use of many various vocabulary learning strategies, and discover which work best for them. If ESL/EFL learners employ and combine various individual vocabulary learning strategies, they will be more successful in developing the lexicon of the English language (see Cain, Oakhill, & Lemmon, 2004; Dörnyei, 2005; Parks & Raymond, 2004; Riding, 2005).
Teaching students independent vocabulary-learning strategies is important for the development of vocabulary-learning process, as those students need to acquire thousands of words to handle academic demands (Nagy & Anderson, 1984). Direct instruction of vocabulary alone does not guarantee the growth or development of vocabulary knowledge. In their study of students in grades six through nine (11-14 years old), Nagy and Anderson estimated that students in these grades might be exposed to 3,000 to 4,000 unfamiliar words while reading nearly one million words in context throughout an academic school year, which again makes autonomous vocabulary learning one of the best tools learners should use to handle such a huge amount of unfamiliar words. Graves (2006) asserts that these huge numbers of new vocabulary show that students need to learn vocabulary-learning strategies that can help them understand and learn the meanings of thousands of words independently. This can be gained through helping the learners act autonomously to make the most of effective vocabulary-learning strategies (see also Fotos & Browne, 2004).

Pavicic (2003, cited in Metha 2009) developed a way of improving learners’ abilities to find out, store and use vocabulary items, concentrating on the importance of vocabulary-teaching and how teachers can help their students. He focused mainly on self-initiated autonomous learning using independent strategies based on formal practices, functional practices, and memorising, and concluded that teachers should highlight the use of effective vocabulary teaching methods, and create tasks and activities to help their students not only build their vocabulary but also develop helpful strategies to learn the vocabulary autonomously. This insight contributed to the present study’s focus on examining learners’ knowledge about and use of vocabulary learning strategies, and in particular, on their reasons for using them. Helping students to use effective vocabulary-learning strategies can raise their awareness of the importance of learning vocabulary and the language in general and it can also help them learn what strategies they should use and why they should use them (Chamot, Barnhardt, Eldinmary, & Robbins, 1999; Cotterall & Reinders, 2004; Macaro, 2001; Oxford, 1990; Wenden, 1991). For example, explicitly teaching methods, i.e. naming and defining specific strategies and explaining when and how to use them, provides opportunities for practice and evaluation. A key point is made by Oxford and Nyikos (1989, p. 291) who state in their article on the variables affecting the choice of language-learning strategies by university students: “Unlike most other characteristics of the learner, such as
aptitude, attitude, motivation, personality and general cognitive style, learning strategies are readily teachable” (see also Allford & Pachler, 2007; Benson, 2000; Oxford, 1990).

2.2.4. Stages of learning new vocabulary

The following five sections of the literature review will discuss a number of strategies that have been deemed effective in the five stages of vocabulary learning. The concept of identifiable stages in the process of vocabulary learning has been proposed by a number of researchers, including Brown and Payne (1994, cited in Hatch & Brown 1995, p. 373), and Hatch and Brown (1995) (see also Luo, 2009; Mokhtar, Rawian, Yahaya, Abdullah & Mohamed, 2009). In a paper presented at the TESOL Convention, Brown and Payne (1994, cited in Hatch & Brown 1995, p. 373) outlined five essential steps of processes in vocabulary-learning: (a) having sources for encountering new words; (b) getting a clear image, either visual or auditory, or both, of the forms of the new words; (c) learning the meaning of the words; (d) making a strong memory connection between the forms and the meanings of the words; and (e) using the words. This proposal was further refined by Hatch and Brown (1995, p. 383), who agreed that vocabulary-learning goes through five stages and at each stage the learning task focuses on a particular aspect of learning and the learners need to use strategies in order to deal with a particular task. These five essential steps in vocabulary learning were established as:

1. Encountering new words.
2. Getting the word form.
3. Getting the word meaning.
4. Consolidating word form and meaning in memory.
5. Using the word.

The exposition in the following section contains a review of some vocabulary-learning strategies and relevant activities that can be utilised at each stage. These provide the basis for comparison with the findings from the survey.
2.3 Stage 1: Encountering new words

At the first stage of vocabulary-learning development, there are many effective strategies that can be employed, such as underlining or highlighting the most difficult words in a text, emphasising key words and the repeated words in a text (which also entails deciding which level the new word belongs to, as described above), and so on. However, the focus here will be on ‘guessing strategies’. Learners can use these strategies to guess from contexts by activating background knowledge of parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.), parts of the sentence: nouns (subject or object), predicates (past, present, or future) etc. and some other grammatical features (plural, singular, etc.). ESL/EFL learners can also make use of the morphology of the word by syllabifying it, and also make good guesses from pictures, illustrations, and charts that come with the text.

2.3.1 Using guessing strategies

Generally speaking, it is important to make use of everything related to the new word before looking it up in a dictionary, as this strategy can develop learners’ vocabulary, strengthen their critical thinking ability and learning capacity, and save time. Using guessing strategies can also help students learn and read faster (Abdulwahab, 1997). Guessing can be a useful strategy for students to learn for the reason that it is a beneficial reading skill and a helpful tool that encourages them to make and test predictions (Liu & Nation, 1985). A number of theories supporting the use of guessing word meaning from context affirm that teaching words in contexts stimulates guessing and improves vocabulary growth (see Liu & Nation, 1985; Nation & Coady, 1988). Mokhtar, Rawian, Yahaya, Abdullah and Mohamed, (2009) tested seven vocabulary-learning strategies: metacognitive regulation, guessing strategies, dictionary strategies, note-taking strategies, rehearsal strategies, encoding strategies, and activation strategies, to identify the types of learners based on their VLS preferences and to discuss the impact of their preferences on the acquisition of English vocabulary. They found that “among the seven vocabulary learning strategies analyzed, only two strategies, guessing and dictionary strategies, were preferred by the respondents” (p. 141).
Teaching vocabulary using traditional instructional methods is ineffective and time-consuming by comparison (Al-Otaibi, 2004; Al-Wahibee, 2000). For example, using a dictionary to learn every new word at this stage (stage 1) could be impractical. The use of guessing strategies can be justified by reason of the colossal amount of English words. Here, students need more practical, effective strategies rather than looking up new words in their dictionaries or asking their teachers and classmates about the meaning of every new word they face. As Nation (1990, p. 159) states, “[b]ecause of the large number of low frequency words and because of their infrequent occurrence and narrow range, it is best to teach learners strategies for dealing with these words rather than to teach the words themselves” (see also Al-Asmary, 2007; Nation, 2008).

At the first stages of encountering new words, guessing strategies are more suitable for advanced as well as intermediate L2 learners who have already reached the high-frequency vocabulary level. There are various types of guessing strategies that can effectively help L2 learners predict, learn, and memorise numerous new words. In practice, this section concentrates on three main guessing strategies: guessing from: contexts, pictures, and word morphology. Ghazal (2007, p. 85) states that “[l]earners using guessing strategies draw upon their background knowledge and use linguistic clues like grammatical structures of a sentence to guess the meaning of a word.” Oxford (1990) remarks that good FL learners usually tend to make educated guesses when encountering new words, while less skillful learners are likely to turn toward the dictionary or other actions that might hinder their progress toward FL proficiency.

**Guessing from contexts**

Learning how to guess new words from contexts is an important skill, for the reason that it helps learners think logically by looking around the words to find clues (Clarke & Nation, 1980; Liu & Nation, 1985; Nation, 2008). The literature indicates that if students learn how to guess the unfamiliar words in sentences, they will save more class time and will be able to read faster and easier, and they will better understand what they read. This strategy, which is very popular with many learners and teachers, appears to be most advantageous for ESL/EFL learners, especially for those from intermediate to advanced levels. Bahrick (1984) comments that learning the meanings of the new words
within their contexts is considered the deepest level of processing, and it ensures the best memory, for the reason that FL learners can take advantage of semantic features to understand and distinguish word meanings when they use this strategy. Bahrick also remarks that guessing using the context of the new word can encourage more effective language learning. Lai (2005, p. 14) favours guessing from context as the most useful of all vocabulary-learning strategies.

This strategy can be divided into three main types: guessing from contexts by activating background knowledge of parts of speech, parts of the sentence, and other grammatical features.

**Parts of speech**

The first stage of vocabulary development that a learner enters is known as vocabulary pre-reading (Aebersold & Field 1997, pp. 139-140), at which a learner can learn the new word using its function and position. Readers can observe the grammar patterns and structures in which a word can occur and the words that frequently appear before or after it --the collocations. The knowledge of the basic parts of speech in the English language can help learners make good guesses at the meaning of numerous new words (see also Nation, 2001; Nation & Coady, 1988). To demonstrate the idea of guessing using parts of speech, examples like these will be used in the instruments of this study to help the students understand how to make use of this strategy:

- .......... and his sister ate the apples.
- John will .......... an apple.
- John ate a .......... apple.
- John ate an apple .......... by.
**Parts of the sentence**

ESL/EFL learners who have some basic grammar knowledge of the target language can predict the meaning of many new words within their contexts. Grammar can play an important role in reading comprehension, because the structure of a well-written sentence in a text can help the learners know who/what is the doer or agent, what is the action taking place, and who/what is the object of that sentence (see Lai, 2005; Nation, 2001). Most importantly, the structure of a well-written sentence can help learners guess the meanings of many new words by giving the time the action takes place, and by answering questions like why, how, and where that action happens.

**Other grammatical features**

To guess the meaning of many difficult words in a text, ESL/EFL learners can also take advantage of grammatical features such as plural forms, singular forms, punctuation, transition signals, and question words. Aebersold and Field (1997, pp. 139-140) point out that in this stage of vocabulary development, a learner can use the content surrounding the words and analyse the parts of the word to guess its possible meaning (see Lai, 2005; Nation, 2001; Nation & Coady, 1988).

**Guessing from pictures**

In addition to their generally recognised effectiveness in the education process, pictures can be very useful in teaching languages (Kost, Foss, & Lenzini, 1999; Sadoski & Paivio, 2001). According to Wright (1990, p. 2), pictures are motivating and draw learners’ attention. Moreover, Hill (1990, p. 1) advocates that pictures can be valuable aids in language education as they can convey “images of reality into the unnatural world of the language classroom.”

In keeping with the saying that ‘a picture is worth more than a thousand words’, learners can make good use of pictures in learning vocabulary. They can guess the meaning of many new English words by looking at relevant pictures in their
textbooks, for instance. In his study on the effect of pictures on language-learning, Wright (1990) claims that pictures can be very helpful in illustrating the meaning of many new words. The following example from the Saudi English student’s book (third intermediate level, 2006 edition, unit 5, lesson 3, page 44) demonstrates that many words in the text can be guessed from this single picture such as missed, throw, trash-bin, trash, garbage, litter, etc. Such guesses can save class time and help consolidate the meaning of new words in the students’ minds. Later, students can check their understanding of the new words by asking their teacher or looking up the difficult words in their dictionaries (see also Morimoto & Loewen, 2007; Schnitz, Bannert, & Seufert, 2002).

**Figure 2.3.1.2: A Mini Conversation from the Saudi English Curriculum.**  
Source: Student’s Book, Third Intermediate Level, Unit 5, Lesson 3, Page 44.

**Guessing from the morphology of the word**

ESL/EFL learners can make good use of English roots, prefixes, and suffixes to understand the meanings of the thousands of derived and inflected words, which are considered to comprise around 50 per cent of the words in most English texts, that is to say 50 per cent of the English vocabulary is complex words that consist of a root plus either or both a prefix or a suffix. According to Pittman (2003), prefixes, roots, and suffixes are the most utilised word parts that, in their many combinations, make up 50 per cent of the English language. With technological innovations and cultural
assimilations, English vocabulary continues to expand rapidly; however, most of those complex words are made up of simple word parts: (roots, prefixes, and suffixes) whose definitions are familiar to many ESL/EFL students, making them relatively easily acquired. ESL/EFL students who use this strategy can identify difficult and compound words in their reading and writing and they also can break any unfamiliar words down and then understand their meanings by knowing the meanings of their parts. Beers (2003, p. 27) recommends that “[a]nother effective approach to vocabulary development is working with word families—ones that share similar roots, prefixes, or suffixes. Knowledge of root words provides students with powerful tools to predict meaning for many similar words.” In a recent study on the relationship among word knowledge, word prediction, and reading comprehension, Sorbi (2010, p. 5) found that the participants who guessed the meaning of the words using their prefixes, suffixes, and roots had a greater ability to read faster and understand reading comprehension. Those students who showed a greater ability for word prediction had a greater ability to understand reading comprehension texts too (see also Nagy & Anderson, 1984, p. 305).

Knowing prefixes and suffixes in the L2 learning process can help learners grasp the meaning of the new words even before they look them up in the dictionary. Moreover, this strategy can also help learners see how words are often arranged in families that have similar features. Nation (2001) states that “[a] knowledge of affixes and roots has two values for a learner of English: it can be used to help the learning of unfamiliar words by relating these words to known words or to known prefixes and suffixes, and it can be used as a way of checking whether an unfamiliar word has been successfully guessed from context” (p. 264). He adds that several kinds of knowledge are needed to use word parts. Firstly, learners have to be able to recognise that a complex word is made up by several parts, and those parts are also contained in other words (see Nation, 2001, p. 274). In his study on the skill aspect of learning the form of the word, Nation (1990, pp. 168-174) states that learners need three types of skills to exploit affixation: breaking a new word into parts so that the affixes and roots are learned separately with more emphasis on each part; knowing all the possible meanings of the parts; and being able to connect the meaning of each part with the meaning of the word.

Kelly (1991, pp. 80-81) asserts that knowledge of Graeco-Latin roots can be of a great help in vocabulary growth, as it can help L2 learners guess and predict the meanings of
many new words. Kelly also affirms that knowing Graeco-Latin roots can help students remember the new word by knowing how its contemporary English meaning evolved from its metaphorical origins, and why that word is spelt the way it is. Learners need to recognise word parts and have concepts of their meanings and functions. Nation (2001, p. 274) affirms that learners need to recognise how the affix and stem combine and make a new word with related meaning. According to Mori (2003, p. 404), contextual information and word morphology are two major sources that readers use to interpret novel words (see also Bauer & Nation, 1993).

However, guessing the meaning of many new English words entails knowing numerous roots and affixes, which makes this strategy more suitable for intermediate and advanced ESL/EFL learners. Making use of this strategy entails knowing the most useful word parts of the English language; for example, students can start with learning about 20 high-frequency prefixes and suffixes, and they need to be able to recognise them in their various forms when they occur in words and relate the meanings of those parts to the meaning of the word (Nation & Meara, 2002, p. 46).
2.4 Stage 2: Getting the word form

Another of the aspects involved in knowing a word is its ‘form’. Knowing the form of a new word includes knowing its pronunciation, spelling, inflections, derivations, and other structural knowledge. This section, dealing with the second stage of vocabulary-learning development: ‘getting the form of the new word’, explains why it is important to consider creating methods that help students learn the spoken form, written form, and parts of the new word. In this stage, many strategies may be effective, such as using morphology (dividing the new word into roots and affixes), asking teachers, classmates or native speakers about the form of the new word, or making use of spelling dictionaries and general books that teach spelling rules. Here, the focus will be on just two learning strategies: ‘using dictionaries’ to learn (spelling, syllables, stress, pronunciation, parts of speech, the meanings of important prefixes and suffixes, the history of the word, other words derived from the main word, whether or not the word is capitalised or abbreviated, and if there is any special plural form), and ‘doing spoken and written repetition’ to practise the pronunciation and spelling of new words.

2.4.1 Using dictionaries to learn the form of a new word

Word form is usually defined in terms of the phonological or orthographic sound or appearance of a word. There are many ways that a person can learn the form of a new word. One of the best known ways to do so is to use a dictionary. Using a dictionary can help students learn many aspects related to the form of the new word such as its spelling, syllables, stress, pronunciation, part of speech, the meanings of important prefixes and suffixes, the history of the word, other words derived from the main word, whether or not the word is capitalised or abbreviated, and if there is any special plural form (Beech, 2004; Bilash, William, Gregoret, & Loewen, 1999; Gonzalez, 1999; Prichard, 2008; Wingate, 2004).

According to Nation (2005, p. 4), effective ways of teaching the word form include “1) spelling dictation: The teacher says words or phrases and the learners write them, 2) pronunciation: The teacher writes words on the board and the learners pronounce them getting feedback from the teacher, and 3) word parts: The teacher writes words on the
board and the learners cut them into parts and give the meanings of the parts.” Nation goes on (p. 5) to assert that learning the form of the new word includes “following spelling rules, recognizing word parts, and building word family tables.” A dictionary, an authentic source for learning spelling, can also help students learn the part of speech of that word. The part of speech information tells the students how each entry is used in a sentence, indicating whether the word is a noun, verb, adjective, adverb, or other part of speech, which can help them learn more about the written form of the new word (see also Baxter, 1980; Gardner, 2007; Knight, 1994).

In addition to learning the written form of the new word, pronunciations can be improved with the aid of a dictionary, as it also shows how many syllables the new word has and where the stress is placed. Dictionaries can also show whether there are two pronunciations of the new word and help learners decide which one to use. In addition, other features in dictionaries that ESL/EFL learners can use are the syllable breaks and the pronunciation guide that shows how the word should sound when spoken. Many electronic dictionaries allow the users to hear the pronunciation, as well as reading the phonetic transcription.

To learn the form of the new word from a dictionary, it does not make a big difference whether that dictionary is monolingual or bilingual, electronic or paper as long as it shows the spelling, part of speech, and pronunciation of the words. There are many types of dictionaries: books, CD-ROMs, internet-based dictionaries, general dictionaries, and specialised learners’ dictionaries. Each type of dictionary has its own advantages and disadvantages in terms of size, shape, weight, size of information, ease of use, speed of finding the word, sound files for pronunciation, pictures, and so on. Therefore, a good learner’s dictionary should be carefully chosen to guarantee that it shows, as a minimum, the spelling, part of speech, and pronunciation of each entry. According to Nation (2008, p. 89), learners’ dictionaries are better because they include syllabification, meaning, grammar, collocations, register appropriateness, frequency, and advice on common errors. Electronic dictionaries are among the best choices for ESL/EFL students as most of them provide pronunciations of the English word to the user. In addition to the massive information and explanations they contain, they are easy to carry around and compared to book dictionaries, appear to be much faster and more
operative when learning ESL/EFL vocabulary (see also Fauss, 2001; Gray, 1986; Perry, 1997).

Generally, a dictionary is a valuable tool for L2 learners during their learning process because it limits the amount of time they raise their hands to ask about spelling. Moreover, being able to use dictionaries can develop learners’ confidence and foster autonomous vocabulary-learning to continue making progress in their learning beyond the classroom. The above-mentioned goals can be obtained by the application of this strategy through classroom activities planned around a dictionary.

2.4.2 Doing spoken and written repetition

The aim of this vocabulary-learning strategy focuses mainly on learning the form of the new word, which can be gained by doing lots of spoken and written repetition. The words should be isolated from the context at this stage to assure full concentration on the word form rather than its meaning, usage, or any other aspect of vocabulary learning. Doing spoken and written repetition to practise the pronunciation and spelling of the new word is very important to learn its form (Al-Qarni, 2003; Chen & Truscott, 2010; Webb, 2007). First of all, students need to hear the new word from a good source such as a teacher, a talking dictionary, or an English native speaker to guarantee the effectiveness of high-quality vocabulary learning. A strategy like careful listening to the new words that students need to learn can be a good option in teaching the form of the new vocabulary, especially when concentrating on teaching the pronunciation of the new word. Lado (1964, p. 121) recommends: “Let the students hear the word in isolation and in a sentence. If the sounds of the word have been mastered, the students will hear it correctly with two or three repetitions.” He also recommends that slow pronunciation without misrepresentation can help students, especially if the new word is broken into parts and syllabified so that the students learn the form of the word including its pronunciation as well as spelling, and adds that pronouncing the new word enables the students to remember it longer and identify it more willingly whenever they come upon it in a text or hear it in conversation.
The second step is to ask the students to write the new word immediately, as writing the word while the auditory memory is fresh is a very effective method. Moreover, copying the word from the blackboard immediately can help students understand the grammatical aspect of the word. Gu (2003) asserts that forgetting is most likely to happen immediately after the initial encounter of the new word, and that the rate of forgetting goes slower subsequently. For that reason, he recommends that students should start repeating newly learned words immediately after the first encounter. In their study on the number of words that could be recalled immediately after initial learning, Anderson and Jordan (1928) found a learning rate of 66 per cent after one week, 48-39 per cent after three weeks, and only 37 per cent after eight weeks from the first-time learning situation (see also Al-Qarni, 2003; Seibert, 1930; Webb, 2007).

Every time learners read a word out loud, they strengthen the form of that word in their minds, which means that the more times they repeat words, the faster they increase their vocabulary knowledge. Such practice will ensure that the word stays in their memories for a long time. In a study by Seibert (1927), three conditions were analysed: studying aloud, studying aloud with written recall, and studying silently. The results showed that studying aloud always produced better results than the other two conditions. He then studied the time for relearning after two, 10, and 42 days, and found again that learning aloud was much more effective and helpful than studying aloud with written recall and studying silently. However, Gu (2003) recommends applying a number of repetition strategies at the first stages of vocabulary learning. Carter (1987, p. 153) suggests that “quantities of initial vocabulary can be learned both efficiently and quickly and by methods such as rote learning which are not always considered to be respectable. It may be dangerous to underestimate such a capacity.”

To make good use of this strategy, students can keep a list of words they want to learn and do spoken and written repetition very often to practise the pronunciation and spelling of the new words until they feel they have mastered the form of those words, especially considering the fact that the class time is usually limited (Al-Qarni, 2003). The number of words on such a list is flexible. Gu (2003) reports that investigators have tried various list sizes and concluded generally that length depends on the level of difficulty of the words on the list. Hamza (2009), for example, suggests that a list of 20 to 30 new words per class would be reasonable for intermediate ESL/EFL. Word lists
can also be used for rehearsal from time to time as rehearsing can ensure the form of the new words will be remembered for a long time. Rehearsal can dramatically improve long-term memory. Usually, it takes 10 or more repetitions to learn the form of the new word (see Nation & Wang, 1999; Saragi, Nation, & Meister, 1978; Webb, 2007); however, no specific number of repetitions assures mastering the new word (Huckin & Coady, 1999). In his article discussing the effects of repetition on word knowledge in a carefully controlled study of 121 Japanese students learning English, Webb (2007) presented the result of his study, which used 10 tests to measure knowledge of orthography, association, grammatical functions, syntax, and meaning and form. The study examined word-knowledge acquisition at different levels with a number of repetitions, and the results revealed that each time repetitions increased, larger improvements in knowledge were found. Generally, results on doing repetition show that if the aim is remembering words, a great amount of words can be acquired and remembered within a comparatively short period of time, according to Thorndike (1908) and Webb (1962).
2.5 Stage 3: Getting the word meaning

Knowing the equivalent word-meaning in L1 is not enough to assure vocabulary-learning. Unlike many bilingual dictionaries, monolingual dictionaries give more than the meaning of the word. Using monolingual dictionaries, ESL/EFL learners can learn the different meanings of the new word, its synonyms, antonyms, collocations, and its special uses. They also can make use of the icons and pictures in those dictionaries. Moreover, using a picture dictionary can help ESL/EFL learners to learn the meaning of the new word very easily and quickly as it is one of the best and handiest visual aids. This section of the literature review deals with the third stage of vocabulary learning development: ‘getting the meaning of the new word’. In this stage, helpful vocabulary-learning strategies include checking for L1 cognates in bilingual dictionaries, imaging the meaning of the new word, connecting the new word to related words to learn its meaning, grouping words together, using physical action, paraphrasing word meaning, and asking someone (a teacher, classmate, or L2 native speaker) about the meaning of the new word. The focus in this section will be on just two learning strategies: ‘using monolingual dictionaries’ and ‘using picture dictionaries’.

2.5.1 Using monolingual dictionaries

There is a growing interest in dictionary research recently, especially for the purpose of vocabulary learning (East, 2007; Laufer & Hill, 2000; Nation, 2008; Nation & Gu, 2007). Eeds and Cockrum (1985), for example, assert the importance of using the dictionary as a method of instruction, in both first- and second-language learning. A dictionary is amongst the first things FL learners are keen to obtain (Baxter, 1980; Luppescu & Day, 1993). In their study on 293 Japanese EFL university students, Luppescu and Day (1993) found that the group that used the dictionary in vocabulary learning through reading gained better results. Similarly, Knight (1994) studied the effects of using dictionary on comprehension and vocabulary acquisition while reading and he found that the students who used a dictionary and guessed through context not only learned more vocabulary immediately after reading, but also remembered more after a couple of weeks. As mentioned earlier, Mokhtar, Rawian, Yahaya, Abdullah and Mohamed, (2009, p. 141) concluded that “among the seven vocabulary learning
strategies analyzed, only two strategies, guessing and dictionary strategies, were preferred by the respondents.” Marckwardt (1973) asserts that a dictionary is the best source of information about the language because it includes information about grammar, usage, status, synonym discrimination, application of derivative affixes, distinctions between spoken and written English, and much more. Therefore, it is important for EFL learners to consult a dictionary when learning independently, as it helps them learn the meaning of the difficult words, and to determine what word should be used in a certain context. Constant use of a dictionary provides additional contact with the new words in many various contexts, with different constructions and collocations. Laufer (1990, p. 154) comments that learners should be encouraged to consult a dictionary, especially if guessing has failed and the meaning of the new word is still not clear in its context (see also Beech, 2004; Bilash, William, Gregoret, & Loewen, 1999; Gonzalez, 1999; Knight, 1994; Prichard, 2008; Wingate, 2004).

When compared to bilingual dictionaries, monolingual dictionaries can be much more helpful in vocabulary learning, especially when learning the word meaning is the aim. Bilingual dictionaries are important, but they are also limited tools and monolingual dictionaries deserve a place in the ESL/EFL curriculum, according to McCarthy (1990). Moreover, Bejoint (1981) believes that the learners’ monolingual dictionaries produced by major publishers like Longman, Collins, or Oxford are much better than bilingual dictionaries because monolingual dictionaries have better quality of information that can help learners get a variety of different meanings of the new word. For intermediate and advanced ESL/EFL learners, the use of monolingual dictionaries to learn the different meanings of English words is highly recommended; however, researchers suggest that L2 learners should gradually move to monolingual dictionaries as they progress in their study of the target language (Baxter, 1980; Miller, 2006; Underhill, 1985). For example, Baxter (1980, cited in Luppescu & Day 1993, p. 275) maintains that a monolingual dictionary not only demonstrates definitions as alternative to the use of lexical items, but also provides the means to employ definitions. Baxter also asserts that the use of monolingual dictionaries should be given more encouragement as they endorse fluency by offering definitions in context; bilingual dictionaries, on the other hand, tend to channel learners towards single-word translation equivalents only.
There are many advantages to be gained from using a monolingual dictionary. For example, a monolingual dictionary can help ESL/EFL learners stop translating, as its use can encourage ESL/EFL learners to think in English, speed up their comprehension and production of the language, and increase the learners’ use of English. If ESL/EFL learners get into the habit of thinking in English, they will become more efficient users of English and stop translating into their L1. Ahmed (1989) examined a number of vocabulary-learning strategies used by a group of Sudanese EFL students and he classified two kinds of unsuccessful learner and one kind of successful learner. The lower level group was found hardly to use any learning strategies at all; for example, that group never used any sort of dictionary. The other group of unsuccessful learners was a group of university students who used bilingual dictionaries and who were relying on connected translation-type activities when learning the meanings of new words. On the other hand, the more successful learners at the higher level were those students who had gone on from using bilingual dictionaries to using monolingual ones. He found that the students in the successful group made good use of the information in their monolingual dictionaries in addition to looking up definitions of new words. When using elementary learners’ dictionaries to look for the meaning of a word, ESL/EFL learners can get more practice of English by learning the word when they read its various definitions and usages in meaningful examples. Moreover, monolingual dictionaries have many different levels; consequently, ESL/EFL learners can choose the suitable levels for themselves. Bilingual dictionaries, on the other hand, are not often graded this way.

In addition to the above advantages, a monolingual dictionary is a very good place to learn grammatical terminology, as the same terms are repeated many times. A monolingual dictionary can help ESL/EFL learners learn vocabulary better and learn basic ‘grammar words’ simultaneously. When the definitions and the examples of each word are read often enough, ESL/EFL learners are exposed to more authentic grammar and more useful related words. Such regular exposure has many benefits, such as reinforcing the learners’ vocabulary and grammar by using existing knowledge to understand new words, and developing the dictionary-like ability to use explanatory phrases to describe something for which the learners do not know the name. Underhill (1985) points out that monolingual dictionaries give appropriate treatment to many high-frequency words, which can help L2 learners learn vocabulary more efficiently and
practically. Miller (2006, p. 435) affirms that the wealth of grammatical information contained within monolingual dictionaries can help ESL/EFL learners improve their English language skills and, *ipso facto*, their academic writing.

Over and above introducing grammatical terms, a monolingual dictionary provides information such as synonyms and antonyms of a word, the most commonly used words in the target language, more definitions for each word, common confusions and mistakes, and the phonemic script for pronunciation. A monolingual dictionary explains a word in (mostly) simple language that is easy to understand, usually with examples. Very few bilingual dictionaries provide examples in which the word in question is used, and rarely give any information about its usage; thus, they give little guidance as to where and how learners can use the words, while monolingual dictionaries often provide examples and tell learners exactly how and where the words should be used. In addition, they provide some useful collocations, which are the natural combination of words giving clearer clues to context. As well as understanding the different meanings of the new word, ESL/EFL learners can learn a great number of synonyms of that word, antonyms, collocations, special uses, style, register, and many examples that illustrate usage. ESL/EFL learners can also make use of the icons and pictures in those dictionaries as every time they look up a word, they get further reading practice in English, see words in context, and see authentic examples of how words are actually used (see Cowie, 1999; Miller, 2006; Nesi & Haill, 2002).

Even though students find a monolingual dictionary harder to use as it is written completely in the L2, good training of those students on how to make use of monolingual dictionaries is the solution advocated by Schofield (1982). It is very important to create effective methods to foster learners’ independence so that they, especially advanced learners, can deal with new lexis and expand their vocabulary outside the classroom. If learners are given adequate training, an English monolingual dictionary can be an invaluable tool in helping them become more independent. Schofield also asserts that a learner needs a good number of dictionary skills to use a dictionary successfully. Using monolingual dictionaries could be difficult for L2 learners in the beginning since more effort and commitment are required when using a monolingual dictionary. It is important to train the students to learn dictionary skills to make the best use of their dictionaries in language-learning (Underhill, 1980; Whitcut,
Moreover, Nation (2001, pp. 285-287) and Schofield (1982, pp. 186-193) suggest that making use of a dictionary is not a straightforward technical and passive activity; it is rather a complex process of hypothesis-testing involving the learner’s active participation. Schofield has enumerated useful dictionary strategies a learner could employ when using a dictionary, recommending that training ESL/EFL learners and encouraging them to adopt the habit of using a monolingual dictionary should be an essential component of current classroom practice. For example, ESL/EFL teachers can take a set of dictionaries into the classroom and get the students to use them in class so that they become more familiar with using a dictionary. ESL/EFL teachers can also ask their students to have their own monolingual dictionaries so that they can use them both in class and at home. Such activities can foster independence in language-learning (see also Bejoint, 1981; Cowie, 1999).

2.5.2 Taking advantage of picture dictionaries

Exposure is important in learning a language and the more exposed the learners are to the language, the faster they learn. In the teaching of children or ESL/EFL beginners, using real objects or visual aids such as pictures is considered one of the best methods to increase exposure. According to Sekular and Blake (1985), the sense of vision in humans represents our richest source of information of the world. Studies in both psychology and educational theory (Kost, Foss, & Lenzini, 1999; Lee & Huang, 2008; Sadoski & Paivio, 2001; Schnotz, Bannert, & Seufert, 2002) have shown that visual learning is considered a highly effective method for teaching students how to learn and how to think, regardless of students’ level or age. Students learn faster and remember information much better when it is learnt both verbally and visually. Hill (1990), for example, emphasises that foreign-language learners can be highly motivated to participate and communicate their thoughts when visuals are used during the teaching process, as the use of visuals can make the learning experience of the target language more significant and meaningful. Similarly, Wright (1990, p. 2) asserts that pictures can provide “interest and motivation; a sense of the context of the language and a specific reference point or stimulus.”
Pictorial materials are helpful not only in the teaching/learning process, but also in recalling what was previously learned and remembering information for a longer time. In their study on the encoding and arousal factors in free recall of verbal and pictorial material with 40 undergraduate students, Kaplan, Kaplan, and Sampson (1968) found that students had greater recall for pictorial material than for words. They confirm that the dominance of recall for pictorial material over that for words is associated with the fact that “pictures are coded both verbally and visually while words are coded only verbally” (p. 74).

Visual learning is advantageous in the development of vocabulary knowledge because of the interface between images and the words represented by those images. Students tend to find visual learning motivating and stimulating. Systematically, visual learning has great effectiveness in quick and enduring memorisation of the new words. In a study on 42 American primary-school children aged nine and a half attempting to discover if pictures were more effective than words in simplifying the learning of a foreign language, Webber (1978) found that children had better recall for foreign-language responses when pictures were used as stimulus rather than translation equivalents of the lexical items (see also Yachi, 2007).

The general points above obviously suggest the importance of using picture dictionaries in teaching/learning vocabulary. A picture dictionary is more suitable for elementary learners and L2 beginners, especially those who cannot yet deal with standard dictionaries. Picture dictionaries can be used to improve the learning process because they give a visual representation of word meanings. As with other dictionaries, the learners can look up unknown words, check their spellings, and find out their meanings. Whether electronic or print, a picture dictionary can be a helpful tool in L2 learning, especially when it becomes part of curriculum work. A picture dictionary allows visual learners to find words, spell-check written words, and check on unknown words. It is a great resource and it can be used in class or as a self-study tool that can guide L2 learners through the overall L2-learning experience (see Chujo, Oghigian, Utiyama, & Nishigaki, 2011).

Many picture dictionaries provide information different from and additional to that found in a standard dictionary. L2 learners can connect words with the illustrations that represent them, because picture dictionaries define words clearly and concisely; no
matter how complex the word is, the definition is always understandable. Many picture
dictionaries also provide examples to demonstrate how words are used in idiomatic
expressions and as phrasal verbs as well. Some picture dictionaries come with audio
CDs for providing pronunciation of the words and they also have indexes with an easy-
to-follow pronunciation guide to increase accuracy and fluency in using new
vocabulary.

L2 learners benefit from using a picture dictionary because they learn the most
important words first; they learn about how, when, where, and why to use them, and
they learn precisely what words mean. Many English picture dictionaries, for instance,
have more than 5000 words that are illustrated in full color and defined in context and
they also include a variety of exercises, which makes them good sources for English
vocabulary teaching/learning use. Some picture dictionaries come with accompanying
workbooks for lower-beginner, beginner, and intermediate levels. Moreover, many
picture dictionaries have practice activities at the bottom of every page to enable
students immediately to use the target vocabulary. In those dictionaries, learners can
find words that are grouped into sections and categories such as family, home, time,
seasons, transport, travel, and more. What is even more interesting is that the layout of
the pages in many picture dictionaries is highly suitable for learners who have
difficulties in reading (L2 beginners). In the *New Oxford Picture Dictionary*, for
instance, there is adequate white space on each page surrounding the pictures to make
them more noticeable and easier to view. Moreover, the text in those dictionaries is
usually clear and large enough for learners with limited visual skills.

A number of studies, including Chun (1996), Ellis (1993), and Oxford (1990), have
indicated the significance of creating classroom activities using picture dictionaries for
the reason that it can improve English vocabulary-knowledge efficiently. For example,
Gerngross and Puchta (1992) presented more than 60 effective activities using images
and pictures teachers can use in their ESL/EFL class. The aim of such activities is to
encourage the students’ active interaction and increase their motivation and interest.
Similarly, Maley, Duff, and Grellet (1980) discuss many varieties of pictorial material
that teachers can make a good use of when teaching ESL/EFL. When pictures and
images are used, students learn to understand the connection between the visual input
and the written word. Consequently, they learn the English words faster and more
2.6 Stage 4: Consolidating word form and meaning in memory

Now that L2 learners know the form and meaning of the new word, the next step is to consolidate that knowledge in their memories. This section of the literature review focuses on the fourth stage of vocabulary-learning development: ‘consolidating word form and meaning in memory’. A number of helpful vocabulary-learning strategies can be used at this stage including rehearsal, putting L2 labels on objects, using L2 media, testing oneself and doing frequent revision, studying the new word with its collocations, using roots and affixes of the new words with other words that have the same roots or affixes, reading a topic about the words wanted to be memorised, using vocabulary cards, using posters, making use of note-taking and so on. The focus in this section will be on two learning strategies: ‘using memory strategies’ including association of the new word with its coordinates and connecting it to personal experiences; and ‘using verbal/written repetition in varied examples’ for the purpose of consolidating word form and meaning in memory.

2.6.1 Using memory strategies

Retaining words that have been learned always troubles L2 beginners, due to the fact that forgetting a word is easier than remembering it. The initial knowledge of any information including vocabulary is partial and delicate due to the storage system of the brain. Thus, it is important to understand how our memories work when learning and memorising words, which can also help create more efficient vocabulary-learning strategies and effective vocabulary teaching methods (see Chiu, 2009; Lee, 2004; Ullman, 2005, 2006).

Memory strategies or (mnemonics) are used to improve memorising by connecting familiar words and images with the new knowledge (Mastropieri, Scruggs, & Fulk, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Woolfolk, 1993). Since ancient times, philosophers, psychologists, teachers, and learners have been fascinated by mnemonics as aids to memory as Wittrock (1988) points out. Atkinson (1972, 1975) and Atkinson and Raugh (1975)
assert that mnemonic devices in foreign-language vocabulary-learning are supported by a robust line of research. They formed the view that vocabulary-learning is basically a memory issue, and mnemonic devices work miraculously in enhancing memory. Similarly, Mastropieri, and Scruggs (1991) assert that memory strategies include connecting the word to be recalled with previously learned knowledge such as forms of imagery or grouping. In fact, there are countless memory strategies that can be used to help learners consolidate the form and meaning of new words. Oxford (1990) has presented a great variety of vocabulary learning strategies to help learners memorise new words faster and more effectively.

Memory-strategy instruction has a great effect on vocabulary-learning (Cohen & Aphek, 1980; McDaniel & Pressley, 1989) as using various memory strategies to learn new vocabulary can outstandingly facilitate word memorisation. Cohen and Aphek (1980), for example, trained students of Hebrew to recall new words using the memory strategy of paired associations. They began by giving their students brief instructions on the use of the ‘associations’ strategy to encourage vocabulary memorisation. After that, they selected new words from a text and made their own associations for them. Results verified that students who used the strategy of paired associations to remember the new word had better performance than those who used a different association or none at all. Similarly, Thompson (1987, p. 211 cited in Atay & Ozbulgan, 2007, p. 41) asserts that these strategies “help individuals learn faster and recall better because they aid the integration of new material into existing cognitive units and because they provide retrieval cues.” McDaniel and Pressley (1989) studied the effect of many memory strategies and techniques, for example keyword strategy and context method. Comparing the keyword strategy (learning words through the combination of an auditory clue and imagery) with other strategies like the context method, McDaniel and Pressley found that the keyword strategy was considerably more facilitative to learning than the context method. Carlson, Kincaid, Lance, and Hodgson (1976) compared a group of students who were trained on the method of loci to a control group and they found students memorised new words fundamentally better. There are wide-ranging reviews in relation to the efficiency of using mnemonic techniques in L2-vocabulary learning (see Carney & Levin, 2000; Gray, 1997; Hwang & Levin, 2002; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1991; Mastropieri, Sweda, & Scruggs, 2000; Meara, 1980; Miyake & Shah, 1999; Nation, 1982; Uberti, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 2003).
**Grouping words (association with coordinates)**

Associating words with coordinates can be of great help in remembering information previously learned. Due to its importance, this topic has been investigated not only in the field of linguistics but also in psychology and psycholinguistics. In their well-known study, Richards, Platt, and Weber (1985) describe the strategy of ‘word association’ as a way in which words that have some sort of relation come to be associated with each other. They advocate that such a strategy can strongly influence the learning and remembering of new words. Making use of word-association strategies can consolidate the form and meaning of the new word in memory (Greidanus & Nienhuis, 2001; Meara, 1980; Nation, 1982; Oxford, 1990). For example, Miller (1996) affirms that word-association strategy demonstrates the familiarity effect; i.e., responses are faster to familiar words and if a word has been presented before, it takes a shorter time to respond to that word. In a study, Read (1993, p. 358) reports that:

> One of the basic findings is that native speakers have remarkably stable patterns of word association, which can be taken to reflect the sophisticated lexical and semantic networks that they have developed through their acquisition of the language. On the other hand, second language learners produce associations that are much more diverse and unstable; often their responses are based on purely phonological, rather than semantic, links with the stimulus words.

Kess (1992) believes that the system of word association is like a spider web where words in the mental network are connected to other words. In their empirical studies, Greidanus, Becks, and Wakely (2005), Greidanus and Nienhuis (2001), and Qian (2002) observed startling results when this strategy was applied by L2 learners.

In addition to the phonological and orthographical relations, there are two main types of word association: syntagmatic, known as ‘chain relations’, and paradigmatic or ‘choice relations’. Syntagmatic associations are those that would be related by a phrase or syntactic structure, while paradigmatic associations include the other words that could replace the target word (Li & Schmitt, 2009; Siyanova & Schmitt, 2008; Wolter, 2001). There is a tendency for native speakers to respond to word association stimuli paradigmatically and for non-native speakers to respond syntagmatically, according to Coulthard, Knowles, Moon, and Deignan (2000, p. 27).
Given the number of studies on word association in vocabulary learning, the level of agreement among them is all the more surprising. All of the studies mentioned here report positive and highly encouraging results, confirming the scholarly consensus that this is a particularly effective contributor to vocabulary acquisition.

**Syntagmatic relations:**

These are the responses related sequentially to the stimulus word that come either before or after it in context. It is generally known that collocation is the tendency for some words regularly to co-occur; but, these words are not arbitrary and often said as fixed multi-word expressions. Collocation is an umbrella term that refers to phrases or groups of words that function as single lexical items (Coulthard, Knowles, Moon, & Deignan, 2000, p. 62). For native speakers, the mental lexicon decodes multi-word items as ‘chunks’ (McCarthy, 1990, p. 44), while L2 learners tend to break those multi-word items down and analyse each word out on its own. For other types of English multi-word items and fixed expressions, see Alexander (1984). McCarthy (1990, p. 14) states that “[k]nowledge of collocation is knowledge of what words are most likely to occur together.” Collocations can be grammatical and lexical (content words). Both types of collocations make patterned language that allows for the processing of language at a greater level of comprehension, as their meanings can be predictable and the units of language, rather than pieces of language, are accessible (Coulthard, Knowles, Moon, & Deignan, 2000, p. 81). According to McCarthy (1990, p. 42), the process of forming new vocabulary within the mental lexicon entails efforts of mental contextualisation for the reason that the mental lexicon is in continuous motion and it adds new input to associations and previous knowledge. Collocation is considered the highest level of word association in general responses for L2 learners, as well as for children, for the reason that they have similar connecting links. This would seem to account for the high frequency of differing word-class responses. Hence, vocabulary growth within the mental lexicon is greatly affected by “the increasing perception of syntactic, semantic and conceptual relations between words” (Carter, 1987, p. 190).

Children learn the largest percentage of their first-language vocabulary from reading and listening in an incidental way (Nagy, Anderson, & Herman, 1987; Nagy, Herman,
Anderson, 1985). Nagy, Anderson, and Herman (1987, p. 262) assessed an average lexical development of 1000 words each year for the children in their study. Therefore, having learners study and remember long lists of words in isolation from their contexts (un-associated) without the benefit of learning them within some meaningful context is largely a waste of class time. Effective vocabulary instruction emphasises the importance of providing learners with several, meaningful exposures to word meanings (see Allen, 1999; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001). There are many theorists who assert the importance of teaching vocabulary in collocations, multiword units, and lexicalised chunks (see Bahns & Eldaw, 1993; Lewis, 1993; Mochizuki, 2002; Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992; Nesselhauf, 2003; Nizonkiza, 2011; Sansome, 2000; Willis, 1990).

**Paradigmatic relations:**

These types of relations only exist between words of the same grammatical class. Co-ordination refers to words ‘on the same level of detail’. Co-ordination and antonymy can be further categorised into complementarity, gradable antonyms, converses, and mutual incompatibles. Research on word association revealed that co-ordination is considered the most common type of response for L1 speakers (Aitchison, 1994, p. 86) and L2 learners have a tendency to recognise or produce more paradigmatic association responses only when their language ability is improved (Greidanus, Becks, & Wakely, 2005; Greidanus & Nienhuis, 2001); however, Namei (2004), Nissen and Henriksen (2006), and Wolter (2001) found that a paradigmatic response is not always a preferable choice for L2.

One of the good techniques that can be used here is sorting and ranking activities. To learn a list of kinds of food, for example, learners can separate the new kinds of food by meat/vegetables/fruit, or they can rank the food items from those most favourable for them to the least favourable, and so on. Learners also can use small drawings in context such as a picture of a room labelled with the names of the furniture pieces. Such techniques can help retention of the new words. To manipulate and remember new words, learners can join those new words with other words with which they are often found. Students can also connect what they know to the new word and use one
word in different forms, which are all related to the new word to make good use of word-association strategy. Moreover, this strategy helps students use collocations with the new word in different situations as well. For example, Schmitt (1997, p. 212) asserts that the new words L2 learners learn can be easily linked to those already known in this strategy as it involves semantic relationships, like coordination, synonymy and antonymy, in conjunction with hyponymy and metonymy illustrated with semantic maps (see also Meara, 2004; Mochizuki, 2002; Oxford, 1990).

Connecting the new word to personal experiences

One of the helpful vocabulary-learning strategies is to connect the new word to personal experiences. This means connecting the word to what the learners already know (Rumelhart & Norman, 1981). Rumelhart (1980) asserts the importance of tapping into the personal schema or the prior knowledge the learners have stored in their long-term memories. When students link new information to existing schema, the learning sticks because it has personal meaning. To guarantee effective vocabulary development, new words need to be linked to the existing knowledge of the learners or ‘learners’ schema’ including images, diagrams, sounds, personal feelings and responses, and so on. Using such activities can consolidate the new vocabulary in memory because they are connected to the learners’ personal experiences (see also Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Monzo & Calvo, 2002; Nassaji, 2002; Pulido, 2003). Practitioners have adopted the recommendations from research studies, and have used them to develop teaching strategies based on their findings. Many of these teaching strategies are widely used, and have been reported to be effective.

Winters (2001, pp. 659-662) presents various ideas to help build on students’ schema including the use of ‘Vocabulary Anchors’, a graphic strategy that can help learners associate new concepts to those they already know. Such a strategy is good not only for verbal/linguistic learning, but also for visual/spatial and logical learning. Another idea is ‘Picture Walk Words’ which connects students’ previous knowledge to a new story, and, in the process, helps them learn new words. It is especially good for visual, interpersonal, and intrapersonal learning. When writing sentences using new vocabulary words, for example, students can be encouraged to connect or relate their prior
knowledge or experience. (Manzo, 1983) builds on students’ personal views and associations with a new word meaning. Such a strategy uses these ‘knowns’ to anchor fleeting word meanings, keeping them from drifting off and being forgotten. The method imparts a self-instructional strategy as well, since students learn how to use their own prior knowledge and experiences to connect the new word with personal experiences, knowledge, and attitudes, much like good word learners do naturally as they encounter new words. The connective value of human experience in word-learning is supported by both anecdotal and experimental scholarship (Nilsen & Nilsen, 2003).

According to Frey and Fisher (2009), educators should use effective methods that help their students connect their prior knowledge to the vocabulary they need to learn, for the reason that such methods, like those mentioned above, can build the students’ general knowledge of a topic and also make vocabulary personal. “At some point, students must move from merely learning words to learning about their own learning of words” according to Frey and Fisher (2009, p. 9), and the use of the methods that encourage connecting the new word to personal experiences can help students remember the form of the new word for a longer time. They suggest that there are two ways teachers can help their students make use of personal connections: by modelling their own thinking or connection to the word for their students to see, or having their students complete activities or demonstrations that allow them to use the words through conversation. The more students build on their new vocabulary knowledge and make it relevant to their everyday lives, the more likely it is that they will store those words in their long-term memory and productively use them in the future.

2.6.2 Using verbal/written repetition in varied examples

In the beginning, L2 learners encounter many problems such as learning and memorising a massive amount of foreign words. It is not surprising that the first and easiest strategy learners naturally use is ‘repeating new words’ until they can be identified. For that reason, we find many studies have focused on several aspects of vocabulary rehearsal (see Al-Qarni, 2003; Rodriguez & Sadoski, 2000). Very little gets into our memory and stays there forever without practice; therefore, verbal and written repetition of the new word in a variety of examples can consolidate its form and
meaning in memory. If learners do not use the new word, or do not repeat it in some way, they will lose it. Nation (1990, 2001) and Thornbury (2004) affirm that systematic repetition of new words is more likely to trigger learners’ storage in long-term memory (see also Chen & Truscott, 2010; Webb, 2007).

The literature shows that L2 learners need to encounter the new word in a variety of contexts in order to retain it. Nation (1990), for example, suggests that learners need 5-16 exposures to learn a word from context. Similarly, Horst, Cobb, and Meara (1998) conducted a study that featured low intermediate EFL learners reading a 109-page book over a ten-day period, with a 20 per cent pick-up rate. They found that words that appeared in text nine times or more were more likely to be learned than those that were repeated less frequently; however, Meara (1997a) argues that since L2 learners cannot normally be exposed to large quantities of text, they only learn one concept for every 100 exposures.

The importance of the repetition strategy has been proven by many studies. In their well-known study, Crothers and Suppes (1967) found out that nearly all of their subjects remembered all 108 Russian-English word pairs after seven repetitions, and about 80 per cent of 216 word pairs were learned by most participants after only six repetitions. Generally, the results of those studies demonstrate that L2 learners can recall the form and meaning of many words effectively and efficiently when repetition is applied (see also Thorndike, 1908; Webb, 1962); however, it is highly necessary to employ a variety of repetition strategies, especially at an early stage of vocabulary-learning. Generally, the number of exposures needed for the mastery of a new word depends on a number of other factors such as the salience and remarkableness of the word in context (Brown, 1993, cited in Huckin, Haynes, & Coady), the richness of contextual clues, the learner’s level of interest, and the size and quality of their existing repertoire of vocabulary (Laufer & Hadar, 1997; Nation & Hwang, 1995). Moreover, variety is essential for vocabulary-teaching/learning for the reason that L2 learners can remember words best when they have used those words in a variety of ways.

Moreover, the indications are that repeating words aloud can assist retention much better than silent repetition. For example, Seibert (1927) studied three conditions of repetitions: studying aloud, studying aloud with written recall, and studying silently.
The results showed that studying aloud always produced better results than the other two types of repetition. After that, he studied the time for relearning after two, 10, and 42 days, and found again that learning aloud was much more effective than the other two conditions. Other researchers including Gary and Gary (1982), Gershman (1970), Hill (1994) and Kelly (1992) found similar results. According to Kelly, (1992, p. 142) “the ear does assist the eye in the long-term retention of lexis.”

Repetition is essential to remember words long term. Remembering vocabulary goes from passive knowledge to active knowledge; consequently, students need to repeat the new word very often before it becomes active vocabulary. Students need to be patient with themselves as it usually takes some time for this process to work. Gu and Johnson (1996) created a taxonomy on the basis of the responses to their questionnaire identifying six types of strategy (1996, pp. 650-651) including rehearsal strategies, using word lists, oral repetition, and visual repetition.

To take advantage of this strategy, repetition must be accompanied by studying the new words within many various examples. Nation and Gu (2007, p.118) affirm that “[m]eeting words in context provides opportunities for developing knowledge of the form, meaning and use of words. Meeting words in a variety of contexts enriches and strengthens learning.” Bright and McGregor (1970, pp. 30-32); and Rodriguez and Sadowki (2000, p. 385) emphasise the importance of teaching/learning vocabulary within a variety of contexts to consolidate its meaning and form in memory. McCarthy (1984) asserts that EFL/ESL educators should assist their students in using new vocabulary automatically in a wide range of language contexts. Aebersold and Field, (1997) state that learners “need to see a word many times in different contexts before it is learned” (see also Al-Qarni, 2003; Chen & Truscott, 2010; Li, 2005; Tinkham, 1989; Webb, 2007).
2.7 Stage 5: Using the word

Once learners have memorised the new word, they need to use it to guarantee full mastery of it. ESL/EFL learners need to become able naturally to use the new English word in context in everyday language. This section of the literature review concentrates on the fifth stage of vocabulary learning development: ‘using the word’. A number of helpful vocabulary-learning strategies can be used in this stage including using new words in different contexts, using polysemy and register, using pair work activities in class, using and practicing meaning in a group outside the classroom, connecting new words to already known words, using semantic maps, using the textbooks’ vocabulary section, and others. The focus in this section will be merely on one learning strategy: ‘using the new word with all its possible collocations’.

2.7.1 Using the new word with all its possible collocations

Remembering newly learnt words could be the learners’ biggest challenge when studying vocabulary. The central question here is why some words remain in the memory for a very long time, while others are forgotten. Simply learning a word without using it is useless, as that word is likely to be forgotten. By using the new word, learners can truly commit it to their long-term memories. There are a great number of ways for improving memory when learning the vocabulary of a foreign language. ESL/EFL learners need to be creative and try to use the newly learned words in as many ways as possible by writing them down, for example, saying them aloud, creating sentences with them mentally or in writing, using them in a conversation, discussing them with friends, and so on. One of the most effective vocabulary-learning strategies is learning and using the new word with all its possible collocations according to the literature review in the previous sections of this chapter (see 2.1.2 & 2.6.1). Employing words in context where they are used with their collocations greatly improves the chance of learners remembering them. “The ability to deploy a wide range of lexical chunks both accurately and appropriately is probably what most distinguishes advanced learners from intermediate ones” (Thornbury, 2004, p. 116).
Collocations are sometimes referred to as ‘lexicalised chunks’, ‘lexical phrases’, or ‘multiword units’. Due to its importance in ESL/EFL learning, collocations should be taught from the very beginning, regardless of the learners’ level or age for the reason that learning collocations will make their language sound much more natural (Arnaud & Savignon, 1997; Bahns & Eldaw, 1993; Lewis, 1993; Sansome, 2000). It is important to get ESL/EFL students used to repeating collocations instead of isolated, out-of-context words. This can be done by simply reading a text where the words are used in memorable contexts with various collocations (see also Nesselhauf, 2003; Nizonkiza, 2011; Siyanova & Schmitt, 2008).

Sag, Baldwin, Bond, Copestake, and Flickinger (2002) define collocations as ‘institutionalised phrases’ that denote a subclass of multi-word expressions that are predominant in language and constitute a key problem, not only for natural language processing, but also for L2 learners as well as professional translators. Collocation is generally described as the tendency of words to co-exist and it can be defined as the restrictions on how words can be used together; for example, which prepositions and verbs are used together, or which nouns appear with particular verbs (Richards, Platt, & Platt, 1992). As Sinclair (1991) points out, it is obvious that words do not appear at random in texts, and people could not produce natural sentences simply by operating on the principle of grammar. Rather, words seem to be selected in pairs or groups and language users are considered to have available to them “a large number of semi-preconstructed phrases that constitute single choices” (Sinclair, 1991, p.110). Gledhill (2000) suggests that collocation involves at least three different perspectives: (1) co-occurrence, a statistical view, which sees collocation as the recurrent appearance in a text of a node and its collocates (Firth, 1957; Sinclair, 1996; Smadja & McKeown, 1990); (2) construction, which sees collocation either as a correlation between a lexeme and a lexical-grammatical pattern (Hunston & Francis, 2000) or as a relation between a base and its collocative partners (Hausmann, 1989); and (3) expression, a pragmatic view of collocation as a conventional unit of expression, regardless of form (Moon, 1997; Frath & Gledhill, 2005).

Firth (1957, p. 179) quips that “[y]ou shall know a word by the company it keeps.” Crystal (1995) defines collocation as the relation between individual lexical items and other words that habitually co-occur with them; collocation is observed between lexical
items used in texts. Words used in collocations are often commonly predictable. Aitchison (1994) notes that when we observe the human word-web, that is, the way in which people connect words in their minds, words appear to be organised in semantic fields, and there, collocational linking seems to be particularly strong.

Collocation is an essential part of acquiring any language for the reason that the meaning of a word has much to do with the words with which it usually associates. “Not only do these associations assist the learner in committing these words to memory, they also aid in defining the semantic area of a word”, and also “permit people to know what kind of words they can expect to find together” (Nattinger, 1988, pp. 69-70); however, collocation demands that one word is used rather than another in particular contexts, which makes it very difficult for non-native speakers to predict. Collocational knowledge is part of native speakers’ competence, and can be problematic for learners in cases where collocability is language-specific and is not solely determined by universal semantic restrictions (McCarthy, 1990, p. 12). The argument that collocation is an important level of language selection is persuasive when we observe foreign-learner texts containing deviant collocations. There is surely need for an understanding of and focus on collocation by teachers and students (Carter & McCarthy, 1988). The suitable word (known as the collocate) that can be used in conjunction with the base word is unpredictable. That makes it difficult or even impossible to use any near-synonyms. Zughoul (1991) explains that what collocates in the L1 does not necessarily collocate in the L2, as different languages have different collocation modes.

Native speakers learn collocations throughout the normal acquisition process of their first language, while L2 learners need to train themselves to produce them in the correct context since collocations do not follow a set of patterns or rules. The more the L2 learners are competent at producing the naturally right collocations, the less hesitant they are when producing long sentences and thus, the more capable in their L2 they become (see Chi, Wong, & Wong, 1994; Sadeghi, 2010).

L2 learners are likely to have many collocational errors due to their lack of collocational-pattern knowledge of lexical items. Due to this, the literature suggests the importance of using collocations with the freshly learned words as it helps learners make their language more natural and more easily understood (Taiwo, 2004). The learners will also have alternative and richer ways of expressing themselves. Moreover,
it is easier for our brains to remember and use language in blocks or chunks rather than as single words. Collocations, then, should be treated as ‘single blocks’ of language. In his famous study on the vocabulary strategies L2 learners utilise, Ahmed (1989) found that good learners were more aware of what they could learn about new words, paid more attention to collocation, and were more conscious of contextual learning, while underachieving learners took each word as a separate item, unrelated to previously learned words. Similarly, Ediger (1999) suggests that students should contextualise the vocabulary terms they have learned and use them outside the classroom.

One way of maintaining collocation-learning and enhancing collocation use is through encouraging ESL/EFL learners to be involved in extensive reading of English literature. Reading activities expose learners to a massive amount of vocabulary, and can help them discover and acquire new collocations. Taiwo (2001, p. 323) evaluates the risk that ESL learners cannot combine words correctly without having previously read them as very high. Therefore, practice using new collocations in context as soon as possible after learning them is necessary as it can help ESL learners build their abilities to use English naturally in the future (see also Chi, Wong, & Wong, 1994; Sadeghi, 2010). According to Meara (1997b) and Carter (1987), teachers should encourage learners’ creativity through the use of aids to vocabulary learning such as lexical matching and networks.

To be able to use a word entails mastering its collocational range and restrictions on that range, according to Lewis (1993). Knowledge of words can be expanded and enriched with the collocational components. As Hill (1999) has explained, many students with good vocabularies face problems with fluency for the reason that their collocational competence is quite limited. It is better, therefore, to present new words and their collocations using visual aids such as charts and posters. Words that collocate can be made into diagrams or mind maps, as storing them in the mind in this way aids recall and memorisation. In the literature, this strategy is known as a ‘word tree’ (see figure 2.7.1).
Helping ESL/EFL learners use this strategy can aid in raising their consciousness on the importance of collocation. Words can be also presented with examples of L1 collocations that they usually use and then be compared with examples of English collocations. Rudzka, Channell, Ostyn, and Putseys (1981) advocate a grid method to present collocations. Carter (1987) states that instead of presenting words separately or in paired associates, the enlargement takes place by means of grids in which words from the same semantic group are subjected to a modified componential analysis and/or to an analysis that reveals the common collocates of the target items. Teachers sensitive to the finer points of teaching words in contexts will not introduce the grids as inflexible, but rather as hypotheses that learners can test against further data. Furthermore, it is likely that “the associations generated by and across words in this kind of semantic network aid both the retention and recall of words by learners” (Carter, 1987, p. 173). As demonstrated in this and previous sections of the literature review, ESL/EFL learners can easily use the newly learned word naturally with many collocations if they have learnt the word within different contexts and with a good number of collocations (see also Hoey, 2000; Lewis, 2000; Nesselhauf, 2005).
2.8 Framing the research

This section presents justifications for the research plan, research questions, and the instruments used in the research on the basis of what is known from the literature. It also summarises what gaps this study can fill and what it can add to the EFL field.

The literature review showed that many Saudi EFL students have a number of difficulties in attaining EFL vocabulary, which could be a major contributor to their poor English skills. Their weak performance could be a result of the insufficiency of teacher support, ineffective vocabulary-learning use, inefficient vocabulary-teaching strategies, lack of class time, etc. The findings of the literature review suggest that there are crucial defects in the EFL learning and teaching process in Saudi Arabia.

Building on the researcher’s earlier pilot study investigating the factors underlying Saudi learners’ difficulties in attaining EFL vocabulary, this study continues to explore what vocabulary-learning strategies are most effective at each of the vocabulary-learning stages. The literature review suggests that autonomous vocabulary-learning could be a good solution to many problems Saudi EFL learners and teachers encounter in relation to fostering critical thinking, facilitating the teachers’ tasks, and saving class time. The research evidence suggests that Saudi EFL students need to be involved in an environment that encourages autonomous vocabulary-learning instead of being presented with long lists of words taken from the syllabus. Studies from other countries suggest that EFL teachers should urge their students to utilise useful vocabulary-learning strategies to learn vocabulary outside the classroom for the reason that class time is limited.

This in turn raises an important question: to what extent are Saudi EFL learners aware of the significance of autonomous vocabulary-learning? This is another issue this study aims to explore. The theoretical base of this study was grounded on the work of Brown and Payne (1994) and Hatch and Brown (1995) and on their accounts of the vocabulary-learning process and the needs of learners at each stage. This study, though, focuses on identifying what strategies should be recommended for each stage. It also explores the difficulties that Saudi EFL students encounter at each stage of the five vocabulary-learning stages identified in Hatch and Brown’s study. Because of the complexity of the vocabulary learning process, a number of different models for vocabulary learning
stages have been proposed by different researchers (e.g. Beers & Henderson, 1977; Templeton, 1983). Of these proposals, Brown and Payne’s (1994) 5-stage model was considered to offer the clearest account of the various aspects of vocabulary learning, as well as being the most extensively discussed in the literature. For the purposes of this study, it was necessary to have a model that clearly identifies the aspects of vocabulary learning that are addressed by the various learning strategies under investigation.

There are two potential theoretical limitations associated with this choice. The first is that it must be clearly understood that Brown and Payne’s model is not intended to be seen as a sequential one, where learners complete one stage before going on to the next. Similarly, the vocabulary learning strategies considered here are not considered or intended to be sequential; although this study’s findings do indicate that some are more useful to learners at earlier or later levels of study. The second potential limitation is that the 5 stages, as the outcome of an exploratory factor analysis, are a bottom-up model that was not developed for top-down purposes such as the present investigation of learning strategies. Nonetheless, of the available models, this one was considered to have the best fit with the learning strategies themselves, because each strategy could be seen to contribute to one of the areas of learning identified in the 5-stages of the model.

To explore the difficulties Saudi EFL learners encounter when attaining English vocabulary and to answer the research questions, the research plan has been arranged according to the five stages discussed in the previous five sections of the literature review, which also discussed a number of the effective strategies that can be employed in the five stages of vocabulary-learning. The instruments used in this research were designed to explore what strategies were used at each of the five stages described above. In summary, the five vocabulary-learning stages and the main strategies used in them are:

1. Encountering new words: The vocabulary-learning strategy the literature suggests is helpful for EFL students here is ‘guessing strategies’. This strategy includes guessing from contexts by activating background knowledge of parts of speech, parts of the sentence, predicates, and other grammatical features. The literature also suggests that EFL learners can make use of the morphology of the word and make good guesses form pictures, illustrations, and charts that come with the text.
2. Getting the word form: The literature suggests that EFL learner should use their dictionaries to learn the form of the new word. It also suggests that doing spoken and written repetition can help them get the pronunciation and spelling of new words.

3. Getting the word meaning: The two learning strategies recommended in the literature for this stage are ‘using monolingual dictionaries’ and ‘using picture dictionaries’.

4. Consolidating word form and meaning in memory: To help EFL students overcome forgetting the form and meaning of the new word, the literature suggests making use of ‘using memory strategies’ and ‘using verbal/written repetition in many various examples’ for the purpose of consolidating word form and meaning in memory.

5. Using the word: In the final of the vocabulary-learning stages, the literature suggests that EFL learners should use the new word with all its possible collocations as often as possible.

This theoretical orientation guided the formulation of the research questions investigated in the chapters that follow. First, the literature review on vocabulary-acquisition processes and strategies led to the question of whether Saudi EFL learners are using any of the strategies that have been identified by researchers in other linguistic contexts as effective at the various stages of vocabulary-learning. The international literature on the nature of vocabulary-knowledge also raises the broader question of how the concept of vocabulary knowledge is understood by educators and learners in the Saudi context. These became research questions 1 and 2.

After establishing which strategies Saudi EFL learners are or are not using in their vocabulary learning, it is desirable to look more deeply into which strategies they prefer and use most (and least), and then at what the reasons for these preferences might be. This raises the related questions of which strategies are more (and less) interesting for these particular learners, which strategies do (and do not) engage them cognitively, and how the learners themselves understand their reasons for using some strategies and not using others. These became research questions 3 and 4.
Finally, the strong indications in the literature about the importance of autonomous vocabulary-learning raised the question of whether Saudi EFL learners are aware of this key aspect of learning, and if so, to what extent. This became the fifth research question. These five questions, then, are aimed squarely at filling the gaps in our knowledge about the issues facing this particular group of learners and at contributing to a broader understanding of how various concepts of vocabulary-knowledge and learning among EFL learners worldwide may be influencing their choices of, and engagement with, different learning strategies.

As the literature review shows, the issue of vocabulary-learning strategies within the five stages of vocabulary-learning has not been sufficiently investigated, especially not within the Saudi context. The majority of the studies that have examined vocabulary focused mainly on vocabulary-teaching methods rather than learning strategies. Concentrating on a crucial element of L2 acquisition, this study has clear implications for all ESL/EFL learners including Saudi EFL learners. It is hoped that the results can help to increase the use of effective EFL vocabulary-learning strategies and generate data that enables EFL educators to help their students become more autonomous learners when learning new vocabulary. The following chapter traces how the five research questions shaped the research design of the present study.
Chapter three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design, selection of participants, procedure for data collection, and analysis. The methodology used for the data-collection phase of this study was focused in particular on exploring the vocabulary-learning strategies that are most preferred and most utilised by Saudi EFL learners, and the learners’ reasons for using or not using those strategies.

This focus flowed from the overall aim of investigating what could be the key factors underlying the well-documented difficulties of Saudi students in attaining English vocabulary, by examining a sample of EFL learners from universities, secondary-, intermediate-, and primary schools in Saudi Arabia (See Sections 1.3 & 1.4 above). The method is mixed quantitative-qualitative, investigating vocabulary-learning strategies via a questionnaire survey of 200 learners and semi-structured interviews with 20 learners.

While earlier studies on Saudi students’ weakness in attaining English vocabulary attribute such weakness to a variety of factors, many of them mention, or at least imply, that there is a lack of appropriate learning strategies (See Section 1.3 above). For that reason, this study focuses specifically on the strategies that learners themselves do (and do not) use, with a view to determining which strategies might be the most effective and the most motivating for students.

Thus, the purpose of the research is to identify students’ preferred vocabulary-learning strategies and explain how they affect the EFL learning/teaching process in Saudi Arabia. Data was collected, examined, and analysed to provide a new understanding of the factors causing the abovementioned difficulties. Based on the theoretical and empirical research literature on the nature of vocabulary-knowledge and on learner strategies, a questionnaire was designed for the survey and semi-structured interview questions were written to suit the purpose of the present study.
3.2 Research design

As already mentioned, the study is mixed quantitative-qualitative by design. The aim of this study was to gain a clear understanding of the participants’ ideas and practices concerning their vocabulary-learning strategies. An emergent design best fits the exploratory nature and purpose of this study. The main aim of having mixed quantitative-qualitative designs in this study is to address comprehensively the research questions and examine all the possible factors responsible for the Saudi learners’ difficulties in attaining EFL vocabulary, based on the theoretical and empirical research literature on the nature of vocabulary knowledge, and on learner strategies. Studies of learning strategies have often focused on the frequency of use and the repertoire of strategies. Learners’ own reasoning behind their choice and use of strategies is equally important. This has normally been elicited through qualitative means. Despite the usefulness of utilizing a questionnaire format for this purpose, the limitations of this means including the shortage of the questionnaire questions about each vocabulary learning strategy could be further developed in future research.

3.2.1 Pilot study:

This PhD research builds on the researcher’s 2008 Master’s research, which was a pilot investigation of factors underlying Saudi learners’ difficulties in attaining EFL vocabulary. The investigation found a somewhat paradoxical situation where the Saudi EFL students surveyed expressed awareness of the importance of good vocabulary-learning strategies, but indicated at the same time that they did not make very effective use of such strategies. Saudi EFL teachers and students were surveyed. On the one hand, the teachers affirmed that they made use of various vocabulary-teaching methods and that they willingly encouraged their students to use many effective vocabulary-learning strategies when they learned EFL vocabulary. On the other hand, they blamed their students for lack of enthusiasm in learning EFL in general. The results suggested that there was a great discrepancy between the amount of effort teachers invested in training their students in using vocabulary-learning strategies and the rate at which students took up those strategies.
Therefore, a need was felt for further study of those factors, and for systematically examining the actual reasons that cause such general weakness in acquiring EFL in Saudi schools. Further research has been necessary to discover what strategies are effective for learning vocabulary, and to what extent the more effective strategies are actually used, or not used, by EFL learners.

3.2.2 The questionnaire

The first phase of the data-collection process involved the development of a written questionnaire, designed to be given to all of the participants in their normal daily environment (during classes). The results were used to establish the vocabulary-learning strategies utilised by Saudi EFL learners, as a step toward explaining how they affect the EFL learning/teaching process in Saudi Arabia. The questionnaire had five sections, corresponding to the major stages in vocabulary learning: encountering the word, getting the word form, getting the word meaning, consolidating word form and meaning in memory, and using the word. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

The questionnaire took about 30-40 minutes to complete in one session during class time. The participants were asked freely and honestly to give their responses to the questions in the questionnaire. The questionnaire items were provided in English and Arabic. The questionnaire had a structured multiple-choice format and the options the participant could choose from were: “Agree” or “Disagree”, and then tick one possible reason for his/her choice. The number of Saudi EFL students who participated in the study was 200. This is the average number of students in a Saudi public school; but participants were distributed evenly across four educational levels: primary, intermediate, secondary, and university. Divided into the above-mentioned five sections, the questionnaire helped the researcher to obtain the best samples of the Saudi EFL learners’ performance potential. The questionnaire data was then examined and analysed using statistical software programs including Microsoft Excel and SPSS.

Based on theoretical considerations of some previous efforts to study vocabulary-learning strategies, including Ahmed (1989), Al-Asmary (2007), Gu (2003), Kudo
(1999), Nation (2008), Oxford (1990) and Schmitt (1997), the final version of the questionnaire was formed and structured by the researcher, taking particular note of the design and responses of students to the questions of Schmitt’s vocabulary-learning strategies questionnaire and their answers in interviews. The project design also built on that of the researcher’s 2008 Master’s thesis, which used a questionnaire of a similar type to investigate factors underlying Saudi learners’ difficulties in attaining EFL vocabulary. The final form of the present questionnaire was used in a pilot group (20 students; five students from each educational level) and was critically reviewed by a number of experts in the field of applied linguistics including the research supervisors and the Human Research Ethics Committee (reference no: H-2008-0097) to identify any potential problems. The questionnaire was built for the purpose of collecting data on the actual steps the participants would take when learning a new English word and it contained 18 items. Here is an example of a question and its multiple choice answers:

Circle **only one choice** of the following (agree or disagree) then circle **the reason(s) for your choice**:

**Example:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q. 1</th>
<th>When I encounter a new English word for the first time, I use guessing to learn the meaning of that word.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree because:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. My teacher encourages me to use this strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. This strategy is helpful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. This strategy is fast and easy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. This strategy is fun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree because:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. My teacher did not teach me this strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. This strategy is not helpful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. I do not have enough time to use it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. It is lazy of me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.2.2: A Sample Question from the Questionnaire

The questionnaire included two questions (in the student's information sheet) about the overall achievement and the achievement in the English language particularly, that must be answered before answering the rest of the questionnaire questions. This was done in
order to make a comparison between the lower achieving (LA) students, defined as students whose marks in English ranged between 50-70, and higher achieving (HA) students, defined as those whose marks in English ranged between 71-100. This categorization was based on the general perception in Saudi EFL teaching that marks in the 71-100 range indicate satisfactory to high achievement, while 50-70 indicates a somewhat weaker performance.

3.2.3 The semi-structured interviews

In addition to the questionnaire, deeper insight into the use and understanding of vocabulary-learning strategies of the surveyed EFL learners was needed. According to Merriam (1998, p. 8), qualitative methods relate to “process, meaning, and understanding” and they have been extensively used by researchers to examine processes of learning and teaching, within a naturalistic context. Merriam (1998) adds that qualitative research methodologies emphasise processes rather than ends; therefore, they are considered exploratory, descriptive, and inductive.

For this study, a qualitative methodology was appropriate to complement the quantitative data obtained through the questionnaire. Stake (1995, p. 37) proposes that:

Quantitative researchers have pressed for explanation and control; qualitative researchers have pressed for understanding the complex interrelationships among all that exists… Understanding (a description of things happening) also has a psychological ring which explanation has not.

In seeking answers to the research questions, qualitative methods were deemed more appropriate. Part of the data was gathered through semi-structured interviews that took place on location, in the participants’ normal school or college environment. Each student interviewed had different perceptions about EFL vocabulary-acquisition; however, many commonalities and harmonies among the perceptions were noticed. Their experiences and insights contributed to the aim of more thoroughly understanding key factors underlying the well-established difficulties in attaining English vocabulary among Saudi EFL learners.
The researcher presented a list of questions as a guide for the interview, but the interview questions were deliberately open-ended and interviewees were encouraged to reflect on their learning experiences. This methodology supported the data collection that sought answers to all five of the research questions:

1. How do Saudi learners learn EFL vocabulary? Are they using the most effective methods in their vocabulary learning?

2. How do Saudi L2 learners (and their teachers) understand the concept of ‘vocabulary knowledge’?

3. What are the vocabulary-learning strategies that are most preferred and most utilised by Saudi EFL learners?

4. What are the learners’ reasons for using/not using those strategies? Which learning strategies might be the most effective and the most motivating for students in ways that contribute to their overall SLA?

5. To what extent are Saudi EFL learners aware of the significance of autonomous vocabulary learning?

Qualitative research helped the researcher gather a great amount of useful data to answer the above questions. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), qualitative research produces a huge quantity of data that needs to be organised repeatedly. The consequences and conclusions of this research represent the hypotheses formed as a result of the researcher’s interaction with the data collected from the interviews, the written questionnaires and the researcher’s field notes.

The interview questions were constructed using ‘category questions’ as they “allow the investigator to account for all of the formal characteristics of the topic under discussion” according to McCracken (1988, p. 36). Moreover, the questions were developed in accordance with Stake’s viewpoint of constructing interview questions. Stake states: “I choose to use issues as conceptual structure--and issue questions as primary research questions—in order to force attention to complexity and contextuality. I also use them
because identification of issues draws attention to problems and concerns” (1995, p. 16).

The interviews were based on the five categories of vocabulary learning. The interview questions can be seen in Appendix B. A field test of the instrument and interview process was conducted with a number of students (4 students; 1 student from each educational level) under conditions anticipated in the project information statement and the consent form before the data was gathered.

Subsequently, all interview transcripts were translated and reviewed by three selected Saudi EFL teachers before proceeding with the final data collection. The information sources of this study consisted of transcripts of audio-tape interviews, notes from the interviews, and the literature review. Comparing the information sources increased the level of confidence in the results of this investigation.

The interviews provided a good means for the participants to communicate and state their views, opinions, thoughts, and beliefs about the issue of English-vocabulary acquisition. The flexibility of the interviews was a very helpful factor in this study as it allowed the researcher to modify the wording and structure of the topics. This helped the researcher to explore various issues concerning the individual participants and their specific contexts. During the interview process, the interview guides served as a basic checklist that kept the researcher as well as the participants focused on the topics to be covered. The researcher met with the participants after they had completed the questionnaire in a separate room at the school/college. Since the purpose of the meeting was focused on the vocabulary strategies those students utilised, the discussions began with exploring what vocabulary-learning strategies they commonly used, what learning strategies were more/less motivating to them, and what their reasons for using/not using those strategies were. The interview was the basis for beginning analysis of the data. The following section of this chapter explains in further depth the methods and procedures used in the management and analysis of the gathered data.

To encourage the students to participate in the research project, the researcher explained to the participants the aim of the investigation. Furthermore, the researcher told the participants that the results of the study would be announced in a formal session and be published as a thesis. The interviews were conducted in Arabic (the participants’ L1) in
order to remove any concerns related to the participants’ proficiency of the target language that might have affected the quantity or quality of the data. Furthermore, to help students describe what vocabulary-learning strategies they really used, they were asked to bring their Students’ English books to the interview sessions to illustrate what they reported by providing specific examples from their Students’ English books.

Coding the data derived from the interviews went into two main stages to constitute inter-rater reliability. The first stage dealt with the division of data and the creation of coding categories. According to Gass and Mackey (2000, p. 102), segmentation of data and the creation of coding categories are the decisions that rely on individual judgment. Therefore, the data had to be rated by more than one person to increase the validity of the emergent findings. The second stage involved a third rater and dealt with using the coding scheme and verifying the coding categories. Generally, the methods used in this project helped the researcher in:

1. specifying the best vocabulary-learning strategies that Saudi EFL students use/do not use at each level of education (elementary, intermediate, secondary, college and university);

2. identifying the actual reasons for using/not using those strategies at every level of the five essential vocabulary-learning stages mentioned above;

3. gaining a deeper understanding of the vocabulary-learning processes that the questions of this study address;

4. measuring how eager those students were to learn effective strategies for vocabulary learning; and

5. gaining some insight into the degree to which students felt that their EFL teachers encouraged them to use the above-mentioned strategies.
3.3 Recruiting procedure

The subjects for this study consisted of Saudi male EFL students from four different educational levels (elementary, intermediate, secondary, and college/university). The research will be conducted only in male schools, colleges, and universities, as it is illegal for a non-relative male to interview female students in the Saudi society. Further research may include female Saudi students, which may enrich the data. The students were selected from both urban and rural areas in Saudi Arabia. In order to obtain a diverse selection of respondents, students from different schools, regions, ages, and educational levels were surveyed and interviewed. Data gathered from the participants did not involve any information relating to the person or the identity of the subjects, but in any case, the researcher made sure that all data was safely stored on his computer, and that no one else, with the exception of the researcher’s supervisor, was able to access the data. To maintain the anonymity of the participants, participants’ privacy was protected during the recruitment process, and there was no unauthorised access to consent forms, questionnaires or any personal information. Paper materials, e.g. completed questionnaires, were safely stored in a locked cabinet and will be destroyed after the required period for retention of research data.

As a first step, the researcher sent an invitation to participate to a representative selection of Saudi public schools and universities, asking the principals/deans to allow him to distribute the participant information to classes, and to the parents of students under 18 years of age. The researcher approached 14 school principals and two college deans. Of these, 11 educational institutions (nine public schools and two colleges from two different universities) agreed to participate in the study. The researcher visited classes in the presence of the class teacher, the school principal, and/or the college dean, when possible. The aims of the project were thoroughly explained through the provision of information sheet (see Appendix F). It was emphasised that participation was strictly voluntary and that their decision to participate would entail neither benefits nor disadvantages for any of them. The participants were given enough time to make their decision. Those who chose to participate signalled their consent by signing and returning the designated consent form. All principals/deans to whom an invitation had been extended were provided with a comprehensive information statement about all
aspects of the proposed research, including objectives, the expected outcomes of the research, use of class time, possible disruptions to normal classes, etc.

Participants were made aware that participation in this research was entirely voluntary. Only those who gave their informed consent were considered for the inclusion in the research. Whether or not they chose to participate, their decision did not disadvantage them in any way. Those who decided to participate had the freedom to withdraw from the project at any point in time without giving any reasons. There were two consent forms available:

1. Adult students’ consent form (see Appendix J).

2. Parents’ consent form (for participants under 18) (see Appendix K).

The researcher made sure that all the participants understood that their answers to the interview questions would be recorded and they would be allowed to listen to their recorded responses and erase any part of them or make any changes to them. The participants were also fully aware that their personal information would remain confidential to the researcher. They had the opportunity to have questions answered to their satisfaction. The information statement, consent form and questionnaire/interview were provided in both English and Arabic (see Appendices A-D, F-G & J-K). The students had the choice to answer the questions of the questionnaire/interview in either of the above-mentioned languages.

During the data-collection process, no adverse events occurred. The participants were properly advised that at the conclusion of the research project, information about its results would be presented in the form of information posters, which will be made available at all the venues where participants were recruited. These posters will also contain contact information about the researcher in case any of the participants would like to receive additional information about the research and its findings. No personal or identifying information about the participants will be included on the posters.
The researcher followed up with thank-you letters after the interviews. Another thank-you letter was sent to each school principal/dean whose school/college/university had participated in the project.

3.4 The sample

The target sample consisted of 200 students from four different levels: elementary schools, intermediate schools, secondary schools, and colleges and universities, with 50 students from each level, or a total of around 200, as it is the average number of students in a Saudi school. In order to obtain a diverse selection of respondents, students from different schools, regions, ages, and educational levels were interviewed. To achieve the desired target, 300 questionnaires were distributed. Total questionnaires returned were 247 of 300, or a response rate of 82 per cent. All of the questionnaires were usable even though responses to a few questions were omitted or incomplete. The additional 47 questionnaires were randomly selected to be discarded, so that 200 responses were analysed. Follow-up semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 per cent of the total sample (20 participants), five from each educational level.

3.5 Data-collection procedure

Data were collected beginning in October 2009 until June 2010. The questionnaire was administered first. The questionnaire took about 30 minutes to complete, while the semi-structured interview took 60-70 minutes. Only 10 per cent of the total number of the participants (n = 20) was needed to respond to the questions of a short semi-structured interview held immediately after the questionnaire session. The interviews were held in a separate room in the same school, during the class time or recess time. Each participant was asked to complete an information sheet and provide general demographic information in relation to his/her educational level, degree, classes, etc. The participants were not, however, asked about any personal information such as their names or any other indications of their identities. Their participation was effectively anonymous. Each interview participant had the opportunity to listen to the recording
and edit or erase any part of it. Only when the participant was satisfied with the recording was the recording transcribed.

Each participant had a chance to read the information statement and make sure he/she understood its contents before they consented to participate. After that, they were asked to complete a consent form and the anonymous questionnaire, and to volunteer for interview, if interested. The data-collection procedure involved no risks for the participants. They got neither direct nor indirect benefits from their participation in the research. This project did not involve participants in any kind of potential risks, nor any physical nor psycho-social harm. Participants were not exposed to any kind of risk and harm as collection of data took place in the participants’ normal daily environment at school. As part of his application for safety clearance, the researcher had completed a risk assessment for this project where all foreseeable hazards were identified and appropriate controls introduced to eliminate or reduce the risk to an acceptable level. The researcher is familiar with the area in question and had taken steps to ensure he would be familiar with the location prior to commencing the fieldwork.

3.6 Data-transfer procedure (from questionnaires to data sheets)

Questionnaires were numbered in the order in which they were received from each educational level. The completely answered questionnaires from the elementary level were numbered 1-50; the completely answered questionnaires from the intermediate level were numbered 51-100; the completely answered questionnaires from the secondary level were numbered 101-150; and the completely answered questionnaires from the college/university level were numbered 151-200.

Questionnaire data were transferred to ‘data sheets’ manually by the researcher. Data were checked twice by the researcher and then twice by an individual with a research background to guarantee precision and accuracy. Subsequently, the data were entered into Microsoft Excel databases by the researcher. To guarantee precision and accuracy, each database sheet was printed and checked against the data sheets. Data provided on
the students’ information (educational level, English marks of the last year, general final grade of the last year) was transferred manually onto subject-specific ‘data sheets’ and checked twice for accuracy.

3.7 Data coding and analysis

The interview data in this study were assembled using a categorical aggregation analytic strategy. Categorical aggregation is known as the process of piecing together bits of information gathered about an issue and organising it into an orderly research interpretation. A coding procedure was used to represent a number of frequent issues. All the interviews were audio-taped directly to the researcher’s laptop. The software program used for recording the interviews was Digital Sound Recorder 3.2.5. Nud.ist, a qualitative-research computer program was also used in the initial data coding process. The data were also analysed using the more recent NVivo qualitative software (Version 7). NVivo was used for organising all the non-numerical data. To facilitate progress and coherence based on each issue, the data were organised and sorted using electronic files of the above-mentioned software for each interview. A distinct electronic file was used for recording and storing data.

Keeping with the philosophy of McCracken (1988) mentioned above, the data were analysed using analytic categories. The results were reported using assertions and small generalisations. The survey was conducted to find answers to questions about an issue; therefore, generalisability to the larger population has limited validity. In this type of data analysis, where broad views and generalisations are used, they are most often called small generalisations or assertions. Grand generalisations are used sometimes but are of limited applicability (Stake, 1995). Nevertheless, some general knowledge can be gained from each participant that may increase our knowledge about the issues being studied.

To deal with such a large mass of raw data, the researcher used Patton’s (1990) recommendation of chronologically organising, coding, and numbering all data collected into one complete file. To store this data, the researcher used his laptop computer where he saved each recorded interview in a separate folder labeled with a
distinctive number, the date of each meeting, and the student’s educational level. Each folder contained five sound files for each section of the interview as well as the researcher’s notes about that meeting. The researcher also kept copies of the interview questions in both English and Arabic, and some Students’ English books used at each educational level.

Constant comparative methodology was used to analyse the data. All through this project, the researcher saved the raw data in chronological order as files in each participant’s folder. When the researcher returned to the data, he began his analysis by first reading the final interview several times and writing down his thoughts and impressions. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 344), it is important to identify “units of information that will, sooner or later, serve as the basis for defining categories.” They also assert that this procedure, known as the process of coding, consists of identifying words, phrases, sentences, or multiple sentences from the raw data. The researcher then started the process of coding by first classifying issues related to the vocabulary-learning strategies that were most preferred and most utilised by the participants.

Data obtained through the administration of the questionnaire and the interview was subjected to a number of basic statistical analyses. The data was examined and analysed using statistical analysis software programs that are used for data mining and quality control. Details of the analysis and results are presented in the following two chapters: Chapter 4 focuses principally on the questionnaire data concerning the use by learners of vocabulary-learning strategies; and Chapter 5 focuses mainly on the data from interviews, giving deeper insight into the learners’ understandings of vocabulary knowledge and vocabulary-learning processes.
Chapter four: Analysis of questionnaire data

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the data from the questionnaires are presented. The data were grouped under the five areas of vocabulary learning, and were analysed for each school, college, and university, then aggregated by educational level since there was no intention to compare individual institutions. Methods used to analyse the data were descriptive statistics (frequency and percentages) and comparisons of frequencies. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel were used to analyse the data. Chi-square tests were applied to examine the observed differences in the frequency distribution of responses on all the questions of the questionnaire in order to guarantee their statistical significance, especially the differences between high and low achievers in terms of the use of strategies at each stage of vocabulary learning.

This chapter aims to answer whether Saudi EFL learners use the vocabulary-learning strategies that researchers deem effective at different stages of vocabulary learning. At the same time, it is acknowledged that the notion of ‘effective vocabulary learning strategies’ is not universal, i.e. some are more suitable than others for particular outcomes (e.g. breadth vs. depth) and for individual learners. The focus here is on examining the gap between knowledge about and use of strategies that are considered effective. Following on from this, further research measuring the effectiveness of the abovementioned strategies for Saudi EFL learners is highly desirable, but is beyond the scope of this study.

Responses to the instrument questions were considered with relation to the questions central to this research, particularly the following:

- Research Question 1: How do Saudi learners learn EFL vocabulary? Are they using the most effective methods in their vocabulary learning?

- Research Question 3: What are the vocabulary-learning strategies that are most preferred and most utilised by Saudi EFL learners?
• Research Question 4: What are the learners’ reasons for using/not using those strategies? Which learning strategies might be the most effective and the most motivating for students in ways that contribute to their overall SLA?

For purposes of comparison, the results were divided into those from lower level (LL) learners, studying at elementary- and intermediate levels, and upper level (UL) learners, studying at colleges and universities. Since school students start studying English at year six (at the age of 12), the LL group is aged 12-15 years, and the UL group is aged 16-20. This division was deemed the most appropriate because of the change in teaching styles and expectations of learners (both teachers’ expectations, and learners’ expectations of themselves) between school and tertiary education.

Another comparison of interest was between the lower achieving (LA) students, defined as students whose marks in English ranged between 50-70, and higher achieving (HA) students, defined as those whose marks in English ranged between 71-100, at the end of the year before the survey was conducted. This division was based on the general perception in Saudi EFL teaching that marks in the 71-100 range indicate satisfactory to high achievement, while 50-70 indicates a somewhat weaker performance. This comparison was made in order to be able to focus on which vocabulary-learning strategies were most preferred and most utilised by higher-achieving students at each educational level. The relationship between the performance of LL and UL, LA and HA students was thus investigated. Percentages were used to describe responses. Questionnaire findings are presented in the tables below that show comparisons between groups.

4.2 Participants’ academic achievement

As mentioned above, the respondents were divided into two groups: the lower achieving (LA) group with English grades between 50-70, and the higher achieving (HA) group with English grades between 71-100. There were 63 students in the (LA) group (31.5 per cent of the total), while there were 137 (HA) students (68.5 per cent of the total).
The analysis required a comparison between groups of learners in terms of their overall SLA. To make a thorough measurement of learners’ overall SLA in Saudi Arabia would require more testing than was possible within the framework of this research. The only means available to gain an indication of overall SLA in the Saudi context was the level of the learners’ achievements in the language, as identified by their school achievement scores. Hence, this was operationalized by collecting, in the first part of the student questionnaire, both the overall academic achievement level and the English language achievement level of each student. These scores were categorized into the two achievement groupings most commonly recognized throughout the Saudi education system, where marks in the 71-100 range are taken as indicating satisfactory to high achievement, while 50-70 indicates a somewhat weaker performance. Moreover, chi-square tests were applied to measure whether ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ achievers are statistically significantly different in their reported use of strategies at each stage of vocabulary acquisition. Nonetheless, more research using different methods and tests is needed to systematically measure the Saudi learners’ overall SLA.

While the grouping into UL/LL and HA/LA is a very broad categorization, introduced in order to be able to make comparisons like those shown in Table 4.2.1, it does have the advantage of reflecting the categorization system used throughout Saudi Arabia. The generality and uniformity of this categorization is far from ideal from an educational or a research perspective, but for the purposes of the present study, other differences in age, cognitive abilities and development were not addressed within this large sample. The interesting initial findings reported here suggest that further research with a more fine-grained analysis could be even more informative.

A summary academic profile of respondents in terms of educational level, English marks, and general final grade from the year before the survey was conducted is presented in Table 4.2.1.
Table 4.2.1: Distribution of Respondents by English and Overall Academic Grade and Level of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Lower Levels (LL: Younger students) ( n = 100 )</th>
<th>Upper Levels (UL: Older students) ( n = 100 )</th>
<th>Sample Total ( N = 200 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-70</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71-80</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81-90</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91-100</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Lower Levels = elementary & intermediate, aged 12-15; Upper Levels = secondary & university, aged 16-20.

More than half of the respondents had higher marks (above 70) in English in the previous year. Of those, 26 per cent had 91-100 marks. In the next band, 24 per cent had 81-90 marks in English in the previous year, which means that half of the participants (50 per cent) had very good to excellent grades in English in the previous year. The data showed that 30 per cent of students had fairly good (51-70) marks in English in the previous year, and 31 per cent of them did moderately well in their overall educational performance. Only four participants (2 per cent of the respondents) had low marks (50 marks or less) in English in the previous year, while no participants had lower than 50 marks overall. Table 4.2.1 also shows that a larger number of upper-level students had higher academic achievement grades in comparison with their equivalents in lower levels of schooling. For example, only 18 (out of 100) LL students had grades between 91-100 in English in the previous year, while in the UL group we can see that 36 students (out of 100) had grades in that range. That could be a sign that more effective learning strategies were employed by students and teachers in the upper educational levels. It is also possible that the higher marks at upper levels is a result of the higher motivation clearly seen in upper levels, which could be also linked to awareness of preparing for employment or the upper-level teachers’ pressure.

Generally, the overall level of achievement of the students across all academic subjects was high in the year prior to the survey being conducted. More than half (55 per cent) of them had over 80 marks; i.e. they had very good or excellent grades. None of the
respondents got a general mark of 50 or less in the previous year. The above data shows that the respondents were achieving well in general and in English in particular, and so it could reasonably be supposed that they would be aware of English-learning strategies including vocabulary-learning strategies.

4.3 Questionnaire data analysis

As previously mentioned, the questionnaire was divided into five sections corresponding to the five stages in vocabulary learning. Within each section there were a number of questions each asking about the use of a particular strategy that previous research had identified as effective at the given stage (see Section 2.2.4). For each question, respondents had to choose one from four multiple-choice answers from an Agree section or one from four multiple-choice answers from a Disagree section. (The actual format of the questionnaire can be seen in Appendix A).

4.3.1 Stage one: Encountering the word

Q. 1: When I encounter a new English word for the first time, I use guessing to learn the meaning of that word.

Guessing is considered potentially useful to teach because it encourages readers to make and test predictions, which is a useful generalised reading skill (Liu & Nation, 1985). Several approaches to vocabulary teaching support the use of guessing word meaning from contexts, based on studies that affirm that teaching words in contexts improves vocabulary growth (see Nation & Coady, 1988). Oxford (1990) comments that good language learners will make educated guesses when confronted with unknown expressions, whereas less adept learners will most likely turn toward the dictionary or display other behaviour such as panicking for instance, or other actions that may impede progress toward FL proficiency. Bahrick (1984) has shown that using the meaning of the new word within the whole meaning of the sentence stimulated the deepest level of processing and ensured the best memory. It is clear that learners can make use of
semantic features to understand and distinguish word meanings and hence promote more effective language-learning. Therefore, one could predict some use of this helpful strategy by Saudi EFL learners when encountering a new English word.

Table 4.3.1.1: Frequency of Responses to Q1/1 by Level of Education and Grades in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Lower levels</th>
<th>Upper levels</th>
<th>LA</th>
<th>HA</th>
<th>Sample Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n = 100</td>
<td>n = 100</td>
<td>n = 63</td>
<td>n = 137</td>
<td>n = 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>0 2 2</td>
<td>2 33 35</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>35 (26%)</td>
<td>37 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>0 3 3</td>
<td>1 30 31</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>33 (24%)</td>
<td>34 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>0 4 4</td>
<td>1 1 2</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
<td>6 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>0 5 5</td>
<td>1 1 2</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>6 (4%)</td>
<td>7 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>37 11 48</td>
<td>2 0 2</td>
<td>39 (61%)</td>
<td>11 (8%)</td>
<td>50 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>3 0 3</td>
<td>1 0 1</td>
<td>4 (6%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>4 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>4 26 30</td>
<td>1 8 9</td>
<td>5 (8%)</td>
<td>34 (25%)</td>
<td>39 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>2 3 5</td>
<td>8 10 18</td>
<td>10 (16%)</td>
<td>13 (9%)</td>
<td>23 (12%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A = Agree, D = Disagree; LA = lower achieving, HA = higher achieving - Overall difference between LA and HA was significant at $\chi^2 (7) = 87.04, p = .000$

As shown in Table 4.3.1.1, by far the largest proportion of respondents (24 per cent of the total sample) endorsed answer number one from the disagree section (D1). In other words, participants reported that they did not use a guessing strategy when they encountered a new word for the reason that their teachers had never encouraged them to use that strategy. This response was endorsed by almost half ($n = 48$, 48 per cent) of the respondents from primary and junior school and only by two respondents from the upper educational levels. Conversely, 35 per cent of students (mostly with higher grades in English) from upper levels (secondary- and university levels) reported that they did use that strategy not only because it was helpful (31 per cent) but also because their teachers at upper levels encouraged them to use such a strategy when encountering a new word for the first time. Close to a third (30 per cent) of the LL students did not use the guessing strategy because they felt they did not have enough time to use it. This
could be true, as LL students in Saudi Arabia study more subjects than those in upper levels. Saudi students in secondary grades can choose one major or specialisation to study, just like college and university students. For that reason, LL students might not feel focused on English as they have so many other subjects to study, and at this age, only few of them would expect to enter occupations where they would be likely to use English much.

Higher achieving students of English, referred to as HA students, from both upper- and lower educational levels used guessing strategies when encountering new words (26 per cent of total HA) because they were encouraged by their teachers (answer A1) and because they knew the importance of that strategy (24 per cent of total HA endorsed answer A2), but this tendency is more pronounced at upper levels, indicating that LL students were not encouraged to use this strategy. More than 60 per cent of lower-achieving students of English (LA students) did not use any guessing strategies for the reason that their teachers did not encourage them to use such strategies. This could partly reflect a general tendency for teachers to place less emphasis on independent thinking, and to discourage guessing, among younger students. The observed differences in the frequency distribution of responses on this question were statistically significant ($\chi^2(7) = 87.04, p = .000$).

On the whole, only four respondents (2 per cent) of the whole sample reported that the guessing strategy was not helpful, which means that the majority of the sample of EFL Saudi students found that this strategy was useful to help them predict, learn, and memorise new words. Most importantly, those who reported using this strategy were mainly HA students, indicating that it could be a contributor to their high academic achievements in English.
Q. 2: Knowing what part of speech the new word is helps me guess the meaning of it.

Table 4.3.1.2: Frequency of Responses to Q2/1 by Level of Education and Grades in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Lower levels</th>
<th></th>
<th>Upper levels</th>
<th></th>
<th>LA</th>
<th>HA</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Sample Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14 (22%)</td>
<td>35 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>11 (17%)</td>
<td>36 (26%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4 (6%)</td>
<td>29 (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>6 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6 (10%)</td>
<td>2 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17 (27%)</td>
<td>11 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8 (13%)</td>
<td>18 (13%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A = Agree, D = Disagree; LA = lower achieving, HA = higher achieving - Overall difference between LA and HA was significant at $\chi^2 (7) = 90.72, p = .000$

Table 4.3.1.2 presents the number and percentage of the responses to the second question of the questionnaire. Interestingly, the results show that students of lower levels (46 per cent) mainly agreed that they were urged by their teachers to use guessing strategies based on the part of speech of the new word; however, they indicated that they did not have enough time to find out what part of speech each new word was, as suggested by the fairly large proportion (27 per cent) who endorsed answer D3. Upper level students (45 per cent) also reported that knowing what part of speech the new word is helps them guess its meaning (A2). Only 2 per cent of the whole sample reported that knowing the new word part of speech did not help them guess its meaning. It should be noted that this response came from the low achieving (LA) participants in both age groups. A sizeable proportion of LA students (27 per cent), mostly in the younger age group, thought that English in Saudi Arabia should be given more class time. Saudi students at lower levels study about 13 different subjects including English and that puts much time pressure on them in regard to learning EFL vocabulary strategies. The observed differences in the frequency distribution of responses on this question were statistically significant ($\chi^2 (7) = 90.72, p = .000$).
Q. 3: Knowing the grammatical features of the new word helps me guess the meaning of it.

Table 4.3.1.3: Frequency of Responses to Q3/1 by Level of Education and Grades in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Lower levels ( n = 100 )</th>
<th>Upper levels ( n = 100 )</th>
<th>LA ( n = 63 )</th>
<th>HA ( n = 137 )</th>
<th>Sample Total ( n = 200 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>HA</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>HA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A = Agree, D = Disagree; LA = lower achieving, HA = higher achieving - Overall difference between LA and HA was significant at \( \chi^2 (7) = 124.88, p = .000 \)

Table 4.3.1.3 presents the responses to item 3 of the first stage (encountering the new word). The majority of upper level students (44 per cent), and especially the highly achieving (HA) ones, indicated that knowing the grammatical features of the new word (plural forms, singular forms, punctuation, transition signals, and so on) helped them guess its meaning, and they found this strategy fast and easy to use especially when encountering the word for the first time (answer A3 was selected by 32 per cent of UL students).

While HA students from both educational levels found this strategy very helpful, the majority of LA students (74 per cent) attributed their lack of employment of this strategy to lack of encouragement from their teachers. Among the LL students, more than 50 per cent indicated that their teachers did not support guessing through teaching the grammatical features of the new word; however, 24 per cent of LL students blamed themselves for not using this strategy and 19 per cent indicated that shortage of class
time was the reason for not using this strategy. Only 3 per cent of the whole sample (LA students mainly) believed that this strategy was not helpful. The observed differences in the frequency distribution of responses on this question were statistically significant ($\chi^2 (7) = 124.88, p = .000$).

Q. 4: Pictures that come with vocabulary lessons help me guess the meaning of many new words.

Table 4.3.1.4: Frequency of Responses to Q4/1 by Level of Education and Grades in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Lower levels $n = 100$</th>
<th>Upper levels $n = 100$</th>
<th>LA $n = 63$</th>
<th>HA $n = 137$</th>
<th>Sample Total $n = 200$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>HA</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>HA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(14%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(14%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(14%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(14%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(11%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(11%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(14%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(14%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(13%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(13%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(8%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(17%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(17%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(8%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A = Agree, D = Disagree; LA = lower achieving, HA = higher achieving - Overall difference between LA and HA was significant at $\chi^2 (7) = 85.04, p = .000$

As seen in table 4.3.1.4, almost 80 per cent of the participants said they did use this strategy. More than 50 participants used guessing from the student’s book pictures because they believed that it was a helpful strategy, especially when encountering the English word for the first time. The total number of students who reported that their teachers encouraged them to use guessing from pictures was 48 (out of 200). Table 4.3.1.4 also shows that lower-level students depended more on pictures than students from upper levels. The results also show that HA students like using this strategy, with an average percentage of 30 per cent and less than 15 per cent for LA students. Thirteen
per cent of LA students indicated a lack of encouragement from teachers to make use of the pictures. Although teachers may be aware that this strategy is considered useful not only in identifying the meaning of the new word, but also in improving critical thinking, it is possible that they expect students to use the strategy without encouragement when pictures are provided with the text. Some 17 per cent of LA students indicated that the class time did not allow for using this strategy.

HA students, in contrast, do seem to have enough time to use this strategy during the class time when they encounter a new word in a text or in their listening classes. A total of 26 participants from both lower- and upper levels reported that they liked this strategy as they found it fun. None of them reported that this strategy is not helpful. Some students reported that they did not use guessing from pictures for the reason that they did not have enough time to use it (7 per cent) or it was lazy of them not to use it (7 per cent). The observed differences in the frequency distribution of responses on this question were statistically significant ($\chi^2 (7) = 85.04, p = .000$).

Q. 5: Knowing the morphology of the new word (such as affixes) helps me guess the meaning of it.

Rapid vocabulary acquisition in the school years is greatly increased by words with prefixes, suffixes, or both, as pointed out by Nagy and Anderson (1984, p. 305). This points to the likelihood that students can easily guess the meaning of many complicated words if they have the ability to recognise words using morphological parsing of those words, potentially adding to their confidence in the four language skills and test-taking as well. According to Beers (2003, p. 27): “Another effective approach to vocabulary development is working with word families—ones that share similar roots, prefixes, or suffixes. Knowledge of root words provides students with powerful tools to predict meaning for many similar words.”
Table 4.3.1.5: Frequency of Responses to Q5/1 by Level of Education and Grades in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Lower levels n = 100</th>
<th>Upper levels n = 100</th>
<th>LA n = 63</th>
<th>HA n = 137</th>
<th>Sample Total n = 200</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>HA</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>HA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A = Agree, D = Disagree; LA = lower achieving, HA = higher achieving - Overall difference between LA and HA was significant at $\chi^2 (7) = 106.48, p = .000$

Like guessing from word parts of speech, grammatical features, and pictures, guessing the new word using its morphology has the potential to help L2 learners predict, learn, and memorise numerous new words effectively. Despite the benefits of this strategy outlined in the literature (see Section 2.3.1), the results show that only UL students make use of this strategy. Table 4.3.1.5 shows that 36 participants indicated that guessing the meaning of the new word using morphology was helpful to them; however, 33 of them were from upper levels and only three participants at lower levels shared the same idea. Many UL students found this strategy fast and easy as well (17 out of 22), which means that this strategy is more suitable for UL students who have studied English affixes and who already know a good amount of English vocabulary. In contrast, the majority of LL students (65 per cent out of the total sample) indicated that the main reason for not using this strategy was that their teachers did not teach them or encourage them to use it. One reason for teacher avoidance of this strategy could be attributed to the fact that many lower level EFL teachers are not highly qualified; the majority of them have only a diploma in English. Alternatively, lower-level EFL teachers may refrain from encouraging their students to use this strategy intentionally as
they may believe that students at lower levels may not be advanced enough to make use of morphology.

Table 4.3.1.5 also shows that HA students (mainly from upper levels) tend to rely on using morphology of the new word to guess its meaning (average percentage of 17.5 per cent) more than LA students (average percentage of 11 per cent). This may possibly indicate that using helpful vocabulary strategies including guessing using the new word morphology could be a contributor to their success in their EFL education. The observed differences in the frequency distribution of responses on this question were statistically significant ($\chi^2 (7) = 106.48, p = .000$).

**Summary of section 1:**

Overall, the results for the three main guessing strategies (guessing from: contexts, pictures and word morphology) show that upper-level students tend to use guessing strategies more than their lower-level counterparts. High achievers consistently used more strategies than low achievers. Insufficient class time was often cited as reason for not utilising guessing strategies in EFL vocabulary learning.

The results also speak of the role of the teacher in students’ strategy use, with respondents in the younger age group reporting lack of teacher support for the use of guessing strategies and respondents in the older age group reporting teacher support for some advanced strategies like guessing using the knowledge of morphology, but not for others like guessing from contexts by activating background knowledge of parts of speech, parts of the sentence, other grammatical features as well as making good guesses from pictures, illustrations, and charts that come with the text. High and low achievers differed statistically significantly in their reported use of strategies at this stage of vocabulary learning with chi square values varying between 85.04 and 124.88, all $ps = .000$.

Based on the findings of section 1, which answer research questions 1, 3, and 5 regarding students’ vocabulary learning strategies, the data showed that the majority of the sample of Saudi EFL students do not use guessing strategies, especially not lower-
level and lower-achieving students, due in part to the shortage of English class time in Saudi schools, and that their teachers do not give them much encouragement to use those strategies.

4.3.2 Stage two: Getting the word form

Q. 1: To learn the form of a new word, I use my dictionary.

It is widely accepted that using a dictionary can help learn the spelling of a new word, its syllables, stress, pronunciation, part of speech, the meanings of important prefixes and suffixes, the history of the word, other words derived from the main word, whether or not the word is capitalised or abbreviated, and if there is any special plural form. Nation (2005, p. 5) asserts that learning the form of the new word includes “following spelling rules, recognizing word parts, and building word family tables.” As such, many educators consider it useful to encourage ESL/EFL students to refer to their dictionaries whenever appropriate to learn the form of the new words, as a dictionary can be an extra teacher for them. Teachers who make sure that their students know how to use a dictionary to learn the form of the new words, argue that this will help them be more independent and autonomous vocabulary learners. If students know how to use their dictionaries effectively, they will be more able to study outside the classroom and not rely on the teacher the whole time.

Table 4.3.2.1: Frequency of Responses to Q1/2 by Level of Education and Grades in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Lower levels n = 100</th>
<th>Upper levels n = 100</th>
<th>LA n = 63</th>
<th>HA n = 137</th>
<th>Sample Total n = 200</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>HA</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>HA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.3.2.1 presents students’ responses about the use of dictionaries when learning the form of new words. More than 20 per cent of the 200 students reported that they did not use this strategy as they were not encouraged by their teachers to do so. Further analysis of the data revealed that those (44) students were mainly from lower levels (36 out of 44 students). Out of 100 students in the lower levels, 75 students reported that they did not use their dictionaries for a variety of reasons. These results demonstrate that dictionaries are rarely used in lower levels in many Saudi schools. Almost 30 per cent of lower-level students did not use this strategy, attributing this to their own laziness.

For upper level students, Table 4.3.2.1 shows that 34 out of 36 students used their dictionaries to learn the form of new words because they were encouraged by their teachers; 26 per cent of them believed that this strategy was helpful. This indicates that the Saudi EFL upper level teachers specified some of their class time to teach dictionary skills. On the other hand, many UL students (24 per cent) reported that they did not use this strategy for the reason that they did not have enough time in- or outside their classroom.

The results in Table 4.3.2.1 also show that 23 per cent of HA students (from upper levels mainly) agreed that they were urged by their teachers to use this strategy to learn the form of new words; 20 per cent of them indicated that they used it because it was helpful; and 10 per cent of them found it fun. None of them reported that this strategy was not helpful, but almost 40 per cent of HA students did not use this strategy either because of class time shortage or due to laziness. These results provide further support for the idea of the effectiveness of using a dictionary to learn the form of new words, as it is associated with the higher achieving students, who would use it even more if they

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>4 (6%)</th>
<th>0 (0%)</th>
<th>4 (2%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6 (10%)</td>
<td>26 (19%)</td>
<td>32 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>27 (20%)</td>
<td>29 (15%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A = Agree, D = Disagree; LA = lower achieving, HA = higher achieving - Overall difference between LA and HA was significant at $\chi^2 (7) = 62.00, p = .000$
had more class time. The observed differences in the frequency distribution of responses on this question were statistically significant ($\chi^2 (7) = 62.00, p = .000$).

Q. 2: English dictionaries help me learn many aspects about the new word such as its spelling, syllables, pronunciation, and part of speech.

It is widely agreed that training learners in the use of the dictionary can effectively enable them to continue to make progress in their learning beyond the classroom, increasing their knowledge along with their vocabulary. Being able to use dictionaries develops autonomy and confidence in the learner, fostering autonomous learning. Researchers who have described different processes for effective language-learning strategy instruction include Oxford (1990), Wenden (1991), and Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary, and Robbins (1999).

Table 4.3.2.2: Frequency of Responses to Q2/2 by Level of Education and Grades in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Lower levels $n = 100$</th>
<th>Upper levels $n = 100$</th>
<th>LA $n = 63$</th>
<th>HA $n = 137$</th>
<th>Sample Total $n = 200$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>HA</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>HA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A = Agree, D = Disagree; LA = lower achieving, HA = higher achieving - Overall difference between LA and HA was significant at $\chi^2 (7) = 58.16, p = .000$
The largest overall percentage of the students (22 per cent) stated that they did not use their English dictionaries, for the reason that their teachers did not encourage them to do so. A number of students (45: 36 from lower levels and nine from upper levels) indicated that English dictionaries were not helpful because they had never been encouraged to make use of their English dictionaries. Other students did not consider that English dictionaries were helpful for many reasons including shortage of class time (17 per cent) and laziness (15 per cent). Looking at responses to the reasons of not using this strategy, we can see that only 3 per cent of the overall participants reported that this strategy was not helpful, which means that the majority of the students appreciate the effectiveness of this strategy but they have other reasons for not using it.

The situation is different at the upper levels. More than 63 (out of 100) UL students responded that they used this strategy. Of these, 29 reported that they used it because their teachers encouraged them to do so, 25 indicated that it was helpful, and 7 indicated that using English dictionaries is fun.

The results of the analysis revealed that there was a strong relationship between higher grades and the use of English dictionaries to learn the aspects of new words. The analysis revealed that almost 60 per cent of HA students (mostly from upper levels) do use this strategy for many reasons, which provides a strong indication that good students are those who use their English dictionaries to learn the form of the new word and its other aspects. The observed differences in the frequency distribution of responses on this question were statistically significant ($\chi^2 (7) = 58.16, p = .000$).

Q. 3: I do spoken repetition to practise the pronunciation of the new word.

Doing spoken repetition to practise the pronunciation of the new word is very important to learn its form. First of all, students need to listen to the new word from a good source such as a teacher, talking dictionary, an English native speaker, etc. to guarantee the effectiveness of high-quality vocabulary-learning. Careful listening to the words may be a good option in teaching vocabulary items in a heterogenic classroom. The effectiveness of this strategy is discussed by Gu (2003), Lado (1964), Thorndike (1908), and Webb (1962).
Table 4.3.2.3: Frequency of Responses to Q3/2 by Level of Education and Grades in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 3</th>
<th>Lower levels $n = 100$</th>
<th>Upper levels $n = 100$</th>
<th>LA $n = 63$</th>
<th>HA $n = 137$</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>HA</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>HA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A = Agree, D = Disagree; LA = lower achieving, HA = higher achieving - Overall difference between LA and HA was significant at $\chi^2 (7) = 49.60, p = .000$

Table 4.3.2.3 presents students’ responses about the use of the spoken-repetition strategy to practise the pronunciation of the new word. The majority of students who apply this strategy come from lower levels. Some 39 per cent of low-level students (mostly HA students) reported using this strategy as they were encouraged by their teachers to do so; 15 per cent of low-level students believed that this strategy was fast and easy; and 27 per cent of them used this strategy because it was fun. It seems that the upper level teachers did not encourage their students to use this strategy to learn the pronunciation of the new word as suggested by the fact that only 2 out of the 100 students in the upper levels selected answer A1. Many of them knew this strategy to be helpful (28 per cent) but they did not tend to use it for a variety of reasons, including that they thought they did not have enough time to apply spoken repetition (24 per cent).

Unsurprisingly, the results show that HA students from both levels did use this strategy. Of all HA students, 23 per cent indicated that this strategy was highly helpful to learn the pronunciation of the new word; 24 per cent (mainly from lower levels) indicated that they were encouraged by their teachers to use spoken repetition to learn the pronunciation of the new word; 17 per cent believed that this strategy was the fastest
and easiest way to learn to pronounce the new word; and 15 per cent of them thought that this strategy was fun. The observed differences in the frequency distribution of responses on this question were statistically significant ($\chi^2(7) = 49.60$, $p = .000$). Overall, students’ responses suggest that the lower-level teachers encouraged their students to use this strategy as it is the easiest and fastest way to learn the pronunciation of the new word. Yet, the students would make more use of this strategy if they had more class time.

Q. 4: I do written repetition to practise the spelling of the new word.

Table 4.3.2.4: Frequency of Responses to Q4/2 by Level of Education and Grades in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Lower levels $n = 100$</th>
<th>Upper levels $n = 100$</th>
<th>LA $n = 63$</th>
<th>HA $n = 137$</th>
<th>Sample Total $n = 200$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>HA</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>HA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A = Agree, D = Disagree; LA = lower achieving, HA = higher achieving - Overall difference between LA and HA was significant at $\chi^2(7) = 153.04$, $p = .000$

Doing written repetition can help L2 learners learn the spelling of the new words effectively. The results show that lower-level students tended to use this strategy more than their upper-level counterparts. Many LL students did written repetition to practise the spelling of the new word not only because they believed that it to be a helpful strategy (33 per cent), but also because their teachers encouraged them to use it (35 per cent). The results suggest that upper-level teachers did not encourage their students to
use this strategy since none of the UL students endorsed answer A1 even though they saw written repetition as important and helpful (34 per cent).

The main reason for not using this strategy for both levels was the shortage of class time as suggested by the fact that 46 students in both levels indicated that they would use this strategy if they had more time in- or outside the classroom. Table 4.3.2.4 also shows that almost 40 per cent of the HA students used this strategy; yet, 26 per cent of them indicated that they did not have enough time to apply it for each new word. The observed differences in the frequency distribution of responses on this question were statistically significant ($\chi^2 (7) = 153.04, p = .000$).

Summary of section 2:

Generally, the Saudi EFL students indicated a lack of encouragement from their teachers to use their bilingual or monolingual dictionaries to learn the form of the new word or its aspects such as spelling, pronunciation, synonyms, antonyms, and so forth. Students from upper levels (HA students mainly) reported that they did use that strategy because it was helpful, and that their teachers at upper levels encouraged them to use their dictionaries to learn the form of the new word. Even though they realised the importance of the use of dictionaries in learning the word form, they did not use them because of the shortage of time. The results show that lower-level teachers did not provide specific class time for teaching dictionary skills.

In regard to doing spoken and written repetition, agreement that they were encouraged by their teachers to use those strategies was limited almost entirely to lower-level students. The majority of HA students believed that it was important to use those strategies, but they also reported that shortage of time could be a big reason for not using those strategies.

With regard to the research questions on students’ vocabulary-learning strategies, the data from Section 2 showed that the majority of low-level students did not make use of their dictionaries to learn the form of the new word, and that the majority of UL students did not take advantage of the strategies of spoken and written repetition to learn
the form of the new word (spelling and pronunciation). The main reason for the relative neglect of these strategies is attributed to the shortage of English class time in many Saudi schools. High and low achievers differed statistically significantly in their reported use of strategies at this stage of vocabulary learning with chi square values varying between 49.60 and 153.04, all $ps = .000$.

4.3.3 Stage three: Getting the word meaning

Q. 1: To learn the new word meaning, I only use my English-English dictionary.

Many studies have focused on the importance of using English dictionaries for the purpose of vocabulary-learning, including: Bensoussan, Sim, and Weiss (1984), Eeds and Cockrum (1985), Knight (1994), Laufer and Hadar (1997), Laufer and Hill (2000), Laufer and Kimmel (1997), and Marckwardt (1973). Bejoint (1981), for example, believes that few bilingual or semi-bilingual dictionaries get close in quality of information to that found in the learners’ monolingual dictionaries produced by major publishers such as Longman, Collins, or Oxford. The research thus suggests that ESL/EFL teachers should encourage their students to depend less on bilingual dictionaries and gradually move to monolingual dictionaries. There are also indications that those learners who use monolingual dictionaries also recognise the advantages themselves. Monolingual dictionaries can be considered indispensable tools especially for intermediate and advanced ESL/EFL learners.

In their study on 293 Japanese EFL university students, Luppescu and Day (1993) found a clear advantage for the dictionary group in vocabulary-learning through reading. Similarly, Knight (1994) comments that while incidental vocabulary-learning through contextual guessing did take place, those who used a dictionary in addition to guessing through context not only learned more words immediately after reading, but also remembered more after two weeks. It is worth noting that this combined learning strategy promotes cognitive engagement by encouraging learners to form a hypothesis as to the word’s meaning, and then seek confirmation or disconfirmation of their own hypothesis by using the dictionary. Marckwardt (1973) points out that dictionaries usually supply abundant information not found elsewhere, because they include
information about grammar, usage, status, synonym discrimination, application of derivative affixes, and distinctions between spoken and written English not generally treated in textbooks, not even in a rudimentary fashion.

Table 4.3.3.1: Frequency of Responses to Q1/3 by Level of Education and Grades in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Lower levels n = 100</th>
<th>Upper levels n = 100</th>
<th>LA n = 63</th>
<th>HA n = 137</th>
<th>Sample Total n = 200</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>HA</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>HA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A = Agree, D = Disagree; LA = lower achieving, HA = higher achieving - Overall difference between LA and HA was significant at $\chi^2 (7) = 108.72, p = .000$

Despite the evidence for the importance of using dictionaries to learn the meanings of new words, Table 4.3.3.1 shows that 33 per cent of EFL students did not use their English dictionaries to learn the meaning of a new word, for the reason that their teachers did not encourage them to use that strategy. For example, 62 low-level student participants did not use this strategy for the same reason. Even HA students (24 per cent) from both levels indicated a lack of encouragement to use this strategy. More than half of the LA students (54 per cent) reported not using this strategy for the same reason. They could use bilingual dictionaries but those dictionaries are limited tools and monolingual dictionaries deserve a place in the ESL/EFL curriculum, according to McCarthy (1990).

Table 4.3.3.1 shows that the UL students tended to use this strategy for the most part because they were encouraged by their teachers (25 per cent) and because it was helpful
(21 per cent) whereas 20 per cent of them did not use their English-English dictionaries to learn the meanings of the new words because they felt that they did not have enough time to use such a strategy. For the LL students, the results show that 10 per cent of them believed that this strategy was not helpful for them and another 10 per cent were of the opinion that the shortage of class time was the main reason behind neglecting this strategy.

The findings support the idea that the strategy of using English-English dictionaries can be very helpful, as the table above shows that it is mainly used by HA students, which could indicate that it is contributing to their EFL-learning success. The observed differences in the frequency distribution of responses on this question were statistically significant ($\chi^2 (7) = 108.72,$ $p = .000$).

Q. 2: Using an English-English dictionary helps me learn other aspects of the new word such as its synonyms, antonyms, collocations, and different uses.

In general, the literature suggests that learners should be encouraged to aim at graduating to a good monolingual dictionary as soon as their proficiency allows it. Even though students find a resource that is entirely in the target language harder to use, better training of learners in how to use monolingual dictionaries is the solution as suggested by Schofield (1982), who thinks that ESL/EFL teachers can use and create effective methods to foster the learners’ independence so that learners will be able to deal with new lexis and expand their vocabulary beyond the end of the course. Such an approach would require learners to become familiar with using monolingual dictionaries as early as possible. If the learners are given adequate training, an English monolingual dictionary can be an invaluable tool to help them become more independent. A learner needs many skills to use a dictionary successfully (Schofield, 1982). Further support for this strategy is found in Underhill (1980), Whitcut (1979), and Nation (2001).
Table 4.3.3.2: Frequency of Responses to Q2/3 by Level of Education and Grades in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 2</th>
<th>Lower levels  ( n = 100 )</th>
<th>Upper levels  ( n = 100 )</th>
<th>LA  ( n = 63 )</th>
<th>HA  ( n = 137 )</th>
<th>Sample Total  ( n = 200 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>HA</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>HA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D1</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A = Agree, D = Disagree; LA = lower achieving, HA = higher achieving - Overall difference between LA and HA was significant at \( \chi^2 (7) = 128.88, p = .000 \)

Similarly to those in Table 4.3.3.1, responses to this item show that the biggest percentage of the whole sample indicated that they did not use this strategy because they were not encouraged to do so. Even though 17 per cent of the respondents believed that it is important to use an English-English dictionary, 34 per cent of the whole sample (almost 70 participants) indicated that their teachers did not encourage them to make use of monolingual dictionaries.

Table 4.3.3.2 also shows that only 4 per cent of the whole sample reported that this strategy was not helpful, which means that the majority of the Saudi EFL students knew that this strategy was useful in helping them predict, learn, and memorise numerous new words; yet they did not use it because of the lack of class time (12 per cent), laziness (12 per cent), or not being encouraged by their teachers (34 per cent).

The results also reveal a significant relationship between higher grades and the use of this strategy since 21 per cent of the HA students (especially those from the upper levels) reported that they did use this strategy as they were encouraged by their teachers, and 20 per cent used this strategy because they believed that it to be very helpful for them. Fifteen per cent reported that the shortage of class time was the main reason for
not using this strategy. The observed differences in the frequency distribution of responses on this question were statistically significant ($\chi^2(7) = 128.88, p = .000$).

Q. 3: I make use of the icons and pictures in my English-English dictionary to learn the meaning of the new word.

Hill (1990), for example, has pointed out that the use of visuals in foreign-language teaching can motivate learners to participate and communicate their thoughts, thus making the foreign-language learning experience meaningful. Similarly, Wright (1990, p. 2) asserts that pictures can provide “interest and motivation; a sense of the context of the language and a specific reference point or stimulus.” Kaplan, Kaplan, and Sampson (1968, p. 74) supported the view that the superiority of recall for pictorial material over that for words is attributed to the fact that “pictures are coded both verbally and visually while words are coded only verbally”. Visual material can also give users a more accessible way into engaging with a resource that is entirely in the target language, for learners who may find that daunting. More on this strategy is found in Webber (1978), and Kaplan, Kaplan, and Sampson (1968).

Table 4.3.3.3: Frequency of Responses to Q3/3 by Level of Education and Grades in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Lower levels $n = 100$</th>
<th>Upper levels $n = 100$</th>
<th>LA $n = 63$</th>
<th>HA $n = 137$</th>
<th>Sample Total $n = 200$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 A1</td>
<td>0 3 3</td>
<td>0 2 2</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
<td>5 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>0 5 5</td>
<td>3 37 40</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
<td>42 (31%)</td>
<td>45 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>0 8 8</td>
<td>2 18 20</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>26 (19%)</td>
<td>28 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>1 6 7</td>
<td>2 29 31</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
<td>35 (26%)</td>
<td>38 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>45 20 65</td>
<td>3 0 3</td>
<td>48 (76%)</td>
<td>20 (15%)</td>
<td>68 (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>4 1 5</td>
<td>0 0 0</td>
<td>4 (6%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>5 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 1 2</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
<td>5 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>1 3 4</td>
<td>0 2 2</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
<td>6 (3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A = Agree, D = Disagree; LA = lower achieving, HA = higher achieving - Overall difference between LA and HA was significant at $\chi^2(7) = 159.52, p = .000$
Table 4.3.3.3 shows that 33 per cent of the students did not make use of the pictures/icons in their English dictionaries to learn the meaning of a new word, for the reason that their teachers did not encourage them to use such a strategy. For example, 48 LA students and 20 HA students did not use this strategy for the same reason, but it can be seen clearly that 40 per cent of the UL students believed this strategy to be helpful; 20 per cent of them used that strategy because it is fast and easy, while 31 per cent reported the strategy to be fun.

Almost none of the students sampled reported that this strategy was unhelpful (only 5 out of 200 participants -all from LL), providing confirmation that those students knew that using picture dictionaries and making use of the pictures and icons in their dictionaries could be useful, but they were not encouraged by their teachers to use this strategy. Similarly to the results seen in Tables 4.3.3.1 and 4.3.3.2, mainly HA students used this strategy, indicating that making use of pictures/icons in English dictionaries is useful and effective for the high achievers. The observed differences in the frequency distribution of responses on this question were statistically significant ($\chi^2 (7) = 159.52$, $p = .000$).

**Summary of section 3:**

In general, Saudi EFL students sampled rarely used English-English dictionaries and they did not make use of their features (definitions, synonyms, antonyms, examples, pictures, icons, etc.) for many reasons, the most important of which is that they were not encouraged by their teachers to do so. However, students from upper levels reported that they did use this strategy because it was helpful and that their teachers at upper levels did encourage them to use their monolingual dictionaries to learn the meaning of new words. This is an indication that only upper-level teachers specify time for teaching monolingual dictionary skills to their students.

In regard to making use of icons and pictures, we find that only the UL students considered this strategy helpful, fast, easy, and fun even though they were not encouraged by their teachers to make use of the icons and pictures that come in monolingual or picture dictionaries. Based on the findings of Section 3, we can also see
A strong relation between higher grades and the use of monolingual dictionaries. The majority of the HA students make good use of their English-English dictionaries; yet, they also reported that class time was not enough to apply this strategy. In that, they agreed with their equivalents from lower levels that they would use this strategy if they had more class time. High and low achievers differed statistically significantly in their reported use of strategies at this stage of vocabulary learning with chi square values varying between 108.72 and 159.52, all *p* = .000.

With specific reference to the research questions regarding students’ vocabulary-learning strategies, the data showed that the majority of the students did not make use of the above-mentioned strategies, especially not the lower level and LA students, due to the shortage of English class time and to their teachers not encouraging them to make use of those strategies.

### 4.3.4 Stage four: Consolidating word form and meaning in memory

Q. 1: I make use of grouping words strategy to consolidate the form and meaning of the new word.

The literature clearly demonstrates the importance of memory strategies including the strategy of grouping words in consolidating the form and the meaning of new words in memory. Many researchers believe that memory strategies can strongly influence the learning and remembering of new words. In fact, many studies recommend making use of word-association strategies, in particular, to consolidate the form and meaning of the new word. Among the wide range of studies affirming the efficiency of memory strategies and techniques in learning L2 vocabulary are Cohen (1987), Fuentes (1976), Hulstijn (1997), Levin and colleagues (1979), Meara (1980), Nation (1982), Paivio and Desrochers (1981), Pressley, Levin, and Miller (1982), and Willerman and Melvin (1979). (See Section 2.6.1)
Table 4.3.4.1: Frequency of Responses to Q1/4 by Level of Education and Grades in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Lower levels n = 100</th>
<th>Upper levels n = 100</th>
<th>LA n = 63</th>
<th>HA n = 137</th>
<th>Sample Total n = 200</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>HA</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>HA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A = Agree, D = Disagree; LA = lower achieving, HA = higher achieving - Overall difference between LA and HA was significant at $\chi^2(7) = 102.08, p = .000$

This stage of vocabulary learning is perhaps the most significant one as learners consolidate the form as well the meaning of the new word in memory. In spite of the importance of using the grouping strategy to assist memory, the results show that 74 students out of the whole sample did not use this strategy. The results in Table 4.3.4.1 above reveal a disappointing situation, where more than half of the sample (55 per cent) reported that they did not use this strategy, with 33 per cent reporting it to be mainly because they were not encouraged by their teachers to do so. Further analysis of those students revealed that there were 64 lower-level students not using this strategy for the same reason.

This strategy was mainly applied by upper-level students, with 64 UL students (HA students mainly) indicating a use of this strategy because they were encouraged by their teachers (21 per cent); they believed this strategy to be helpful (26 per cent); they believed it to be fast and easy (8 per cent), and fun (9 per cent). This indicates that the upper-level teachers did encourage their students to use this strategy in and outside the classroom. Sixteen per cent of the upper-level students indicated that the reason for not using this strategy was lack of time.
The results confirm that there is a strong relationship between high academic performance and the use of grouping words strategy. The results revealed that more than half of the HA students used this strategy. Those who did not use it indicated that they needed to be encouraged by their teachers to use it (23 per cent); that they would use it if they had more time (12 per cent); and some 8 per cent of them indicated that they did not use this strategy due to their own laziness, although 20 per cent of them considered grouping words strategy very helpful. The observed differences in the frequency distribution of responses on this question were statistically significant ($\chi^2 (7) = 102.08$, $p = .000$).

Q. 2: I use encoding strategies such as imaging the meaning of the new word.

There is considerable support in the literature for the use of these strategies to enhance remembering through the connection of new knowledge with familiar words and images, as discussed by Levin (1983), Mastropieri, Scruggs, and Fulk (1990), Woolfolk (1993), Mastropieri and Scruggs (1991), and McDaniel and Pressley (1989). The results show 38 per cent of lower-level students used this encoding strategy as their teachers encouraged them to do so, 27 per cent of them considered those strategies helpful; and 23 per cent thought that they were fun.

Table 4.3.4.2: Frequency of Responses to Q2/4 by Level of Education and Grades in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Lower levels $n = 100$</th>
<th>Upper levels $n = 100$</th>
<th>Sample Total $n = 200$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>9 29 38</td>
<td>0 3 3</td>
<td>9 32 41 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(14%)</td>
<td>(23%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>5 22 27</td>
<td>2 2 4</td>
<td>7 24 31 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(11%)</td>
<td>(18%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>1 1 2</td>
<td>1 1 2</td>
<td>2 2 4 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3%)</td>
<td>(1%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>7 16 23</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>8 18 26 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(13%)</td>
<td>(13%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>2 1 3</td>
<td>6 8 14</td>
<td>8 9 17 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(13%)</td>
<td>(13%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>1 0 1</td>
<td>15 3 18</td>
<td>16 3 19 (10%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This strategy in particular is chiefly preferred by lower-level students. Table 4.3.4.2 shows that 90 out of the 102 LL students did use encoding strategies, especially imaging the meaning of the new word. We can also see that the majority of those who reported using this strategy at this level of education (67 students) had high scores in English, which suggests that the use of effective strategies like this one can contribute to educational success.

On the other hand, upper-level students did not tend to use encoding strategies for many reasons, including that they were not encouraged by their teachers to do so (14 per cent), or that they believed that encoding strategies were not helpful (18 per cent). Some 29 per cent of them indicated that they would use these strategies if they had time, while 27 per cent of them thought that it was simply lazy of them not to use those strategies.

Overall, encoding strategies were mainly used by the HA students (mainly from lower levels). Even though they realised the importance of using those strategies, upper-level students did not use them for the reason that they were not encouraged to use them by their teachers (14 per cent), and that they did not have enough time to apply them when studying the meaning and the form of the new word (29 per cent). It is possible that the use of imaging and drawing in learning is thought of as a playful activity, which may be seen as more age-appropriate for younger students than those at upper levels. The observed differences in the frequency distribution of responses on this question were statistically significant ($\chi^2 (7) = 36.56, p = .000$).

Q. 3: I connect the new word to personal experiences in order to consolidate its meaning in my memory.
Many researchers assert the importance of tapping into the personal schema or the prior knowledge that learners have stored in their long-term memories. Rumelhart (1980), for example, asserts that when students link new information to existing schema, the learning ‘sticks’ because it has personal meaning. To guarantee effective vocabulary development, new words need to be linked to the existing knowledge of the learners or ‘learners’ schema’, images, diagrams, sounds, personal feelings and responses, and so on. This is further considered by Frey and Fisher (2009), Manzo (1983), Nilsen and Nilsen (2003), Rumelhart (1980), Rumelhart and Norman (1981), and Winters (2001). (See Section 2.6.1).

Table 4.3.4.3: Frequency of Responses to Q3/4 by Level of Education and Grades in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Lower levels ( n = 100 )</th>
<th>Upper levels ( n = 100 )</th>
<th>LA ( n = 63 )</th>
<th>HA ( n = 137 )</th>
<th>Sample Total ( n = 200 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>HA</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>HA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A = Agree, D = Disagree; LA = lower achieving, HA = higher achieving - Overall difference between LA and HA was significant at \( \chi^2 (7) = 164.48, p = .000 \)

Connecting the new word to what the learners already know can be a very helpful strategy that consolidates the meaning of the new word in memory. In spite of its importance in vocabulary-learning, many Saudi teachers, especially lower-level teachers, do not seem to encourage its use. Almost all of the students who reported not using this strategy (70, or 34 per cent of total sample) because of lack of teacher encouragement (i.e. selected answer D1) were lower-level students (68 out of the total
70) Only two participants (one student from each educational level) reported that their teachers encouraged them to use it.

Even though they realised its importance, many students did not use this strategy: 23 per cent agree that this strategy is helpful, 15 per cent found it fast and easy, and 16 per cent though it was fun and yet, almost 40 per cent of the overall sample did not use it for a variety of reasons, the most important of which being that they were not encouraged by their teachers to connect the new word to personal experiences in order to consolidate its meaning in memory.

Fewer than 3 per cent of the LA students believed this strategy to be unhelpful. Almost none of the HA students reported that this strategy was unhelpful, which means that they knew that connecting the new word to existing knowledge can be very useful but that they were not encouraged by their teachers to use such strategy. Like tables 4.3.4.1 and 4.3.4.2, HA students for the most part use this strategy, which again indicates that connecting the new word to what the students already know was a useful and effective strategy for the higher achievers in consolidating the form and the meaning of the new words in memory. The observed differences in the frequency distribution of responses on this question were statistically significant ($\chi^2 (7) = 164.48, p = .000$).

Q. 4: I apply verbal repetition by using the new word in 5-16 different verbal examples.

Many researchers believe that learners need repetition within a week to have a 90 per cent chance to recall a word or phrase. Learners, in such activities, engage in recycling words via language skills, which can enhance vocabulary knowledge. Nation (1990, 2001) and Thornbury (2004) affirm that systematic repetition of new words is more likely to trigger the learners’ storage in long-term memory. Many researchers including Brown (1993), Laufer and Hadar (1997), Nation and Hwang (1995), Nation (1990), Horst, Cobb, and Meara (1998), Lado, Baldwin, and Lobo (1967), and Meara (1997b) suggest that learners need to meet the words in a variety of contexts, anywhere from 5-16 different times in order to retain learned vocabulary. Those researchers also believe that variety is essential for vocabulary-teaching/learning, for the reason that L2 learners best remember words when they have used them in different ways.
Table 4.3.4.4: Frequency of Responses to Q4/4 by Level of Education and Grades in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Lower levels $n = 100$</th>
<th>Upper levels $n = 100$</th>
<th>LA $n = 63$</th>
<th>HA $n = 137$</th>
<th>Sample Total $n = 200$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>HA</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>HA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A = Agree, D = Disagree; LA = lower achieving, HA = higher achieving - Overall difference between LA and HA was significant at $\chi^2 (7) = 34.96, p = .000$

Table 4.3.4.4 shows that verbal repetition was mainly used by the lower-level students (91 students) with 36 per cent of the LL students indicating that this strategy was helpful and 19 per cent indicating that they felt encouraged by their teachers to use this strategy. They also used the strategy of verbal repetition because they believed that it was fast and easy (16 per cent) and fun (20 per cent). On the other hand, the UL students did not make as much use of verbal repetition as they were not encouraged by their teachers (35 per cent) or because of their own laziness (28 per cent) or because they did not have enough time to apply such a strategy (29 per cent). Almost none of them reported that this strategy was unhelpful. Verbal repetition may be seen by teachers as a more appropriate activity for younger learners than older ones.

The results above also show that this strategy was mainly used by the HA students. More than 60 per cent of them applied verbal repetition by using the new word in 5-16 different verbal examples as they considered this strategy important in consolidating the meaning as well as the form of the new word; however, many HA students indicated that they did not use this strategy as they did not have enough class time or that they
were just lazy. The observed differences in the frequency distribution of responses on this question were statistically significant ($\chi^2 (7) = 34.96, p = .000$).

Q. 5: I apply written repetition by using the new word in 5-16 different written examples.

The importance of this strategy has been demonstrated by many studies. In their well-known study, Crothers and Suppes (1967) discovered that almost all of their participants remembered all 108 Russian-English word pairs after seven repetitions, and about 80 per cent of 216 word pairs were learned by most participants after only six repetitions. Generally, results of those studies demonstrate that if remembering word pairs is the aim, a surprising amount can be learned within a relatively short time (Thorndike, 1908; Webb, 1962); however, it is necessary to employ a variety of repetition strategies especially at the initial stages of vocabulary learning. As Carter (1987, p. 153) puts it: “quantities of initial vocabulary can be learned both efficiently and quickly and by methods such as rote learning which are not always considered to be respectable. It may be dangerous to underestimate such a capacity.” For more information on the importance of verbal and written repetition, see Bright and McGregor (1970), Gary and Gary (1982), Gershman (1970), Gu and Johnson (1996), Hill (1994), Kelly (1992), McCarthy (1984), Nation and Gu (2007), Rodriguez and Sadowki (2000), and Seibert (1927).

Table 4.3.4.5: Frequency of Responses to Q5/4 by Level of Education and Grades in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Lower levels $n = 100$</th>
<th>Upper levels $n = 100$</th>
<th>LA $n = 63$</th>
<th>HA $n = 137$</th>
<th>Sample Total $n = 200$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>HA</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>HA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Like Table 4.3.4.4, the results above show that written repetition was mainly used by the lower-level students (94 students) with 28 per cent of LL students believing that this strategy was helpful and 30 per cent feeling encouraged by their teachers to use it. They also used the strategy of written repetition for the reason that it was fast and easy (15 per cent) and fun (21 per cent). On the other hand, the UL students did not make as much use of written repetition as they were not encouraged by their teachers (44 per cent) or because of their own laziness (24 per cent) or because they did not have enough time to apply such a strategy (20 per cent). Almost none of them reported that this strategy was unhelpful.

Table 4.3.4.5 shows that this strategy was mainly used by the HA students from lower levels. Almost sixty per cent of them applied written repetition by using the new word in 5-16 different written examples as they recognised the importance of using such a strategy in consolidating the meaning as well as the form of the new word. However, many HA students (47 per cent of all HA) indicated that they did not use this strategy as they did not have enough class time (9 per cent), because they were lazy (18 per cent), or because they were not encouraged by their teachers to make use of such a strategy to consolidate the meaning and the form of the new word (13 per cent). The observed differences in the frequency distribution of responses on this question were statistically significant ($\chi^2 (7) = 45.20, p = .000$).

**Summary of section 4:**

This section discussed the usage of five main vocabulary-learning strategies: grouping words, encoding, connecting new words with personal experiences, and using verbal and written repetition.
The overall results of this section show that upper-level students made use of the strategies of grouping words and connecting words to personal experience mostly because they found these strategies useful rather than because they felt encouraged by their teachers to use them. Some of the reasons for not using the two strategies among the UL participants were lack of time or laziness. Again, it was mostly the HA students at this level of education who utilised the strategies. The results suggest that the neglect of the strategies of encoding and verbal and written repetition can be attributed to a combination of lack of teacher encouragement, insufficient class time, and personal lack of motivation.

Conversely, the results show that the lower-level students primarily made use of the strategies of encoding and verbal and written repetition because their teachers encouraged them to do so, because they found them useful, and because they enjoyed using them. The HA students at this level made use of these strategies a lot more than the LA students. The results suggest that the strategies of grouping words and connecting new words to personal experience saw little use among lower-level students due to, above all other reasons, a lack of teacher support for the two strategies. High and low achievers differed statistically significantly in their reported use of strategies at this stage of vocabulary learning with chi square values varying between 34.96 and 164.48, all $p$s = .000.

**4.3.5 Stage five: Using the word**

Q. 1: I connect new words to already known words and use them in chunks and collocations.

Teachers are advised by a number of sources to get their students used to repeating collocations instead of isolated words and words out of context. It is suggested that helping the students to use the newly learned words in collocations can be of great help; for example, Thornbury (2004, p. 116) observes: “The ability to deploy a wide range of lexical chunks both accurately and appropriately is probably what most distinguishes advanced learners from intermediate ones.” Aitchison (1994) notes that when we observe the human word-web -that is, the way in which people connect words together
in their mind -words appear to be organised in semantic fields, and there, collocational linking seems to be particularly strong. The literature on using the new word with its collocations demonstrates that the more the L2 learners are competent at producing the naturally right collocations, the less hesitant they are when producing long sentences and thus the more capable in their L2 they become (see Section 2.7). Ediger (1999) also suggests that students should contextualise the vocabulary terms they have learned and use them in real-life conversation.

Similarly, Taiwo (2001, p. 323) believes that the risk of ESL learners not combining words correctly without having previously read them is very high. Therefore, practice using new collocations in context as soon as possible after learning them is recommended as it can help ESL learners to build abilities to use English naturally in the future. Teachers can also encourage learners’ creativity through the use of some aids to vocabulary-learning such as lexical matching and networks, according to Meara (1997b) and Carter (1987). To be able to use a word entails mastering its collocational range and restrictions on that range, according to Lewis (1993). Knowledge of words can be expanded and enriched with the collocational components.

Table 4.3.5.1: Frequency of Responses to Q1/5 by Level of Education and Grades in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Lower levels n = 100</th>
<th>Upper levels n = 100</th>
<th>LA n = 63</th>
<th>HA n = 137</th>
<th>Sample Total n = 200</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>HA</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>HA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A = Agree, D = Disagree; LA = lower achieving, HA = higher achieving - Overall difference between LA and HA was significant at $\chi^2 (7) = 99.20, p = .000$
As shown in Table 4.3.5.1, 30 per cent of all students reported that they did not connect new words to already known words or use them in chunks and collocations for the reason that their teachers had never encouraged them to use that strategy. However, 60 per cent of upper-level students reported that they did use that strategy, not only because they thought it helpful (27 per cent), but also because their teachers at the upper levels encouraged them to connect new words to already known words and use them in chunks and collocations (33 per cent). On the other hand, more than 30 UL students indicated that the reason for not using this strategy was either due to not having enough time (15 per cent) or due to laziness (16 per cent), whereas 58 per cent of lower-level students did not use this strategy because their teachers never encouraged them to use it. The results show that 56 per cent of LA students as well as 20 per cent of HA students indicated that their teachers did not encourage them to use this strategy. That could mean that lower-level teachers use less effective vocabulary teaching methods like teaching new words in isolation from their collocations. The observed differences in the frequency distribution of responses on this question were statistically significant ($\chi^2 (7) = 99.20, p = .000$).

Table 4.3.5.1 also shows that 21 per cent of the HA students (mainly from upper levels) used this strategy because they were encouraged by their teachers, and 20 per cent of them reported that they used this strategy because they believed that it was helpful. Yet, the majority of the whole sample did not use this strategy for many other reasons including class-time insufficiency, laziness, and lack of encouragement from teachers. Such comparative neglect of this vocabulary-learning strategy and of its significance is of some concern, as it could not only affect the students’ vocabulary acquisition, but also their entire EFL learning process as vocabulary includes all the four language skills, without which L2 learners can neither express themselves properly nor understand what is said to them.
4.3.6 Summary of the results of the questionnaire analysis

Figure 4.3.6.1: Frequency (number) of all Agree and Disagree Responses by Grades in English

Note: A = Agree = use of strategy, D = Disagree = neglect of strategy; HA = higher achieving, LA = lower achieving

The main analyses of the questionnaire were conducted with the aim of answering research questions 1, 3, and 4 regarding students’ vocabulary learning strategies.

Q1. How do Saudi learners learn EFL vocabulary? Are they using the most effective methods in their vocabulary learning?

On the one hand, the analyses show that there is a mismatch between what research claims is important and what students perceive as important in vocabulary learning, as more than half of the sample did not use vocabulary-learning strategies that had been recommended by researchers. It is notable that 85 out of the 99 students who did use those strategies were HA students. The chart above clearly shows that the HA and LA students differ in how they used those strategies. Figure 4.3.6.1 shows that only nine students (two HA and seven LA on answers D2) believed that those strategies were useless.

The relationship between what is known from previous research about vocabulary-acquisition processes and English skills is clearly demonstrated in the graph: the bars representing HA numbers tower over the bars representing LA number in the Agree (= use of strategy) section. Almost 85 per cent of those who used those strategies had good
to excellent academic performance in English subjects at both upper and lower educational levels. The fact that the HA students are those who form the overwhelming majority among those who reported using strategies suggests that more use of vocabulary-learning strategies can lead to higher academic achievement and better L2 acquisition. However, more research is needed for examining to what extent those strategies are effective, how they should be applied, and most importantly, examining their effect on the learners’ educational achievements as it is the appropriate use of effective strategies that is important; not only the use of the strategies.

Q3. What are the vocabulary-learning strategies that are most preferred and most utilised by Saudi EFL learners?

The analyses above demonstrate that there is a big difference between the two educational levels (upper and lower levels) in terms of the use of vocabulary-learning strategies; i.e., that different strategies are favoured by the two groups. The following table summarises the preferred and most-used strategies for the different educational levels:
Table 4.3.6.1: Distribution of Strategies in Order of Preference and Use by Educational Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lower levels</th>
<th>Upper levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Making use of the new word’s part of speech to guess the meaning.</td>
<td>1. Using guessing strategies based on context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Making use of the pictures in the students’ textbooks.</td>
<td>2. Making use of the grammatical features of the new word to guess the meaning of the new words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Doing spoken and written repetitions to learn the form of the new word.</td>
<td>3. Making use of the new word morphology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Using memory strategies especially encoding strategies (imaging the meaning of the new word).</td>
<td>4. Using bilingual (English-Arabic) and monolingual (English-English) dictionaries and making use of their features.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Applying verbal and written repetition in many various examples to consolidate the meanings of the new words in memory.</td>
<td>5. Using memory strategies, especially the grouping words strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Connecting the new word to personal experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Connecting new words to already known words and using them in chunks and collocations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results show that the lower-level students preferred making use of the new words’ parts of speech when guessing the new words’ meanings. They also made good use of their textbooks’ pictures at the first stage of vocabulary learning. The lower-level students tended to do verbal and written repetition to learn the form of the new word more than their counterparts at the upper levels do. They also preferred to consolidate the meaning of the new word by drawing a picture of what the word represents and by applying spoken and written repetitions. In contrast, upper-level students preferred using more advanced strategies including making use of dictionaries and morphology and grammar features of the new word. They also preferred connecting the new words to personal experiences and using them in chunks and collocations. There were no specific strategies preferred by HA or LA students in particular.
Q4. What are the learners’ reasons for using/not using those strategies? Which learning strategies might be the most effective and the most motivating for students in ways that contribute to their overall SLA?

The role of the teacher emerges as an important factor when it comes to explaining why some strategies are used and others are not. As Figure 4.3.6.1 shows, the bar representing the number of respondents who selected answer D1 in the survey stands tall among all others. This suggests that the main reason for not using the strategies thought to be effective was the absence of teacher support for their use. The second most frequently selected reason for not using strategies was insufficient class time, followed by lack of personal motivation. As previously mentioned, very few perceived the strategies as useless.

Although the HA and LA groups differ in their motivations for using/not using the strategies, it is apparent from the diagram that these differences are smaller in the Disagree section than in the Agree section. In the Agree section, the most cited reason for using a strategy, especially among the HA students, was its perceived usefulness, followed by the teacher’s encouragement for using it. These findings also lend support to the proposition that using effective vocabulary learning-strategies is strongly associated with higher EFL performance.
Chapter five: Analysis of the interviews

The research design for this study included both a questionnaire (quantitative) and semi-structured interview (qualitative) for reasons presented in Chapter 3. The intention was to use qualitative data collected from interviews to support and gain a deeper understanding of the quantitative data collected from the questionnaire and then use further interviews to investigate issues that emerged from the quantitative outcomes. According to Nau (1995), combining the qualitative and quantitative methods of research in such a way can produce a final product that can underline and cross-validate the significant contributions of both. The flexibility of using different methods exploits the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative techniques, and gives the research a balanced approach.

This chapter explores how Saudi EFL learners as well as teachers (depending on their students’ responses) understand the concept of ‘vocabulary knowledge’, and to what extent the participants are aware of the significance of autonomous vocabulary-learning, in order to identify the difficulties many Saudi EFL learners encounter when learning English vocabulary. The material presented here is based on the interviews with Saudi EFL students.

The first section, 5.1, introduces the analysis of the interview data. Section 5.2 presents the findings of the analysis. Section 5.3 presents a discussion of these findings, with particular attention to research questions two and five.

5.1 Introduction

The questions to participants in this study, presented in Appendix B, were developed in order to explore several areas that were identified as possible sources of weakness in Saudi EFL students’ learning of English vocabulary, namely: the non-usage of many effective vocabulary-learning strategies, misunderstanding of the concept of ‘vocabulary knowledge’, and unawareness of the significance of autonomous vocabulary learning. In the Saudi context, it appears clear that students are encountering
difficulties in attaining EFL vocabulary resulting in general weakness in the fluency of
the English level and students’ overall performance. The causes of this weakness are not
well understood due to the scarcity of research on EFL vocabulary acquisition by Saudi
learners, but the present study has identified the aforementioned areas as the most
promising ones to investigate.

The semi-structured interviews reported here were undertaken to gain an “understanding
of the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience”
(Seidman, 1998, p. 3). The semi-structured approach used a list of questions or issues to
be explored with each participant.

According to Briggs and Coleman (2007), Bruce (2004), and Patton (1990), semi-
structured or semi-standardised interviews (also known as guided interviews) mean that
the researcher has a list of themes and questions to be covered, and normally data is
recorded by note-taking or by tape recording. Semi-structured interviews use open-
ended questions, starting with more general questions, for example: “Tell me about …”
and more questions are created during the interview, such as: “You said before … can
you tell me more?” The present investigation applied this approach by beginning with
open-ended questions such as: “Some students believe that knowing the grammatical
feature of the new word helps them guess its meaning, do you agree? Why? Example:
The man ……… a cup of tea.” The face-to-face interview method was chosen for the
thorough and comprehensive data it can provide. The limitation of the semi-structured
method, though, is that it is slightly less reliable, at least in statistical terms, because of
the difficulty of repeating the interview exactly.

This method presumes that there is common information that should be obtained from
each person interviewed, but does not require a standardised set of questions to be
written in advance (Patton, 1990). Data-collection methods in the qualitative tradition
permit a detailed description and analysis of what it is that persons know and
accomplish as they interact with each other in the situations they themselves create and
manage. Such analysis is based on materials collected from social interaction, usually
by means of field- and interview notes or with the help of audio- or videotaped
recordings and transcripts (Patton 1990, p. 392). The qualitative responses are supported
by verbatim quotes from the interviews. The data from the interviews in this study was
saved in text format. It was examined for keywords, themes, categories, and issues and
then quotes were used directly to illustrate each of these main findings or points. (The quotes have been translated by the researcher, since the interviews were conducted in Arabic.)

The main reason for using this method is that interviews are the most widely used procedure in social science research, for reasons of the flexibility of the technique and the great depth of the outcomes. This method gave the researcher the opportunity to see the research topic from the viewpoint of the participant and to understand how individuals come to have this perspective. Rubin and Rubin (1995) believe that interviews share many of the characteristics of ordinary conversations, but with some special features. More focused on the understanding and knowledge of the interviewees than categorising people or events in terms of academic theories or predetermined analytical frameworks; interviews should go with what the interviewees know and feel. The insights gained from such a method are illustrated in the EFL learners’ responses when asked to reflect on various aspects of their vocabulary-learning experiences.

The interview data analysis consists of five main sections and subdivisions. The five main sections are: encountering the word; getting the word form; getting the word meaning; consolidating word form and meaning in memory; and using the word. Each section concluded with fundamental questions like, “At this stage, do you think it is better if you apply the above-mentioned strategies yourself without your teacher’s help? Why? Why not?” in order to evaluate the participants’ awareness of autonomous vocabulary-learning at each of the five stages.

5.2 Interview-data analysis

5.2.1 Stage one: Encountering the new word

As mentioned above, the main focus in this stage is on one of the most important types of vocabulary-learning strategies: the ‘guessing’ strategy, and its subtypes; however, interviews can also reveal whether the students in the sample apply other strategies besides this strategy, such as underlining or highlighting the most difficult words in a
text, deciding at which level the new word is, emphasising key words and the repeated words in a text, and so on. The analysis will also show how conscious the students are in regard to the significance of autonomous vocabulary-learning.

**Using guessing**

The interviews showed that many of the students tended to ignore learning the meaning of the new words they encountered in their reading or listening classes. They were not eager to know the meanings of those words unless they were important key-words that were used repeatedly in the lesson. Even for those key words, the majority of the participants preferred asking their teachers about their meanings, instead of using more active vocabulary-learning strategies such as guessing.

When they were asked about the best strategies to use when encountering a new English word for the first time, many of the participants commented that they did not know any strategies they could use at that stage. Only three participants from upper levels said that they used other strategies to learn the meaning of a word they encountered for the first time, including using electronic dictionaries, asking a classmate, or underlining that word to look it up in a dictionary later on.

The findings show that a majority of the students did not use or prefer guessing strategies for a number of reasons, including lack of class time, too much information to learn, lack of teachers’ support, and lack of motivation. When the idea of ‘guessing’ was explained to them, many students said that using guessing would help them greatly. They would use guessing if they were taught and encouraged by their teachers to use it as an efficient and timesaving strategy. Without such input from teachers, students may underestimate the usefulness of guessing as a learning strategy, since it is often seen in a negative light; for example, it may be equated to the guessing students might do if they do not know an answer in a test.
Making use of the part of speech of the new word

The participants were asked to give their opinions about the efficiency of using the knowledge of the new word part of speech to guess its meaning.

*Interviewer: Do you think that knowing what part of speech the new word is helps you guess its meaning?  Example: The _______ drank a cup of tea.*

Almost all participants agreed that this strategy could be of a great help in guessing the meaning of the new word. One upper-level participant commented:

I don’t know if I should blame myself, my former English teachers, or the curriculum itself for ignoring such a helpful and easy strategy… If I had been encouraged to use this strategy before, I would have used it all the time.

Some participants explained that the curriculum was not designed to encourage the use of guessing strategies:

*Showing the interviewer the exercises of one unit in his student's book, Look! Do these exercises encourage using guessing strategies? I don’t know the point of these exercises in the first place.*

Another participant commented:

Our English book is full of long texts that have so many difficult words; they are really difficult. Why do they put all these long texts in each unit of the book? ... I know guessing strategies are helpful but I can’t guess the meanings of all the difficult words in such long texts.

It is obvious, then, that these students believe that the Saudi EFL curricula are not satisfactorily well planned and do not enhance student performance, as they lack the variety of learning styles that encourage the use of different vocabulary-learning
strategies, including guessing. Such problems could be contributing to the Saudi students’ general weakness (see Section 1.3).

In addition to the problem of the curriculum, lack of class time is another obstacle that hinders many students from using this type of guessing strategies. More than half of the whole sample indicated that they would use this helpful strategy if they had more class time.

From now on, I’ll start using this strategy which I know now it is effective, but I’ll only use it outside the classroom, because as you know, the class is only 45 minutes … five minutes of which is for quick reading, and 10 minutes for taking the attendance and so on.

Another student said that he would use this strategy if he had more class-time:

Shorter curriculum and longer class time would solve this problem for sure. I mean, look, this strategy is good and very easy to use and all that we need is just more class time.

Moreover, nine participants from lower levels said that their teachers had never taught them how to make use of this strategy. One commented:

My teacher always says that we need to finish the book before the end of semester; we don’t have enough time. So, he doesn’t tell us about any strategies. All that he thinks of is just finishing the book on time.

Another student added:

The problem is that our English teacher just writes the new words on the board and asks us to write them down in our notebooks … I really don’t know the point of that! Those words are already written in our students’ books and they are put in alphabetical order, too … I mean, as you can see, our teacher does not tell us anything about guessing strategies at all; and this happens every day, every class.
Findings from the interviews thus confirm that many of these Saudi EFL students were ignorant about guessing strategies. Even though they agreed that guessing strategies were helpful, they did not use them as they had never been taught those strategies before, were not encouraged enough, did not have enough class time, or just because of the inappropriate design of the curriculum.

Making use of the grammatical features of the new word

As with the previous point, the interviews show that the majority of the sample, especially the lower-level students, did not know or use this strategy. They did not make good use of the knowledge of the grammatical features of the new word they encountered in reading- or listening classes to guess its meaning. Some of the students said that their teachers neglected teaching them how to make use of this strategy:

Using this strategy in Arabic is very easy and helpful, but in English, I don’t know. I think it’s the teacher’s responsibility to help how to define which word is a noun, verb, adverb, etc.

However, some upper-level students did use this strategy often, even though they were not encouraged by their teachers to do so:

I think I have discovered making use of this strategy all by myself. As far as I am concerned, I don’t remember that any of my English teachers since I was in Year 6 in elementary school told me how to make use of this strategy, but I do use it and I find it really very effective. This strategy helps me guess the meanings of many words without needing to ask my teachers or even use dictionaries.

The findings of this section suggest that many of the students did not make use of this strategy because of the lack of class time and teachers’ support.
Making use of the textbook pictures

Interviewer: As a student, do you make use of the pictures that come with vocabulary lessons to guess the meaning of the new vocabulary in those lessons? (The interviewer shows some examples from the English student’s book).

Almost all the 20 participants agreed on the importance and efficiency of this strategy. They believed that pictures could be very helpful when guessing the meanings of many new words. If employed well, pictures can promote lively interaction and increase students’ interest and motivation as they help the students learn to understand the connection between visual input and the written word (see Section 2.3.1).

The participants said that the pictures could summarise the main idea of a reading or listening text. However, the textbook pictures are not purposefully employed to encourage guessing. Few participants made good use of the textbook pictures to guess the meaning of a new word. One student said:

I have never thought of making use of these pictures to guess the meaning of the new words in a conversation. Yes, these pictures are funny and useful but I don’t use them for guessing proposes.

Another student added:

You are absolutely right! Look how many words whose meanings I can easily guess from these two pictures … five or maybe ten words can be guessed from those two pictures … but nobody had ever told me to use these pictures as you did.

Here, the students blamed their teachers for not showing them how to make use of such a helpful strategy when encountering new English words.
Moreover, many students believed that the pictures in their textbooks were not drawn purposefully. Some students said that the pictures were ready-made (taken from clipart CDs), and they did not enhance the use of guessing strategies:

These pictures can be found in many pictures or clipart software programs; I have many of these. Why don’t they get some artists to draw pictures that are made only for this book?

Another student thought that some pictures in his student’s book were not clear enough and that they did not convey the meaning of the whole passage:

Showing the interviewer the exercises of one unit in his student’s book: Some of these pictures, like this photo here … It’s a real photo but it’s not clear enough because it is taken from the internet and, you know, these photos are just 72 dpi; that’s very low dpi when they are downloaded from the internet. Look! What is the aim of this photo here? It’s not a matter of just filling the pages of the book to say: here, take it! This is your English book. Each picture must have a meaning and convey a message, right?

This suggests that textbook writers, as well as students, have insufficient awareness of the usefulness of pictures to support vocabulary-learning.

Making use of the morphology of the new word

Like the two points discussed above, only a few participants (mainly from the upper levels) used this strategy. When this strategy was explained to them, almost all the students liked it and decided to use it whenever possible to guess the meanings of many new words.

The majority of the participants, especially from the lower levels, blamed their teachers for not telling them about this helpful strategy:
I don’t remember that my English teachers told me about the morphology of the word. In Arabic, for example, it’s very easy to guess the meaning of any new word as I know, for example, that the suffix “-oon” means plural form of many verbs and nouns, but in English we don’t study such things … It’s my English teacher’s responsibility to do so.

Another student added:

My big brother, who goes to King Faisal University, once told me that any word ending with “-ful” means that it must be an adjective, but what about the other English prefixes and suffixes? I don’t know anything about them … Why don’t they teach us that at school? I am sure if I learn these suffixes in the future, it would help me a lot in guessing the meanings of lots of words.

Many participants expressed the belief that the Saudi EFL curriculum has not been designed to enhance the knowledge and use of morphology:

I’m just wondering why they don’t focus lessons on morphology. If we learn one suffix every day or even every week, we would be able to guess the meanings of so many words without asking the teacher about the meaning of every single word we see in the lessons.

In summary, many of the interviewed students appreciated the importance of using the morphology of the new word to guess its meaning when this strategy was brought to their attention, but they did not use it as the majority of them had never heard of this strategy before, and its use was encouraged neither by their teachers nor by the English curriculum.

**Vocabulary-learning autonomy at this stage**

The interviews above show that a substantial majority of the students in the sample were ignorant of almost all types of guessing strategies, but the students are clever and ready
to learn new strategies. The students had the willingness to gain the knowledge of any strategy that could help them learn better and faster.

When they were asked if they preferred using the above-mentioned strategies independently and without their teachers’ help, many answered that they would like to be autonomous learners when learning vocabulary, but they felt that they did not get enough support from their teachers or from the curriculum.

I think from now on, I’ll start using these strategies … I know they are very helpful, indeed, but the question here is: what about the other classmates and other students? Perhaps they do not know anything about these strategies. So, the problem is not us; it’s the teachers and this very outdated book.

A high-level student commented:

I use my own strategies and they are similar to your guessing ones even though my teachers never taught me how to be an autonomous learner.

These students did appreciate autonomous vocabulary-learning as it helped them learn better, saved them class time, and made them less dependent on their teachers. This confirms Candy’s (1991) claim that autonomous learning helps learners “set their own learning aims, make choices over learning modes, plan and organize work, decide when best to work alone, work collaboratively and when to seek advice, learn through experience, identify and solve problems, think creatively, communicate effectively orally and in writing, assess their own progress in respect of their aims” Candy’s (1991) assertion is based on the fact that learners use different learning strategies as they are individually different. When learning new vocabulary autonomously, learners can set their own goals for the use of the strategies and decide what strategies are more suitable for them. Autonomous vocabulary-learning can effectively help L2 learners make use of many various vocabulary learning strategies, and discover which work best for them. If ESL/EFL learners employ and combine various individual vocabulary learning strategies, they will be more successful in developing the lexicon of the English
language (see Cain, Oakhill, & Lemmon, 2004; Dörnyei, 2005; Parks & Raymond, 2004; Riding, 2005).

**Input from teachers**

In the interviews, students indicated that many of their teachers were not fully aware of the significance of autonomous vocabulary-learning, especially not when they encountered the new word for the first time:

> My teacher always says that we need to finish the book before the end of semester; we don’t have enough time. So, he doesn’t tell us about any strategies. All what he thinks of is just finishing the book on time.

Moreover, some teachers, especially those teaching the lower levels, may believe that these strategies are too hard for their students and that they can be only used effectively by advanced EFL learners.

While these findings are unrevealing about the real reasons for neglecting the teaching of guessing strategies, it is nonetheless clear that, from the students’ point of view, this area is seriously neglected by many Saudi EFL teachers.

**5.2.2 Stage two: Getting the word form**

Learners at this second stage are acquiring many aspects of a word form, including knowing its pronunciation, spelling, inflections, and derivations. Because of the importance of this stage, the interviews focus on exploring the students’ awareness of the following strategies: using dictionaries to learn (spelling, syllables, stress, pronunciation, part of speech, the meanings of important prefixes and suffixes, the history of the word, other words derived from the main word, whether or not the word is capitalised or abbreviated, and if there is any special plural form); and doing spoken and written repetition to practise the pronunciation and spelling of new words.
The participants were first asked to give their opinions about the best ways of dealing with new vocabulary at this stage. The interviews revealed that the majority of the sample was not familiar with any effective strategies to be applied to learn the form of the new word. Such a lack of knowledge of good strategies could be one of the reasons causing the general weakness many Saudi EFL learners have. This confirms again what Abughararah (1986), Alamr (1998), Albadawi (2007), Albanyan (2003), Alfallaj (1998), Alhammadi (1998), Almazroou (1988), Al-Shammary (1984), and Saifulrahman (2006) have said on the topic of the general weakness of Saudi EFL students, as mentioned above.

One participant said:

I only learn the key word my teacher writes on the board … Yes, that’s right; I only hear my teacher pronounce them once, so I practise the pronunciation of the new words only one time … Yes, I know it is not enough to guarantee good pronunciation learning, but what do you want me to do? This is the real situation.

The interviews show that the majority of the sample did not only struggle with learning pronunciation, but also with learning spelling. This causes lack of input of the new word form. One lower-level student said:

Our teacher asks us to copy the new words listed on the board into our notebooks … no spelling learning and no benefit at all, because he does not tell us how to learn spelling at home.

This supports the views of many researchers, as discussed in the literature review: listing new words on the board and then asking the students to copy them does not assure good learning of the new word form, and presenting new items as they appear in reading or listening is not sufficient to ensure vocabulary growth and development.

There was an indication that at least some students would prefer to depend on their electronic dictionaries to learn the form of the new word:
This handy electronic dictionary is always with me, not only in English class. I learn the right pronunciation of many words as it has real and natural voice … and it shows the syllables of the word, which helps me a lot in learning its spelling as well.

**Using dictionaries to learn the new word form**

The literature review in this research suggests that a dictionary can be a great resource for learning the form of the new word (see Section 2.4.1), but the interviews revealed that the majority of the sample of students did not use any dictionaries when learning the form of the new word.

*Interviewer: Do you prefer using your dictionary to get the form of a new word, or asking someone you trust such as your teacher or a classmate?*

One student answered:

No, I don’t. Actually I’ve never used a dictionary in my life … I prefer asking my teacher directly and if I feel that it is upsetting for him, I ask one of the good students in my class about the way the word is pronounced or spelled.

Another student said:

I do have an English-Arabic dictionary at home and I sometimes check my spelling using that dictionary, but I don’t know how to use it to learn the word pronunciation and I can’t afford buying an electronic one like the others.

Many of the participants preferred asking someone they trusted to learn the form of a new word instead of depending on their own abilities:

I only trust my teacher as he is the only source for good English pronunciation. My teacher speaks like English native speakers; like Americans.
Moreover, some of the students used ineffective vocabulary-learning strategies to learn the pronunciation of the new word including writing the pronunciation of the new word in Arabic next to the English word, which makes their eyes only focus only on the Arabic writing in the first place. Furthermore, the students who write the pronunciation of the word in Arabic in their textbooks or copybooks not only miss the chance to learn the spelling of the new word, they could also learn the wrong pronunciation of the new word as they read the Arabic writing only, and it does not have sounds like /p/, /g/, /v/, etc.:

Many people, like my English teachers and my father as well, told me that writing the pronunciation of the English words in Arabic is useless and harmful, but I can’t help it; I think I got used to it and the problem now is that next year I’ll be at the university and my reading is so terrible because I can only read the English words whose pronunciation is written in Arabic.

However, a small number of the whole sample preferred using their electronic dictionaries to learn the form of the new word inside and outside the classroom:

I used to use a Longman English-Arabic dictionary, and it was very helpful when learning the spelling and the pronunciation of the English words … but since I started my secondary school last year, I bought a good electronic English-Arabic and Arabic-English dictionary … it’s handy, easy to use, quick and it is talking, you know. You can hear how the word is pronounced; even the long words and even the medical terms; I like it.

In summary, the interviews revealed that the majority of the students preferred depending on their teachers when learning the form of the new word, instead of using more effective vocabulary-learning strategies such as using monolingual or bilingual dictionaries. This is, of course, not unrelated to the Saudi cultural context, with its strong emphasis on social relations, traditional attitudes to authority, and oral transmission of knowledge; however, most of the students were eager to incorporate new ways of doing things into their traditional cultural repertoire.
Doing spoken/written repetition

When asked about how often they do spoken and/or written repetition to practise the pronunciation and spelling of the new word, more than half of the sample interviewed (12 participants, mainly from lower levels) revealed that they found this strategy helpful:

My English teacher first says each word in the word list several times and then asks everyone to repeat after him to guarantee that we use the right pronunciation … and yes, I find repeating the words after the teacher is helpful.

However, some students commented that their teachers did not place any emphasis on doing written repetition. In addition, many students did spoken and sometimes written repetition only in the classroom, but they did not practise it outside the classroom:

Yes, we do spoken repetition very much but not spelling practice … the problem is that when I go home I do not do spoken or written repetition. For me, for example, I just do my homework and that’s it.

The students did not blame their teachers for the fact that they did not use this strategy outside the classroom, but this situation seems to indicate that many Saudi EFL teachers, though they were aware of the importance of teaching their students the right pronunciation of the key words, ignored teaching their students how to apply this strategy outside the classroom. The findings of the interviews also indicate that few Saudi EFL teachers focus much on the strategy of doing written repetition, whether inside or outside the classroom, which could cause many writing problems for their students in the future, especially with spelling. The interviews indicated that many of those teachers were not using effective vocabulary-teaching methods in this regard.
On the other hand, eight participants, mainly from the upper levels, believed repetition to be a time-consuming strategy, even though they thought spoken/written repetition a good strategy:

Now, I can’t think of anything more efficient than this strategy, especially when I want to learn the pronunciation and spelling … All in all, it’s a good strategy, but I find it boring and repetitive.

**Vocabulary-learning autonomy at this stage**

The interviews show that the majority of the students tended not to be independent in their vocabulary-learning, especially not when learning the form of the new word. Most of them indicated a preference for depending on their teachers to learn the pronunciation and spelling of the new word, and a corresponding tendency not to use any other sources, like dictionaries, outside the classroom.

Even the strategy of spoken/written repetition, the majority of the sample preferred doing it with their teachers rather than doing it by themselves outside the classroom. The reason for such dependence on English teachers is attributed to either the student’s own carelessness or a lack of teachers’ encouragement, especially in terms of teaching dictionary skills and giving exercises that encourage written repetition.

From the viewpoint of these students, such strategies are neglected by their teachers. More investigation is needed to explore the teachers’ reasons for not concentrating on these strategies when teaching the form of the new word.

**5.2.3 Stage three: Getting the word meaning**

As with stage two of the interview-data analysis, the participants were firstly asked to give their opinions about the best ways of learning the meaning of a new word. Generally speaking, findings from the interviews show that the majority of the whole sample, mainly from lower levels, depended completely on their teachers to get the meanings of the new words because they were not taught the strategies of looking for
and learning the meaning of new words by themselves. Lack of knowledge of effective vocabulary-learning strategies, especially learning word meanings, could be a strong cause responsible for the Saudi EFL learners’ weakness. One participant in the interview mentioned:

Why do I have to bother? Why do I have to bring along a dictionary with me when I come to school? My teacher writes the meanings of the important words and I copy that into my notebook.

Making use of monolingual dictionaries to get the meaning

There is convincing evidence that the use of a monolingual dictionary can be of great help in learning words’ meanings in an effective way. Numerous studies have confirmed the significance of dictionary-use for L2 learners when learning vocabulary, including: Bensoussan, Sim, and Weiss (1984), Eeds and Cockrum (1985), Knight (1994), Laufer and Hadar (1997), Laufer and Hill (2000), Laufer and Kimmel (1997), and Marckwardt (1973).

The interviewer asked the participants if they liked using an English-English dictionary to get the meaning of a new word. The vast majority of participants revealed that they never used English-English dictionaries for various reasons, including that they did not know how to use them, were not encouraged by their teachers to do so, and/or because they believed that monolingual dictionaries were too difficult to read and use. One student from high school, who had been studying English for more than six years, commented that he had never used an English-English dictionary during his years of study.

I have never used it since I started studying English six years ago, or six and a half now … I find it very difficult to read, but I may use it when I go to university level.

Another participant added:

Those dictionaries could be easy for English major students or very good and advanced students, but for me! I don’t know; I’m not sure.
However, some participants commented that they would make use of monolingual dictionaries, especially when looking for and learning the meanings of the new words, if they were taught how to use them.

I don’t think English dictionaries are too hard to use … Many words definitions are very easy to understand, but we still need, let’s say, short courses to learn how to make good use of those dictionaries.

In addition, there were some high-level participants who very often used electronic monolingual dictionaries to get the meanings of new words.

Electronic English-English dictionaries are easier to use and they are faster. You get the meaning of any word you want very quickly. My dictionary gives easy definitions and synonyms so you can understand the meaning easily.

The participants were also asked about the benefits of using monolingual dictionaries. Unfortunately, the vast majority of the participants believed that monolingual dictionaries could only be used to get the meanings of the words. Most of them appeared to be ignorant about the other features and advantages of monolingual dictionaries such as meanings and examples, synonyms, antonyms, collocations, idioms, common learner errors, special uses, picture/icon, and word building (see Section 2.5.1).

Such ignorance of the benefits of monolingual dictionaries could be a contributing factor to their weakness in learning vocabulary and learning English in general.

Even though I don’t use them, I think English dictionaries give the meaning in a synonymous way … No, no more.

As many students were ignorant of the benefits of monolingual dictionaries, they did not use them when learning the meaning of a new word. They would rather ask their teachers directly about the meaning of a new word, which could in turn cause more
waste of class time than if students were given specific instruction in how to use
dictionaries to learn more independently.

Making use of the icons in monolingual dictionaries and the pictures in
picture dictionaries

Following on from the previous point, the findings of the interviews show that many
participants believed that icons and pictures could be very helpful when learning the
meaning of a new word, but they did not use monolingual or picture dictionaries in the
first place. Many of them agreed that making use of icons and pictures could make it
easier and faster to learn the meaning of a new word, but they were not encouraged to
own monolingual or picture dictionaries. One participant explained:

They say a picture is better than a thousand words, right? So, yes! Those small pictures
in English dictionaries or even English-Arabic dictionaries are very helpful … They
save time and effort, but to be honest with you, I don’t have one.

However, a few students did have picture dictionaries and they used them often to learn
the meanings of words. A high-level student commented:

I do have a picture dictionary, The Cambridge Picture Dictionary, and I always use it to
learn many English words. I feel that my teacher is so proud of me because I know the
meanings of so many words. Even my classmates ask me about the meanings of many
words.

When that interviewee was asked if he was encouraged by anyone to have a picture
dictionary, he commented:

No, nobody told me about picture dictionaries before, or how to make use of them.
Actually, I found it in a bookstore and bought it; I really love it.”
The literature review suggests that using picture dictionaries can be very helpful when learning the meaning of a new word (see Section 2.5.2). Therefore, EFL teachers should encourage their students to make good use of the pictures and icons in monolingual dictionaries and picture dictionaries, especially when learning the meanings of the words.

**Vocabulary-learning autonomy at this stage**

In terms of vocabulary-learning autonomy, the findings of the interviews suggest that the vast majority of the sampled students were not satisfactorily independent learners. The majority of them relied on their teachers to get the meanings of the new words. These students had the readiness to learn effective vocabulary-learning strategies to learn the meanings of new words, but they were not sufficiently encouraged to use monolingual dictionaries.

In fact, I’d love to use English dictionaries to learn not only the words meanings but also spelling and other stuff, but the curriculum and the teacher do not support me to do that.

Another participant added:

Picture dictionaries must be helpful for sure as we learn from pictures very fast, even faster than reading words, but I don’t know; just let me tell you that before you showed me that picture dictionary, I had never been told about picture dictionaries. Our teacher has never told us about such a dictionary; yes, as far as I can remember, none of my English teachers told me about this before.

In summary, the findings of the interviews strongly suggest that the majority of the students were keen and would have the ability to be autonomous vocabulary-learners if they got sufficient support from their teachers and if the curricula promoted the use of the above-mentioned strategies.
Input from teachers

Almost all the participants from both upper and lower levels agreed that their teachers did not encourage them enough to get the meanings of key words from other good sources such as bilingual-, monolingual-, picture-, or electronic dictionaries, the internet, and so on. The teachers’ neglect of these strategies operates to keep their students more dependent, which may cause more class time to be spent on translation and explaining the meanings of many words rather than teaching vocabulary-learning strategies. As to why teachers may be neglecting these strategies should be the focus of future research.

5.2.4 Stage four: Consolidating word form and meaning in memory

Unlike the previous stages, the findings of the interviews at this stage show that the vast majority of the sampled EFL students were familiar with many good vocabulary-learning strategies that can be used to consolidate the form and meaning of the new word in memory. Many participants mentioned a number of strategies such as using the new word in different sentences, applying verbal and written repetition, playing word games and so on.

Interviewer: What do you think the best methods are to consolidate the form and meaning of a new English word in your memory? Why?

One participant answered:

For me, I’d prefer to put the new word I want to learn in a sentence or a small phrase; that makes it easier for me to remember.

Another participant added:

I think the best way to consolidate the spelling of a word is to write that word several times … then I hide it with my hand and write it from memory to learn its spelling by heart.
Some participants revealed that they were not encouraged by their teachers to do that:

I apply repetition by myself, or write the new word on small cards and take them with me wherever I go … No, my teacher doesn’t encourage me to do this. He only puts the key words in a list on the board and asks everyone to memorise it at home, but never tells us how.

Making use of ‘grouping words’ strategy

This strategy is considered one of the most effective mnemonics that can be used to consolidate the meaning and form of the new word in memory. Many studies assert the importance of using this strategy for the above-mentioned purpose including Cohen (1987), Fuentes (1976), Hulstijn (1997), Levin, Pressley, McCormick, Miller, and Shriberg (1979), Meara (1980), Nation (1982), Paivio and Desrochers (1981), Pressley, Levin, and Miller (1982), Richards, Platt, and Weber (1985), and Willerman and Melvin (1979). (See Section 2.6.1)

After they were given several examples of the strategy of grouping words, the participants were asked if they used such strategies. Among the findings, the findings show that some participants (mainly from upper levels) were aware of this strategy and that they used it. An upper-level participant commented:

Yes, I do use this strategy … Instead of writing the meaning of the English word in Arabic, I write a couple of easy synonyms of the word I want to learn. So, I learn it and I learn many other words, too.

Another participant added that learning the new word with its collocations can effectively consolidate its meaning in memory:

Putting the word in short phrases is very helpful. This is something I have been doing since I was in Year 2 of the intermediate level and I encourage everyone to try this strategy.
However, the interviewed students revealed that their teachers did not encourage them to use this strategy. Other participants, mainly from low levels, explained that they preferred not to use this strategy for many reasons, including that they preferred learning the Arabic meaning of the new English word without focusing much on the English word itself. Unfortunately, this makes them forget that word easily. Moreover, they mentioned that they had never been taught such a strategy before:

I feel it is difficult to learn an English word and its synonyms or antonyms … So, yes, just the English word and its Arabic meaning. For learning new words within phrases or sentences, I find it [learning the new word with its collocations] logical and must be helpful, but the teacher doesn’t tell us that. He only puts a word list on the board and then our job is to find these words in the text.

It is noteworthy that the students’ perceptions are in accord with findings from existing research, which suggest that teaching words as they appear in reading or listening does not guarantee good vocabulary development, and that learning is more effective when new words are presented in collocations or with synonyms and/or antonyms to enhance the vocabulary-learning process.

**Making use of ‘imaging’ strategy**

The findings of the interviews show that this strategy is mainly used by students at the lower levels. Some of those students revealed that their teachers sometimes encouraged them to use that strategy. One participant commented that this strategy was very helpful for him:

That’s true, the word I illustrate or draw, even just with a small icon or a picture, sticks into my mind for a long time.

However, some students (mainly from upper levels) thought that, while this strategy could be effective in consolidating the meaning of the new word, it could also be time-
consuming, especially with the large amount of vocabulary students must learn at upper levels. One student commented:

It’s good; I’d use it if had more time.

**Connecting the new word to personal experience**

Similar to part one of this stage, this strategy, effective though it is in consolidating the meaning of the new word in memory, seemed more suitable for advanced students. Some upper-level students mentioned that even though they were not encouraged by their teachers to use this strategy, they could see that it would be helpful:

It seems good to me; I mean when I connect the meaning of the English word I want to learn with personal stuff like the things I do every day and so on, but to be honest with you, I don’t use that strategy.

**Applying verbal/written repetition**

Almost all the participants agreed on the importance and the effectiveness of this strategy in consolidating the meaning as well as the form of the new word in memory. One participant said:

Since I started studying English in Year 6, I have been using this strategy by repeating the spelling and pronunciation of the words I want to learn. This strategy is really cool and quite good for me.

The participants also revealed that their teachers sometimes encouraged them to do verbal/written repetition as they did that in class anyway, but many teachers did not concentrate on teaching their students how to learn and consolidate the spelling form of the new word in memory.
At the beginning of each class, our English teacher starts by asking about the words we learned in the previous lesson and their meanings of course, but because the class time is short, you know, he doesn’t check if we know how to spell those words or not.

**Vocabulary-learning autonomy at this stage**

The interviews show some advantages in terms of vocabulary-learning autonomy at this stage. Unlike the previous stages, many participants here used a number of good strategies to consolidate meanings of the new words to memory. In terms of applying verbal and written repetition, the findings revealed that a majority of the participants applied this strategy independently outside the classroom; however, for the strategy of grouping words, imaging the meaning of the word, and connecting the word to personal experience, the findings of the interviews suggest that the majority of the participants did not apply those strategies, as they were either not sufficiently encouraged by their teachers or because they had never been taught about those strategies, their importance, and how to make good use of them.

The findings of the interviews show that with the exception of encouraging their students to apply the strategy of verbal repetition, many of the Saudi EFL teachers did not encourage their students to use effective strategies especially not at this very important stage of consolidating the form and meaning of the new word. The findings show that many EFL students are not taught efficient strategies like grouping words, imaging, applying written repetition, or connecting the new word to personal experience. Neglecting such important techniques of vocabulary learning could be a major contributing factor in the general Saudi EFL students’ weakness mentioned above.

**5.2.5 Stage five: Using the word**

This is the final stage of the five vocabulary-learning stages discussed in this thesis. Reaching this stage means that the EFL learner should know many features about the freshly learned word such as its meaning in the learner’s first and second languages,
spelling, pronunciation, morphology, collocations, and so on. This final stage is considered critical as it means complete mastering of the new word.

The participants were first asked to give their opinions about the best ways of dealing with new vocabulary at this stage. The findings of the interviews show that about half of the sample (mainly from upper levels) were familiar with some good strategies that could be applied at this stage, including using the new word in conversations with classmates, and writing many examples using the new word.

The common issue of those who did not use any strategies at this stage and those who did is that the vast majority of them agreed that they were not encouraged to use any strategies at this stage:

When I learn words, I’d love to use them and practise my English … Yes, I use them with my friends and those who speak English like, you know, workers, restaurant staff like Philippines, Indians, and so on.

Another participant added:

The words I use in conversations with other people, I never forget. I never forget those words and I remember them for a long time.

When they were asked if they were encouraged by their teachers to use helpful strategies at this stage, they revealed that they did not get enough support from their teachers. Particularly, they said that their teachers did not encourage them sufficiently to use English in real-life conversation. One of them commented:

No, he doesn’t encourage us. We learn new words every day and there is no time during class to practise all those words … all that the teacher focuses on is to make sure we do our homework, but the new words we’ve learned before, no, he does not.

Another participant added:

My English teacher has never taught me any strategies for using the new words.
Using the new word in chunks and collocations

The research literature suggests that the active use of the new word by learners is especially important in committing it to their long-term memories, and one of the most effective ways for using the newly learned word is using it within its collocations. This topic has been thoroughly investigated by many researchers and theorists including Arnaud and Savignon (1997), Bahns and Eldaw (1993), Cowie (1988), Lewis (1993), Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992), Sansome (2000), Willis (1990) (see Section 2.7.1). Although these studies assert the effectiveness of using the new word in chunks and collocations, especially at the final stage of vocabulary learning, it seems that Saudi students may not have the chance to apply this strategy for a number of reasons. However, a great number of the interviewees stated that this strategy must be helpful as using the newly learned word within its collocations can guarantee longer memorization of it, which supports what the abovementioned studies suggest.

The findings of the interviews show that only two upper-level participants used this strategy, while the other 18 participants did not use this strategy because they were not taught how to make use of it:

You are right, using the new word with collocations or within phrases is very helpful and I would have used it if my teachers told me about its benefits.

In summary, the findings of the interviews show that only the upper-level students were familiar with some good strategies that can be applied at this stage. Those students indicated that they developed their use of those strategies by themselves and that they were not sufficiently encouraged by their teachers to do so. In relation to making use of the collocations of the new word, the findings show that the vast majority of the participants did not use this effective strategy when using the new word. Thus, they were probably learning the new word out of its correct context, and hence using inappropriate prepositions or adjectives and so on with that word.
5.3 Summary of the findings of the interviews

The main analyses of the interview focused on seeking answers to research questions two and five regarding students’ vocabulary-learning strategies.

Q2. How do Saudi L2 learners (and their teachers) understand the concept of ‘vocabulary knowledge’?

This question was posed with a view to exploring the concept of ‘vocabulary knowledge’ from the perspective of Saudi EFL learners, because it is their understanding of this concept that forms the basis for their learning practices. It was also hoped that the analysis would reveal whether the Saudi EFL students appreciate the importance of vocabulary knowledge, which is seen by many educators as the key to the success in all the English language skills. Students’ comments also gave some insights into the input they received from their teachers. This suggests that many of these teachers do not satisfactorily recognise key aspects of vocabulary knowledge.

The findings of the interviews revealed that many Saudi EFL students were not experiencing support from their teachers in learning these aspects of vocabulary. For example, many students reported not being encouraged to learn the new words within their collocations, and it seems that the practice in which some teachers engage, such as listing the new words on the board and then asking the students to copy them in their copybooks, is not stimulating enough for the students. The findings from both the questionnaires and the interviews confirm that many EFL students in Saudi Arabia are being taught very little about what strategies they should use inside and outside the classroom to guarantee good vocabulary growth.

However, it is not clear why so many of the vocabulary-learning strategies discussed in this study are apparently being ignored by the educators. Therefore, further research is needed to explore and investigate the teachers’ reasons for not focusing on those strategies when teaching EFL vocabulary; the present study concentrates only on vocabulary-learning strategies, not on vocabulary teaching methods.
Likewise, the findings of the interviews also revealed that a majority of the sampled Saudi EFL learners appeared to be ignorant of many aspects of vocabulary-knowledge. At the beginning of each stage in the interview, the participants were asked to give their opinions about the best strategies they thought they should use at that particular stage. In response to such questions, only a few of the main aspects of vocabulary knowledge were mentioned in the interviews, indicating that most of the participants had a very limited understanding of the concept of vocabulary knowledge. Many of those participants thought of vocabulary knowledge as knowing the equivalent Arabic meaning of the new words, which is only one aspect of vocabulary knowledge among more than ten aspects. As the majority did not use any strategies to learn the form of the new word, it could be suggested that they do not appreciate the significance of many of the vocabulary-knowledge aspects such as frequency of occurrence, word register, morphology, semantics, polysemy, and so on.

Q5. Are Saudi EFL learners aware of the significance of autonomous vocabulary learning?

As mentioned earlier, autonomous vocabulary learning could be a good solution to many problems encountered by Saudi EFL teachers and learners. The literature review suggests that educators should involve their students in environments that encourage autonomous vocabulary learning instead of presenting them with long lists of words taken from the syllabus (see Errey & Schollaert, 2005; Marshall & Rowland, 1993; Reinders, 2010; Reinders & Balcikanli, 2011; Winch, 2006). They should urge their students to utilise useful vocabulary-learning strategies to learn vocabulary outside the classroom for the reason that class time is limited, which means that the exposure to the target language itself is limited. Marshall and Rowland (1993), for example, assert that teachers should gradually reduce direction as their students increase in confidence and maturity. According to Nagy and Anderson (1984), teaching students independent vocabulary-learning strategies is important for the development of vocabulary-learning process, as those students need to acquire thousands of words to handle academic demands.
The current situation of the sample group of Saudi EFL students was revealed by the findings of the interviews. The vast majority of these students were dependent on their teachers at almost every stage of the vocabulary stages discussed above. As many of them rarely used effective vocabulary learning strategies, especially not outside the classroom, they believed that they could learn everything from their teachers. Such ignorance of the importance of using effective vocabulary-learning strategies created a sort of carelessness and a complete dependence on their English teachers. For example, this made many of them less eager to learn the meanings of many new words encountered in their reading- and listening classes. Instead of using more effective vocabulary-learning strategies, like guessing, for instance, many of the students would ask their teachers and waste valuable class time by translating new words. Many of the interviewed participants revealed that they had never used any monolingual dictionaries, and the vast majority of them were completely ignorant about the benefits of using such dictionaries.

The reasons behind their ignorance can be classified into five main issues:

1. lack of teachers’ support, including not teaching what strategies students should use at each stage, how to make good use of those strategies, and then encouraging them to use those strategies whenever needed;

2. lack of class time;

3. too much information to learn;

4. lack of motivation; and

5. the inappropriate design of the English curricula.

The absence of autonomous vocabulary learning from the EFL learning process in Saudi Arabia could be another factor determining the Saudi learners’ difficulties in attaining EFL vocabulary that could, in turn, be linked to Saudi EFL students’ general weakness.
Nevertheless, a few students, especially from the high levels, did use some good vocabulary-learning strategies, which made them more autonomous learners. It is also worthwhile to mention here that the results of the questionnaire analysis show that those participants who used vocabulary-learning strategies achieved well academically. Even though these students were not sufficiently encouraged by their teachers to use the strategies, this minority revealed that they liked to be independent learners as they greatly benefited from using the effective vocabulary strategies.

Moreover, the findings of the interviews show that almost all the participants agreed on the importance of many vocabulary-learning strategies, such as making use of the textbook pictures to guess the meaning of many words, and applying verbal repetition.
Chapter six: Discussion of findings

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to bring together the results of the questionnaire and the findings of the interviews, and to consider what light these new research findings may shed on matters discussed in the relevant literature. The present study has confirmed the well-documented view that many Saudi EFL students struggle learning English vocabulary, and has explored a number of reasons for why this may be. This chapter discusses the findings from the previous chapters, before building on these results to develop some suggestions and recommendations emerging from this study. It is hoped that this will help us discover how to support autonomous vocabulary learning for EFL students and, therefore, try to reduce the number of the difficulties many Saudi EFL students encounter when learning English vocabulary. The aim of what follows is to review what has been discussed above with specific reference to how these insights could be applied by Saudi EFL teachers, educators, and education policy-makers.

This study is distinctive because it explores the relationship between what is known from previous research about the vocabulary-acquisition process and what is actually being done by (some) Saudi EFL students at each stage of vocabulary learning, including the strategies they use and their reasons for using or neglecting effective vocabulary-learning strategies. The researcher set out to learn these aspects from Saudi EFL students themselves through a sample of 200 Saudi EFL students from four different educational levels. This research has generated findings that could be helpful for ESL/EFL teachers, as well as curriculum developers and education policy-makers worldwide, as it investigates the usefulness of a number of suggested vocabulary-learning strategies, which appear to be making a strong contribution to the success of almost all the higher-achieving students who participated in this study.

Generally, the findings confirm that many Saudi EFL students face difficulties at each of the stages of learning English vocabulary. What makes the problem of learning English vocabulary even more complicated is that the majority of Saudi EFL students are ignorant of the importance of vocabulary in L2 acquisition in general, and more specifically, of the importance of autonomous vocabulary learning. This lack of
awareness leads to an overdependence by students on their teachers when learning EFL vocabulary.

The analyses of the interviews were conducted with the aim of identifying more specifically the difficulties many Saudi EFL learners encounter when learning English vocabulary, exploring how Saudi EFL teachers and learners understand the concept of ‘vocabulary knowledge’, and finding out to what extent Saudi EFL learners are aware of the significance of autonomous vocabulary learning. The results revealed students’ perceptions of how EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia present and support vocabulary strategies. This could be of interest to those involved in English-language program design, and EFL/ESL education at all educational levels.

6.2 Stage one: Encountering new words

At this stage of vocabulary learning, students can use different strategies that researchers deem effective and helpful such as guessing strategy. The good application of this strategy can develop learners’ vocabulary, strengthen their critical thinking ability and learning capacity, and save time. Abdulwahab (1997) asserts that students learn and read faster when using guessing from context. Guessing encourages and improves vocabulary growth (see also Ghazal, 2007; Liu & Nation, 1985; Nation & Coady, 1988). Despite the importance of applying this strategy at this stage, the students reported that their teachers did not focus on helpful vocabulary-learning strategies such as guessing. The findings suggest that only higher-achieving students from the upper levels used guessing strategies as they found those strategies very helpful when encountering the new word. Those students felt that their teachers did encourage them to use guessing strategies at this stage, which could be contributing to their high academic achievements. For almost all lower-level students and many lower-achieving upper-level students, the use of guessing strategies was not sufficiently encouraged in school, particularly not guessing strategies: making use of the knowledge of parts of speech.

Generally speaking, guessing strategies are mainly appreciated by upper-level students, especially the strategies of activating background knowledge of the grammatical
features and morphology of the new word. Yet, those students need to be encouraged more to apply those strategies both inside and outside the classroom. The literature indicates that if students learn how to guess the unfamiliar words in sentences, they will save more class time and will be able to read faster and easier, and they will better understand what they read. This strategy appears to be most advantageous for ESL/EFL learners, especially for those from intermediate to advanced levels. Lai (2005, p. 14) favours guessing from context as the most useful of all vocabulary-learning strategies. On the other hand, lower-level students assert that they mainly rely on the pictures and illustrations that come with the text to guess the meanings of difficult words.

The findings suggest that the reasons for neglecting the use of guessing strategies reflect not only a lack of teacher support, but also the shortage of the English class time in Saudi schools. This point, in turn, reaffirms the importance of autonomous vocabulary learning through focusing on more effective and useful vocabulary-learning strategies like guessing strategies, to compensate at least partially for the shortage of class time devoted to vocabulary learning (see Abdulwahab, 1997; Al-Asmary, 2007; Al-hadlaq, 2003).

The findings also suggest that the majority of the students were initially ignorant of almost all the types of guessing strategies, but the results also show that they were willing to gain knowledge of any strategy that could help them learn better and faster. Many students, especially from the upper levels, preferred using guessing strategies independently. They believed that autonomous vocabulary learning could help them learn better, save class time, and make them less dependent on their teachers. They felt that they did not get enough support from their teachers or from the Saudi EFL curricula. In particular, their teachers did not teach them how to make use of guessing strategies outside the classroom, and the Saudi EFL curricula did not provide enough effective vocabulary-teaching methods that encourage the use of guessing strategies. This affirms the possible reason for the overall weakness of fluency and performance in English resulted from the teaching methods some Saudi EFL teachers use, which are considered inefficient by many students there (see Al-Guayyed, 1997; Al-Sugayyer, 2006). Moreover, the Saudi English syllabi have weak points with regard to teaching essential skills that Saudi students need when learning EFL (Al-Hajailan, 1999; 2003; Al-Jaser, 1989; Al-Saif, 2005; Madkhali, 2005).
More investigation is needed to explore why many effective strategies are neglected in many Saudi schools, especially at the lower levels, as the results do not clearly show the reasons underlying the reported neglect of teaching guessing strategies.

6.3 Stage two: Getting the word form

This stage comprises learning many aspects of word knowledge including knowing the spoken and written forms of the new word that have been identified as needing to be mastered by ESL/EFL learners when learning new words (see Gairns & Redman, 1986; Nation, 1990; Taiwo, 2007). In order to have complete command of a word, students need to learn its form receptively and productively. Nation (2001, p. 27) has described a wide range of the word knowledge aspects that should be known by ESL/EFL learners asserting that focusing on the use of other aspects of vocabulary knowledge can consolidate the meaning, form, grammatical use, and collocation of the new word in memory (see also Al-Homoud, 2007; Bahns & Eldaw, 1993; Laufer, 2005; Nation, 1990; Pigada & Schmitt, 2006; Read, 2004; Thornbury, 2004).

The literature review suggests that using a dictionary can help students learn many aspects related to the form of the new word such as its spelling, syllables, stress, pronunciation, part of speech, the meanings of important prefixes and suffixes, the history of the word, other words derived from the main word, whether or not the word is capitalised or abbreviated, and if there is any special plural form (Beech, 2004; Bilash, William, Gregoret, & Loewen, 1999; Gonzalez, 1999; Prichard, 2008; Wingate, 2004). According to Nation (2008, p. 89), learners’ dictionaries are better because they include syllabification, meaning, grammar, collocations, register appropriateness, frequency, and advice on common errors. Electronic dictionaries are among the best choices for ESL/EFL students as most of them provide pronunciations of the English word to the user. In addition to the massive information and explanations they contain, they are easy to carry around and compared to book dictionaries, appear to be much faster and more operative when learning ESL/EFL vocabulary (see also Fauss, 2001; Gray, 1986; Perry, 1997).
The findings indicate that very few lower-level students used helpful strategies at this stage, as they were not adequately encouraged by their teachers to do so. For example, these students, as well as many lower-achieving upper-level students, did not make use of any bilingual or monolingual dictionaries to learn the form of the new word or its aspects including spelling, pronunciation, synonyms, and so forth. This in turn suggests that the lower-level teachers did not provide dedicated class time for teaching dictionary skills. The results reveal that only higher-achieving upper-level students used their dictionaries when learning the form of the new word. They found this strategy very helpful and they were encouraged by their teachers to use it. The only problem faced here was the shortage of class time.

The indications are that only lower-level students make use of the strategy of doing spoken and written repetition, while upper-level students felt that a lack of class time was a big reason for disusing this strategy.

The results also show that a majority of the students believed that it would be easier to be independent when learning the form of the new word, especially outside the classroom; still, most of them depended greatly on their teachers to learn the pronunciation and spelling of the new word, which suggests that they did not use other sources, like dictionaries, outside the classroom. Such total dependence appears to be mainly a result of the lack of teachers’ support in terms of fostering those students’ autonomous vocabulary learning. The findings suggest that many of the EFL teachers, especially at lower levels, did not encourage their students to use sources like dictionaries to learn the form of the new word inside and outside the classroom. Moreover, when teachers were feeling pressured for time, they were more likely to answer students’ questions as quickly as possible, than take the time to show students how to find their own answers.

The other strategy used at this stage is doing spoken and written repetition to practise the pronunciation and spelling of the new word. Good application of this strategy is very important in learning the form of the new word (Al-Qarni, 2003; Chen & Truscott, 2010; Lado, 1964; Webb, 2007). For example, Gu (2003) asserts that forgetting is most likely to happen immediately after the initial encounter of the new word, and that the rate of forgetting goes slower subsequently. For that reason, he recommends that students should start repeating newly learned words immediately after the first
encounter. A majority of the sample indicated a preference for applying the strategy of doing spoken/written repetition with their teachers rather than doing it by themselves outside the classroom. The reason for such dependence on English teachers was either due to the students’ own disinclination to apply extra effort, or lack of teachers’ encouragement, especially in terms of teaching dictionary skills and giving exercises that enhance doing written repetition.

The results also suggest that many Saudi EFL teachers did not encourage their students to use effective vocabulary-learning strategies that can be used outside the classroom, indicating that they did not foster their students’ autonomous vocabulary learning, particularly not in relation to getting the form of the new word. Many participants explained that they did not use these strategies for the reason that they were not taught how to use a dictionary, and that their teachers did not encourage them to use the strategy of doing spoken and written repetition outside the classroom. This confirms Brown’s (2010, p. 254) assertion that teachers and textbooks tend to focus on just one aspect of word knowledge (meaning) when teaching vocabulary and neglecting many other aspects including its spoken and written forms—despite the fact that vocabulary researchers have long argued that knowing a word means learning much more than just its meaning, with the word’s form, associations, collocations, and grammatical patterns among other things also needing to be acquired. More investigation is needed to explore the teachers’ reasons for not concentrating on these strategies when teaching the form of the new word.

6.4 Stage three: Getting the word meaning

In spite of the importance of using a dictionary when learning the meaning of a word (East, 2007; Eeds & Cockrum, 1985; Laufer & Hill, 2000; Nation, 2008; Nation & Gu, 2007), the majority of the students never used English-English dictionaries, which suggests that they did not take advantage of English dictionaries and their features such as definitions, synonyms, antonyms, examples, pictures, icons, and so on. The reasons for this were several, but most important is the one that they were not sufficiently encouraged by their teachers to do so. The findings show that students from upper
levels, however, did use this strategy because they found it helpful, and that their teachers at the upper levels encouraged them to use their monolingual dictionaries to learn the meanings of new words. This indicates that only the upper-level teachers specifically allocated time for teaching monolingual dictionary skills to their students. It is important for EFL learners to consult a dictionary when learning independently, as it helps them learn the meaning of the difficult words, and to determine what word should be used in a certain context. Constant use of a dictionary provides additional contact with the new words in many various contexts, with different constructions and collocations. Laufer (1990, p. 154) comments that learners should be encouraged to consult a dictionary, especially if guessing has failed and the meaning of the new word is still not clear in its context (see also Beech, 2004; Bilash, William, Gregoret, & Loewen, 1999; Gonzalez, 1999; Knight, 1994; Prichard, 2008; Wingate, 2004).

In addition to making use of English-English dictionaries, the literature of this study suggests deriving benefit from all the pictorial materials available for the reason that they are helpful not only in the teaching/learning process, but also in recalling what was previously learned and remembering information for a longer time (Kaplan, Kaplan, & Sampson, 1968; Webber, 1978; Yachi, 2007). For example, Webber (1978) found that children had better recall for foreign-language responses when pictures were used as stimulus rather than translation equivalents of the lexical items. The results of this study found that some upper-level higher-achieving students did make use of icons and pictures in their dictionaries, even though they were not encouraged by their teachers to make use of such a strategy. They considered this strategy helpful, fast, easy, and fun. The findings of this investigation show that the vast majority of higher-achieving only use this helpful strategy, which confirms what the literature suggests that visual learning is advantageous in the development of vocabulary knowledge because of the interface between images and the words represented by those images. A picture dictionary allows visual learners to find words, spell-check written words, and check on unknown words. It is a great resource and it can be used in class or as a self-study tool that can guide L2 learners through the overall L2-learning experience (see Chujo, Oghigian, Utiyama, & Nishigaki, 2011). The findings also reveal a relationship between high grades and the use of monolingual dictionaries. The majority of the higher-achieving students reported that they made good use of their English-English dictionaries; yet, they also complained that class time was not enough to apply this strategy. In that, they agreed with their
equivalents from lower levels that they would use this strategy if they had more class time.

At this stage, vocabulary-learning autonomy appeared to be no better than at the two previous stages. The results suggest that the majority of the students were not satisfactory independent learners. The majority of them relied on their teachers greatly to get the meanings of the new words. Even though these students had the readiness to learn effective vocabulary-learning strategies, they were not sufficiently encouraged to use monolingual dictionaries.

The literature review suggests that the use of ineffective vocabulary-teaching methods could be a huge obstacle in the way of good vocabulary knowledge. Taiwo, (2007, p. 207) concludes that the goal of the teachers, therefore, should be to motivate learners to learn the appropriate vocabulary. The teacher’s motivation is based on an awareness of the learners’ needs and preferences. EFL learners will learn when they are motivated and when their teachers provide them with better ways to learn vocabulary (Alqahtani, 2009, p. 2). Unfortunately, almost the whole sample agreed that their teachers did not encourage them enough to get the meanings of key words from other good sources such as bilingual, monolingual, picture, electronic dictionaries, the internet, and so on. As such, the teachers kept their students more dependent and less autonomous vocabulary-learners, which may in turn cause more class time to be spent on translation and giving meanings of many words rather than teaching vocabulary-learning strategies such as the skills their students need to make use of monolingual- and picture dictionaries.

As mentioned earlier, the underlying reasons for neglecting this area, especially from the teachers’ viewpoints, are not known. Further research is needed to explore the reasons behind the neglect of such a critical area, as this study concentrates only on vocabulary-learning strategies and not on vocabulary-teaching methods.
6.5 Stage four: Consolidating word form and meaning in memory

At this very important stage of vocabulary learning, students need to use a good number of memory strategies to consolidate the form and meaning of the new word in their memories. These strategies can improve memorising by connecting familiar words and images with the new knowledge (Mastropieri, Scruggs, & Fulk, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Woolfolk, 1993). Mnemonic devices in foreign-language vocabulary-learning are supported by a robust line of research. Vocabulary-learning is basically a memory issue, and mnemonic devices work miraculously in enhancing memory (Atkinson, 1972; 1975; Atkinson & Raugh, 1975). For example, Mastropieri, and Scruggs (1991) assert that memory strategies include connecting the word to be recalled with previously learned knowledge such as forms of imagery or grouping. Similarly, Thompson (1987, p. 211 cited in Atay & Ozbulgan, 2007, p. 41) asserts that these strategies “help individuals learn faster and recall better because they aid the integration of new material into existing cognitive units and because they provide retrieval cues.” There are wide-ranging reviews in relation to the efficiency of using mnemonic techniques in L2-vocabulary learning (see Carney & Levin, 2000; Gray, 1997; Hwang & Levin, 2002; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1991; Mastropieri, Sweda, & Scruggs, 2000; Meara, 1980; Miyake & Shah, 1999; Nation, 1982; Uberti, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 2003).

Moreover, this stage is considered central to the acquisition of vocabulary as it includes the use of many effective vocabulary-learning strategies such as grouping words, encoding, connecting new words with personal experiences, and using verbal/written repetition. As the general results reveal, only upper-level students made use of the strategy of grouping words, while their equivalents at lower levels did not, for the reason that they did not get the support needed to use the strategy of grouping words. Even though almost all the sample from both levels considered this strategy to be important, the majority of them did not use it as they did not have enough time.

However, strategies like using encoding (imaging the meaning of the new word to consolidate it in memory) are mainly utilised by lower-level students. Moreover, the strategy of applying verbal and written repetition by using the new word in 5-16 different verbal/written examples is also mainly used by lower-level students, which
suggests that this strategy is not sufficiently encouraged by upper-level teachers. It is possible that the neglect of these two strategies could be contributing to the shortage of class time, as more effective retention strategies could save time. The results also support the view that if these students were encouraged to use verbal/written repetition and use the new word in many different verbal/written examples outside the classroom, they would not have nearly as much difficulty learning many new EFL words in and outside the classroom.

The literature of this study discussed the strategy of connecting the new word to personal experiences. The good application of this helpful strategy entails connecting the word to what the learners already know (Rumelhart & Norman, 1981, cited in Anderson). Rumelhart (1980, cited in Spiro, Bruce, & Brewer) asserts the importance of tapping into the personal schema or the prior knowledge the learners have stored in their long-term memories. When students link new information to existing schema, the learning sticks because it has personal meaning. Using such activity can consolidate the new words in memory because they are connected to the learners’ personal experiences (see also Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Monzo & Calvo, 2002; Nassaji, 2002; Pulido, 2003).

In spite of the importance of this strategy, the participants’ answers to the questions of this section show that the majority of the whole sample does not connect the new words they learn to personal experiences to consolidate their meanings in memory, for the reason that they are not encouraged by their teachers to do so. These participants stated that the strategy of connecting the new word to personal experiences was very effective and helpful, and that they would use it if they have more class time and if they were encouraged by their teachers.

The findings indicate that all the above-mentioned strategies are used by higher-achieving students, suggesting that using those strategies may be assisting them not only in learning EFL vocabulary but also in their entire English education.

In regard to the strategy of doing verbal/written repetition at this stage, the literature suggests that ESL/EFL learners need to learn in 5-16 different spoken and written examples to consolidate the form and meaning of the new word in memory. Rott (1999) found that six exposures led to better learning than two or four exposures, while Waring
and Takaki (2003) assert that it takes as a minimum of eight repetitions for learners to have about a 50 per cent chance of recognising a word form/meaning (see also Pigada & Schmitt, 2006; Waring & Takaki, 2003; Webb, 2007; Zahar, Cobb, & Spada, 2001). In this critical stage of vocabulary learning, the results show a somewhat more positive picture in terms of vocabulary-learning autonomy. Unlike for previous stages, many participants revealed that they used a number of good strategies to consolidate meanings of the new words in memory. Many students applied verbal/written repetition strategy independently outside the classroom, but they used written repetition less, especially outside the classroom. On the other hand, the majority of students did not apply strategies like grouping words, imaging the meaning of the word, and connecting the word to personal experience, as they were not sufficiently encouraged by their teachers. These students said that they had never been taught about those strategies, their importance, or how to make good use of them. This again confirms that the weakness in the EFL learning and teaching process in Saudi Arabia could be a result of the use of ineffective teaching methods. In addition to the weak points of the Saudi English syllabi, which do not sufficiently encourage the Saudi learners’ vocabulary building, and the lack of cooperative in-classroom activities, long-standing customary methods of EFL teaching are believed to be inadequate to build the learners’ EFL vocabulary (see also Al-Awad, 2002; Al-Otaibi, 2004; Al-Qurashi, 2002; Al-Wahibee, 2000; Fageeh, 2003; Syed, 2003).

The results suggest that, with the exception of encouraging their students to apply the strategy of verbal repetition, many teachers did not encourage their students to use effective strategies, especially not at this very important stage of consolidating the form and meaning of the new word in memory. Neglecting such an important stage of vocabulary learning could be a strong contributor to the Saudi EFL students’ general weakness mentioned above.

### 6.6 Stage five: Using the word

The literature suggests that practicing using new collocations in context as soon as possible after learning them is necessary; it can help ESL/EFL learners to build abilities
to use English naturally in the future. Due to its importance in ESL/EFL learning, word collocation should be taught from the very beginning, regardless of the learners’ level or age for the reason that learning collocations can make their language sound much more natural (Arnaud & Savignon, 1997; Bahns & Eldaw, 1993; Lewis, 1993; Sansome, 2000). It is important to get ESL/EFL students used to repeating collocations instead of isolated, out-of-context words. This can be done by simply reading a text where the words are used in memorable contexts with various collocations (see also Nesselhauf, 2003; Nizonkiza, 2011; Siyanova & Schmitt, 2008). The findings suggest that the strategy of connecting new words to already-known words and using them in chunks and collocations was not widely used, especially not at the lower-levels, suggesting that many teachers did not get their students repeating collocations. Instead, they intentionally or unintentionally helped their students merely to use isolated and out-of-context words. That could mean that many lower-level teachers are using ineffective vocabulary-teaching methods such as teaching new words in isolation from their collocations.

However, the findings also reveal that many upper-level higher-achieving students did use this strategy, not only because they found it helpful but also because their teachers at the upper levels encouraged them to connect new words to already-known words and use them in chunks and collocations. Many of those students, though, said that the reason for not using this strategy was mainly the shortage of class time.

In addition, the literature review suggests that using the new word with its collocations entails learning the new word within different collocations from the beginning, and this makes it easier for the learners to consolidate the word and its collocations in memory by connecting them and then using them naturally. The more the L2 learners are competent at producing the naturally right collocations, the less hesitant they are when producing long sentences and thus, the more capable in their L2 they become (see Chi, Wong, & Wong, 1994; Sadeghi, 2010). As demonstrated in the literature review, ESL/EFL learners can easily use the newly learned word naturally with many collocations if they have learnt the word within different contexts and with a good number of collocations (see also Hoey, 2000; Lewis, 2000; Nesselhauf, 2005). After learners have acquired the core meaning, they usually extend their learning of the target word using other aspects such as additional exposure to that word used within its
context, how far the meaning can be extended, and where the semantic boundaries are. According to Schmitt (2000, p. 123), “this is an ongoing process, as each exposure to a novel usage of a word further defines its boundaries.” Consequently, learning can be eased by repeated exposure to the words that go together. The results of the interviews show that only upper-level students were familiar with good strategies that could be applied at this stage. These students reported that they developed their use of those strategies by themselves, as they were not sufficiently encouraged by their teachers to do so. In relation to making use of the collocations of the new word, the results show that the majority of the participants did not use this very effective strategy when using the new word, which made them learn the new word out of its correct context, resulting in the use of inappropriate prepositions or adjectives and so on with that word. This latter problem is one of the most frequent observations made by English-speaking teachers when commenting on specific weaknesses in their Saudi students’ English.

### 6.7 Summary of the findings

The general findings of both the surveys and the interviews have productively answered the research questions in regard to Saudi EFL students’ vocabulary-learning strategies. The results suggest that there is a mismatch between what research claims is important and what students perceive as important in vocabulary learning, since more than half of the sample did not use the vocabulary-learning strategies that the research overviewed in Chapter two suggests are most effective. The reasons for this are many, but the fact that students perceived that they are not sufficiently encouraged by their teachers to do so stands out. The majority of the students using those strategies were higher-achieving students. They believed that using effective vocabulary-learning strategies could help them greatly in learning new vocabulary. The correlation shown in the results between more use of vocabulary-learning strategies and higher English language achievement suggests that promoting the use of these learning strategies in English classes could improve academic achievement and L2 acquisition. The relationship between what is known from previous research about vocabulary-acquisition processes and what is actually being done by EFL learners at each stage of vocabulary learning can be clearly seen in the results of the main analysis, which showed that the students who used those strategies

strategies tended to be those who had higher academic performance in English subjects at both lower and upper educational levels.

It is at this stage of vocabulary learning that the biggest differences appear between the two educational levels (lower and upper) regarding the use of vocabulary-learning strategies. For example, the younger (lower-level) students preferred to use strategies like making use of the new word part of speech to guess the meaning, making use of the pictures in their textbooks, doing spoken and written repetitions to learn the form of the new word, using memory strategies, especially encoding strategies (imagining the meaning of the new word), and applying verbal and written repetition in many various examples to consolidate the meanings of the new words in memory. On the other hand, the older (upper-level) students preferred to use other strategies such as using guessing strategies, making use of the grammatical features of the new word to guess the meaning of the new word, making use of the new word’s morphology, using bilingual (English-Arabic) and monolingual (English-English) dictionaries and making use of their features, using memory strategies, especially grouping words strategy, connecting the new word to personal experiences, and connecting new words to already-known words and using them in chunks and collocations.

As was clear from the participants’ answers, the majority of lower-level students preferred using the new words’ parts of speech when guessing the new words’ meanings, and using pictures, and verbal/written repetition. Upper-level students, on the other hand, preferred using more advanced strategies, including making use of dictionaries, and morphology and grammar features of the new word, and the strategy of connecting the new words to personal experiences and using them in chunks and collocations. The results did not show any difference between higher-achieving and lower-achieving students in terms of their preference to specific strategies in particular.

In regard to the learners’ reasons for using or not using the abovementioned strategies, the results show that there was nearly unanimous agreement among groups on certain factors. Many students recognised that the vocabulary-learning strategies were helpful but they did not use them because they were not encouraged by their teachers to do so. The overall results for the whole sample showed that the majority of the participants blamed their teachers for not encouraging them to use those strategies and a much smaller proportion, mainly upper-level and higher-achieving students, reported some
encouragement by their teachers to use those strategies. Most students believed that they would use those strategies if they had sufficient teachers’ support and adequate class time. Some students blamed themselves for not using those strategies, admitting they were lazy or careless.

One of the objectives of this study is to explore how the concept of ‘vocabulary knowledge’ is understood by Saudi EFL learners, and how Saudi EFL students appreciate the importance of vocabulary knowledge. The findings show that the majority of the sample of Saudi EFL learners did not get sufficient encouragement from their teachers to use effective vocabulary-learning strategies through the five vocabulary-learning stages, but it is not clear why so many of the vocabulary-learning strategies discussed in this study were ignored by those educators. As such, further research is needed to explore and investigate the teachers’ reasons for not focusing on these strategies when teaching EFL vocabulary; it would be a good complement to the findings of this study on vocabulary-learning strategies also to examine vocabulary teaching methods. The lack of awareness of vocabulary knowledge could be another strong reason for the Saudi EFL students’ general weakness mentioned above.

Likewise, the findings revealed that the majority of the sampled Saudi EFL learners were ignorant of many aspects of vocabulary knowledge. The results of the interviews revealed that the majority of the participants did not fully understand the concept of vocabulary knowledge. Only few main aspects of vocabulary knowledge were mentioned in the interviews. Many of the participants understand the concept of vocabulary knowledge to mean knowing the equivalent Arabic meaning of the new word, which is only one aspect of vocabulary knowledge among more than ten other aspects.

One of the suggested answers for overcoming the difficulties Saudi EFL teachers and learners experience when teaching/learning vocabulary is fostering the use of autonomous learning (see Al-Asmary, 2007; Al-hadlaq, 2003). Candy (1991) believes that autonomous learning helps learners “set their own learning aims, make choices over learning modes, plan and organize work, decide when best to work alone, work collaboratively and when to seek advice, learn through experience, identify and solve problems, think creatively, communicate effectively orally and in writing, assess their own progress in respect of their aims.” In addition to the numerous advantages of
autonomous learning presented by Candy (1991), this study supports the strong relationship between the good use/application of vocabulary learning strategies and the increase in learning autonomy as the learners' agency, self-management, and autonomy are crucially intertwined with their choices of strategies. The results of the questionnaire, on which chi-square tests were applied, show that there is a high correlation between the use of the strategies and high achievement. A great number of researchers, including Errey and Schollaert (2005), Reinders (2010), Reinders and Balcikanli (2011), and Winch (2006) recommend that ESL/EFL teachers should urge their students to utilise useful vocabulary-learning strategies to learn vocabulary independently outside the classroom. The literature review also suggests that Saudi EFL students need to be involved in an environment that encourages autonomous vocabulary learning instead of being presented with long lists of words taken from the syllabus (see Abdulwahab, 1997; Al-Asmary, 2007; Al-hadlaq, 2003). Therefore, this study aims to explore to what extent Saudi EFL learners are aware of the significance of autonomous vocabulary learning.

The results of both methodologies applied in this study show that the majority of the whole sample was dependent on their teachers at almost every stage of the vocabulary-learning stages discussed above. For example, many students reported that they rarely used effective vocabulary-learning strategies, especially not outside the classroom. Those students believed that they could learn everything from their teachers. Such ignorance of the importance of using effective vocabulary-learning strategies has created attitudes of helplessness and passive dependence on their English teachers. The results show that many of the interviewed students were not eager to learn the meanings of many new words they encountered in their reading and listening classes by themselves. Many of them did not know how to be autonomous learners as they did not use effective vocabulary-learning strategies, and they tended to ask their teachers almost every time they need to learn the form or meaning of a new word. Such total dependence can create many problems, such as the wastage of valuable class time, especially through time spent translating the new words those students want to learn. For example, many of the Saudi EFL students reported that they had never used any monolingual dictionaries, and the results show that the majority of them were completely ignorant about the benefits of using those dictionaries.
Concisely, the reasons causing these Saudi EFL learners to ignore the significance of autonomous vocabulary learning can be put into five categories: lack of teachers’ support, including not teaching what strategies students should use at each stage, how to make good use of those strategies, and then encouraging them to use those strategies whenever needed, lack of class time, too much information to learn, lack of motivation, and the inappropriate design of the English curricula.

In relation to decreasing motivation toward autonomous vocabulary learning, it can be seen that complete dependence on teachers all through the five vocabulary-learning stages could be another factor in the Saudi learners’ difficulties in attaining EFL vocabulary, and hence, the Saudi EFL students’ general weakness.

However, the results also show that some students, mainly from upper levels, used some good vocabulary-learning strategies, which made them more autonomous learners. The results reveal that those students who used vocabulary-learning strategies had high academic achievements. Even though students were not sufficiently encouraged by their teachers to use those strategies, some respondents revealed that they liked to be independent learners as they greatly benefited from using those effective vocabulary-learning strategies. This suggests that these strategies, and the success experienced by those who use them, may in turn contribute to increased motivation for autonomous learning. The good application of effective vocabulary-learning strategies can help resolve many of the difficulties ESL/EFL learners encounter when attaining English vocabulary, which can in turn enhance vocabulary-learning autonomy (Cheung, 2004; Hunt & Belglar, 2005; Li, 2005; Lip, 2009; Lo, 2007; Schmitt, 2000; Wu, 2005).
Chapter seven: Conclusions and recommendations

7.1 Introduction

This chapter brings the work to a conclusion. It presents conclusions and recommendations of this study, with particular reference to the contribution that the findings from this investigation may be able to make to the understanding of English vocabulary acquisition. It offers ideas, suggestions, and recommendations aimed at assisting Saudi EFL students, teachers and educationalists, curriculum developers, and education policy-makers, as well as academics interested in the nature of vocabulary knowledge. The final part of this chapter summarises the limitations of the present research and identifies areas for further research.

The present study investigated the difficulties Saudi students encounter when learning EFL vocabulary. In a previous, smaller investigation of factors underlying Saudi learners’ difficulties in attaining EFL vocabulary conducted in 2007-2008, the researcher found a somewhat paradoxical situation where the Saudi EFL students surveyed expressed awareness of the importance of good vocabulary-learning strategies, but indicated at the same time that they were not making very effective use of such strategies. Following on from this, the present study sought to explore the vocabulary-learning strategies that are most preferred and most utilised by Saudi EFL learners and the strategies that are more/less utilised to those learners, in addition to the reasons for using/not using those strategies (see Chapters 4, 5, & 6).

From previous research and discussions among educators, it has been established that many Saudi EFL students find difficulties learning English vocabulary, which suggests that the needs of those learners are still not receiving enough attention, particularly with regard to English vocabulary learning. The findings of the present study suggest that many Saudi EFL teachers, educationalists, education policy-makers, curriculum developers, and students themselves are still not sufficiently aware of the importance of vocabulary learning.
The study has also revealed that many Saudi EFL teachers are not putting enough effort into helping their students to become more autonomous vocabulary learners. Why after all these years of teaching EFL in Saudi Arabia, do so many students still have difficulties learning English? One of the reasons could be that the progress of curriculum development is impeded by the repetition of the same mistakes. The results, as presented in Chapters 4 and 5, seem to suggest that Saudi EFL curricula do not focus enough on vocabulary learning. They do not apply effective vocabulary-teaching methods that foster vocabulary-learning autonomy, according to many interviewees. It also appears that few students are familiar with the concept of vocabulary-learning autonomy and its importance. To have a good implementation of effective EFL vocabulary teaching/learning, Saudi EFL teachers, students, education policy-makers, and curriculum developers need to consider research evidence of the kind reported here. It is hoped that the recommendations of this study can support autonomous EFL vocabulary education in Saudi Arabia and therefore reduce the number of difficulties many Saudi EFL students encounter when learning English vocabulary. They may also contribute to the process of EFL vocabulary teaching/learning not only in Saudi Arabia, but also in other parts of the world where English is taught as a second- or foreign language.

7.2 Class time provided for English instruction

A number of the findings about vocabulary-learning strategies indicate a need to reconsider the availability of class time for teaching and utilising more effective vocabulary-learning strategies.

1. Analysis of the participants’ responses suggests that if the students had more class time, they would encounter fewer difficulties when learning EFL vocabulary. This suggests that curriculum designers should consider increasing the number of hours for language-learning. Since, as research suggests, overall English language proficiency can benefit enormously from an L2 vocabulary of good size and depth, students should be granted more time to engage in meaningful and stimulating
vocabulary-learning activities. Learning word lists may be quicker, but is an outdated and inefficient method.

2. Guessing strategies were found to be underutilised by the learners, especially among the younger learners and the lower-achieving learners, due at least in part to lack of instruction in this strategy and practice with it. Students at all levels could benefit from guessing the meanings of the new words they encounter in their reading and listening classes, and from being encouraged to do so by their teachers.

3. Correspondingly, students would benefit from reduced use of dependent learning strategies, such as asking the teacher for the meaning of a word. Teachers would do well to discourage such strategies and encourage autonomous learning strategies, such as guessing from contexts, morphology, and pictures.

4. The finding that the more successful students from upper levels did use dictionaries to learn the meanings and forms of new words suggested that this strategy should be more widely encouraged. The results indicated that, particularly in the earlier stages of EFL study, it would be beneficial to provide specific class time for teaching dictionary skills, and that students should be encouraged to use monolingual (English-English) as well as bilingual (English-Arabic) dictionaries.

5. Despite the reported obstacle of insufficient class time for dictionary use, students can acquire knowledge of English dictionary use from other sources, such as the Internet, to develop their ability to make good use of their dictionaries. Independent dictionary practice would build confidence and foster more autonomous vocabulary learning. At the lower levels, students would benefit from using the pictures and icons in their picture dictionaries to learn the meanings of new words.

6. Strategies of grouping words, and connecting words to personal experience, were found to be used more successfully by upper-level students, while strategies of encoding and verbal and written repetition were used and encouraged more among the lower-level students. The latter strategies were found to be less appealing to older students, but younger students could benefit considerably from being instructed and encouraged in grouping words and connecting them to personal experience.
7. Upper-level students, particularly the higher-achieving ones, reported active use of strategies of connecting new words to words already known, and using them in chunks and collocations. This suggests that learners at all levels could benefit from more attention to these strategies, both in class and in their learning outside class.

8. The results show that students attribute much influence to their teachers’ encouragement or lack of support for particular vocabulary-learning strategies. This makes it all the more important for teachers to take the lead in showing their students how to use the most effective learning strategies, and encouraging them to use these strategies to become more autonomous in their vocabulary learning. Teachers would also benefit from greater efficiencies in the use of limited class time if this were implemented.

9. The results of this study also have implications regarding the number of students in each class. Giving each student a chance to practise a number of more effective vocabulary-learning strategies entails more class time and fewer students in each classroom. However, better vocabulary-learning strategies would be likely to bring benefits for learners’ motivation and translate into higher academic achievement, which eventually results in producing better EFL teachers in the future.

7.3 Design of curricula and teaching materials

Saudi EFL curricula are in need of review, taking into account the importance of the above-mentioned vocabulary strategies. For example, textbooks can incorporate effective strategies to build up vocabulary by using vocabulary items in different contexts focusing on strategies like word maps, syntagmatic and paradigmatic connections, etc. to consolidate vocabulary and collocations in memory. Meaningful context needs to be provided since decontextualised items are difficult to remember.

1. Participants’ responses suggest that current Saudi EFL curricula provide little or no instruction about the important aspects of vocabulary-knowledge. This is strongly recommended as a beneficial addition to the curriculum. The significance of each aspect should be made clear to the learners, so they understand on what they should
concentrate when learning English vocabulary. The teachers’ books should also include clear explanation of the aspects of vocabulary-knowledge and their importance for EFL learners.

2. The results of this study suggest that the Saudi EFL curricula do not sufficiently focus on encouraging the use of effective vocabulary-learning strategies. Therefore, the Saudi EFL curricula should clearly and practically support the use of the most effective and up-to-date vocabulary-learning strategies.

3. Textbooks and other learning materials could support such an emphasis in a number of practical ways. Each reading/listening text in the student’s book should be carefully constructed in a way that helps the students guess the meaning of its new vocabulary: more illustrative pictures should be added to the text and new words should be placed within easy contexts; words that have affixes suitable for each educational level should be carefully chosen, and so on. Reading and listening texts should be shorter and should encourage the use of guessing strategies.

4. The pictures in the students’ textbooks should be purposefully drawn to match the students’ need and in a way that helps students guess the meanings of as many words as possible. They should be planned very carefully and purposefully by experts in curriculum design, and then drawn by qualified artists in order to enhance the use of guessing strategies.

5. The Saudi EFL curriculum should include a mini-dictionary and a section for teaching the skills Saudi students need to learn when using their dictionaries, including how to look up a word fast and easily. This would also help them to make good use of their English-English dictionaries by learning the spelling, definitions and synonyms of the new word and learning the phonetic symbols to master its pronunciation. Therefore, the Saudi EFL curriculum should support the students to make good use of their monolingual and bilingual dictionaries by teaching them the basic skills of using dictionaries, which will make them able to learn many aspects of the new word autonomously.

6. At the end of each vocabulary lesson, students need to be reminded about the importance of doing spoken repetition to practise the pronunciation of the new
words and doing written repetition to practise their spelling. There should be some activities that foster the use of spoken/written repetition strategy.

7. The Saudi EFL curriculum planners should take into consideration the importance of incorporating cognitive approaches by including cognitive learning activities that enhance the use of vocabulary-learning strategies. They should have activities that help the students consolidate the form and meaning of the new word in memory by providing activities based on strategies like grouping words strategy, encoding strategies, imaging the meaning of the new word and associating the new words with coordinates using syntagmatic or paradigmatic relations, connecting the new word to personal experiences, and similar strategies that engage a range of the cognitive faculties, not just memory.

8. The activities in the Saudi EFL curricula should be designed in a way that helps students use the new word they need to learn in 5-16 different spoken and written examples to consolidate its meaning and form in memory. Such activities should also help students connect the new word to the previously learned words and use it in chunks and collocations. The new words should always be presented within their collocations, not as out-of-context and separate words

### 7.4 Professional development and training

The present study’s findings about students’ lack of awareness of the importance of autonomous vocabulary learning, and consequent overdependence on teachers, point to a number of practical ways in which Saudi and other EFL learners, teachers, curriculum planners, and decision-makers in education could constructively address these matters.

1. The results of this study indicate that both students and teachers are unaware of the importance and utility of vocabulary-learning autonomy. Given that autonomy in vocabulary learning can save precious class time, it is important for policy-makers to provide professional development for EFL teachers in order to bring them up to date with the latest developments in vocabulary teaching and learning.
2. Education policy and curriculum development should support teachers and educators in instructing and encouraging their students in the use of effective strategies for each of the five stages of vocabulary learning. They should support the use of guessing strategies when encountering new words; encourage and promote the use of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries in EFL classes; encourage the use of repetition strategies, grouping words, imaging the meaning of the new word, doing rehearsal by using the new word in 5-16 different spoken and written examples; using the new word in chunks and collocations; and connecting the new word to personal experience to help consolidate its meaning in memory.

3. The Saudi EFL curricula demand more time than the relatively limited class time can give them, which has resulted in them not using and neglecting many effective vocabulary-learning strategies during class time. Moreover, teachers do not have enough class time to teach their students adequate strategies such as dictionary skills, English affixes, and so on. Therefore, EFL education in Saudi Arabia needs revision with a view to enabling teachers to use class time more effectively, and improving the competence of EFL educators and teachers.

4. The results of this study also suggest that many Saudi EFL teachers and lecturers ignore or under-prioritise their students’ participation. Education policy should strive to raise awareness among EFL educators of the importance of their students’ participation to reach the main goal of vocabulary-learning autonomy.

7.5 Limitations of the study

The present research has some limitations associated with sampling, the methodologies, and conceptual and measurement issues. In its current design, this study is unable to cover all the factors determining the difficulties EFL learners encounter, as it focuses merely on a limited number of vocabulary-learning strategies. Consequently, further research is necessary to discover what other factors may be affecting EFL vocabulary acquisition in Saudi Arabia, and in other similarly situated countries. Factors like similarity in form and morphology of the English vocabulary, deceptive morphological structure, differences in the classification of experience in the first- and second
languages, abstractness, specificity, negative value, connotations non-existent in the native language, differences in the pragmatic meaning of near-synonyms and first-language translation equivalents, the learning burden of synonyms, and the apparent rulelessness of collocations, and so on, could not be investigated in the current design of the research. Moreover, this study did not focus on Saudi EFL teachers’ perspectives and views. Thus, while the results do not clearly show the underlying reasons for neglecting the teaching of guessing strategies, it is nonetheless clear that, from the students’ point of view, this area is seriously neglected by many Saudi EFL teachers.

Although this study suggested a number of important factors that may influence students, teachers, and curriculum developers, there are additional factors that this study has not addressed, especially considering that the research was conducted only in male schools, colleges, and universities, as it is illegal for a non-relative male to interview female students in Saudi society. Further research may include female Saudi students, which may enrich the data. Indeed, this research is an initial investigation. It has tried to gain some initial information on the subject and therefore there is no guarantee that students revealed their genuine views.

The majority of this research explored the opinions of students regarding vocabulary-learning strategies. Therefore, the effect of the small size of the samples was that it decreased the generalisability of the findings. The interview methodology used in this study included a small sample (five students from each educational level); hence the results are not generalisable, especially around issues related to teachers’ awareness, as some students found it discourteous to talk about their teachers in a negative way. There is a possibility that the interviewees, because of the sensitivity of the information when talking about their teachers, may not be very open in their responses in order to prove that they do their work properly. According to the Saudi and Arabian ethics, it is highly inappropriate for students to talk about their teachers, who are known in the Islamic culture as ‘the inheritors of the prophets’. The researcher noticed that some of the interviewees were reluctant to answer some of the interview questions about their teachers. There is thus no assurance that the responses revealed their real views; instead, their responses may have been positively skewed in the direction of trying to please the investigator or to display positive attitudes. Future research may use indirect methods (rather than face-to-face interviews) for eliciting this kind of sensitive information.
The issue of autonomous learning in Saudi Arabia requires a change in culture altogether. As the Saudi society is considered collectivistic, people rely on each other’s support and guidance; autonomous/self-directed learning is suited to individualistic cultures, the implementation of autonomy in learning may thus take longer because it has to be accepted by teachers, learners, and society in general.

One of the limitations of this study is associated with the theoretical framework, and hence the generalisability of the findings. As mentioned in Chapter 3, a model for vocabulary learning stages had to be adopted in this study to help in determining which aspects of the complex process of vocabulary learning were addressed by each strategy, and hence how and where they could best be used. The 5-stage model was selected as the best of the available proposals, but it is not clear whether its categories are psychologically real or valid across larger populations of learners. Although the use of this model has helped to generate some interesting findings, future research could broaden the theoretical framework to allow even more informative ways of eliciting, analysing and interpreting future data in this promising research area.

### 7.6 Directions for further research

This study has yielded some findings that may be able to enrich the literature in the field of ESL/EFL teaching and learning. Almost all the vocabulary-learning strategies mentioned in this study foster and practically support vocabulary-learning autonomy. Researchers interested in vocabulary-learning autonomy may wish to explore several of these issues further.

One of the interesting findings of this study is the evidence that the higher-achieving students from both upper- and lower levels were the ones who most often applied the more effective vocabulary-learning strategies inside and outside the classroom (see Figure 4.3.6.1). This could be seen as providing further support for the view that more use of vocabulary-learning strategies can lead to higher academic achievement and better L2 acquisition. The relationship between what is known from previous research about vocabulary-acquisition processes, and what is actually being done by EFL learners at each stage of vocabulary learning can be seen in the results of the main
analysis, as learners who used those strategies tended to be those with stronger academic performance, especially in English subjects in both lower- and upper educational levels.

There were clear indications from the analysis of data that Saudi EFL students need to be involved in an environment that encourages autonomous vocabulary learning instead of having them presented with long lists of words taken from the syllabus. There are also strong indications, supported by other research, that EFL teachers should do more to equip and encourage their students to utilise useful vocabulary-learning strategies to learn vocabulary outside the classroom, for the reason that class time is limited. This study has evaluated a sample of Saudi EFL learners’ understanding of the concept of vocabulary knowledge and its aspects, but more research is needed to explore how to increase the students’ awareness of the significance of autonomous vocabulary learning.

Findings from the interviews indicate that many Saudi EFL educationalists are not fully aware of the significance of autonomous vocabulary learning; however, it is not clear if those teachers ignore teaching the autonomous strategies intentionally, or for the sake of finishing teaching the whole English book on time, or because of a belief that those strategies are too hard for their students and that they are only for advanced EFL learners. More investigation is needed to explore why many effective strategies are neglected in many Saudi schools, especially at the lower levels, as the results do not clearly show the real reasons behind the neglect of teaching for example guessing strategies.

The study has found a pattern of dependence by students on their teachers all through the five vocabulary-learning stages. The fact that these dependent learning strategies were reportedly less frequent among the higher-achieving students points to the likelihood that this overdependence could be another factor determining the learners’ difficulties in attaining EFL vocabulary, and contributing to the general weakness observed in Saudi EFL learning.

As the present study was focused on the learners, it would of course be desirable to conduct an equivalent study on the perceptions and views of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia, which are as central to the education process as the perceptions and views of students. The students’ perceptions about the teaching of vocabulary to them need to be
compared with the teachers’ viewpoints, in order to gain a full picture of what is happening in the classrooms. Although this was beyond the scope of the present study, the recommendations advanced here cannot succeed without engaging the teachers, and further research is needed about how best to do this.

More research is needed to explore what skills can be used to facilitate each of the effective vocabulary-learning strategies, such as guessing, use of dictionaries, and so on. There is a crucial need for the development of an assessment framework as well as further research evidence to develop a professional baseline for efficient vocabulary teaching and vocabulary-learning autonomy. Research in the Saudi context currently lacks studies concentrating on what effective vocabulary-teaching methods teachers should use, and what vocabulary-learning strategies Saudi EFL learners should make use of to reduce the number of the difficulties both teachers and learners encounter.

As with all research, this study and its limitations have raised many further questions and issues for future work. For example, the work needs to be conducted in different schools, colleges, and universities -especially female schools and universities- to see if the results found are generalisable. The two investigations were done in public schools and governmental colleges and universities in Saudi Arabia. Future work could use the same methodologies in private/international schools, colleges, and universities in Saudi Arabia and other parts of the world. This would show if there is a difference between public and private/international schools, colleges, and universities in terms of vocabulary learning and if the results are similar to the findings in public and governmental schools, colleges, and universities. The results of the study cannot be generalised given the sample size, but they do shed light on the main topic of the study; this study should be replicated on a national level with larger sample sizes.

Some important questions for future research stemming from this study are:

1. What are the other factors, not previously examined, that determine or contribute to the difficulties Saudi EFL learners encounter when learning English vocabulary?
2. What other effective vocabulary-learning strategies could Saudi EFL learners benefit from at each stage of the five vocabulary-learning stages?

3. Why is vocabulary learning autonomy neglected by many Saudi EFL teachers, especially at the lower levels? How could this be remedied?

4. What are the most efficient and helpful vocabulary-teaching methods Saudi EFL teachers should use when teaching English vocabulary?

5. How should the concept of ‘vocabulary knowledge’ and its aspects be practically presented to Saudi EFL educationalists, academics, and learners?

6. How should vocabulary-learning autonomy be fostered in Saudi Arabia?

7. How can lower-achieving Saudi EFL students be made more motivated to learn English vocabulary?

While the findings from this study have implications for some of these questions, suggesting, for example, that greater autonomy in vocabulary learning could be promoted by teachers increasing the use of teaching strategies that foster learner autonomy, more research is needed to point the way to how this could most effectively be done in the Saudi educational context. There is a need for follow-up studies using different methods or different tools to help answer these questions, and to better understand what is required to improve EFL education in Saudi Arabia as well as in other parts of the world where English is taught as a second- or foreign language.
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Appendices

Appendix A: Students’ questionnaire

Appendix B: The questions of the interview

Appendix C: Students’ questionnaire (Arabic)

Appendix D: The questions of the interview (Arabic)

Appendix E: Certificate of approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee

Appendix F: Information statement for the research project

Appendix G: Information statement for the research project (Arabic)

Appendix H: Invitation to educational institutes

Appendix I: Invitation to educational institutes (Arabic)

Appendix J: Adult students’ consent form for the research project

Appendix K: Parents’ consent form for the research project
Appendix A:

Students’ information sheet

Research title:

Factors Determining Saudi Learners' Difficulties in Attaining EFL Vocabulary

• Complete the information below:

((Student's information))

Educational level (class): ........................................................................................................

English marks of the last year: ..............................................................................................

General final grade of the last year: .......................................................................................
Students' Questionnaire

Circle **only one choice** of the following (agree or disagree) then circle the reason(s) for your choice:

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q. 1</th>
<th>When I encounter a new English word for the first time, I use guessing to learn the meaning of that word.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Smiley" /></td>
<td>Agree because:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Smiley" /> 1. My teacher encourages me to use this strategy.</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Smiley" /> 2. This strategy is helpful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Smiley" /> 3. This strategy is fast and easy.</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Smiley" /> 4. This strategy is fun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Sad" /></td>
<td>Disagree because:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Sad" /> 1. My teacher did not teach me this strategy.</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Sad" /> 2. This strategy is not helpful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Sad" /> 3. I do not have enough time to use it.</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Sad" /> 4. It is lazy of me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stage one: **Encountering the word**:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q. 1</th>
<th>When I encounter a new English word for the first time, I use guessing to learn the meaning of that word.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Smiley" /></td>
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<td><img src="image" alt="Sad" /> 4. It is lazy of me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q. 2</th>
<th>knowing what part of speech the new word is helps me guess its meaning.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Smiley" /></td>
<td>Agree because:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Smiley" /> 1. My teacher encourages me to use this strategy.</td>
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<td><img src="image" alt="Sad" /> 4. It is lazy of me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q. 3) Knowing the grammatical feature of the new word helps me guess the meaning of it.

Agree because:
1. My teacher encourages me to use this strategy.
2. This strategy is helpful.
3. This strategy is fast and easy.
4. This strategy is fun.

Disagree because:
1. My teacher did not teach me this strategy.
2. This strategy is not helpful.
3. I do not have enough time to use it.
4. It is lazy of me.

Q. 4) Pictures that come with vocabulary lessons help me guess the meaning of many new words.

Agree because:
1. My teacher encourages me to use this strategy.
2. This strategy is helpful.
3. This strategy is fast and easy.
4. This strategy is fun.

Disagree because:
1. My teacher did not teach me this strategy.
2. This strategy is not helpful.
3. I do not have enough time to use it.
4. It is lazy of me.

Q. 5) Knowing the morphology of the new word (such as affixes) helps me guess the meaning of it.

Agree because:
1. My teacher encourages me to use this strategy.
2. This strategy is helpful.
3. This strategy is fast and easy.
4. This strategy is fun.

Disagree because:
1. My teacher did not teach me this strategy.
2. This strategy is not helpful.
3. I do not have enough time to use it.
4. It is lazy of me.

Stage two: Getting the word form:

Q. 1) To learn the form of a new word, I use my dictionary.

Agree because:
1. My teacher encourages me to use this strategy.
2. This strategy is helpful.
3. This strategy is fast and easy.
4. This strategy is fun.

Disagree because:
1. My teacher did not teach me this strategy.
2. This strategy is not helpful.
3. I do not have enough time to use it.
4. It is lazy of me.
Q. 2) English dictionaries help me learn many aspects about the new word such as its spelling, syllables, pronunciation and part of speech.

Agree because:
1. My teacher encourages me to use this strategy.
2. This strategy is helpful.
3. This strategy is fast and easy.
4. This strategy is fun.

Disagree because:
1. My teacher did not teach me this strategy.
2. This strategy is not helpful.
3. I do not have enough time to use it.
4. It is lazy of me.

Q. 3) I do spoken repetition to practice the pronunciation of the new word.

Agree because:
1. My teacher encourages me to use this strategy.
2. This strategy is helpful.
3. This strategy is fast and easy.
4. This strategy is fun.

Disagree because:
1. My teacher did not teach me this strategy.
2. This strategy is not helpful.
3. I do not have enough time to use it.
4. It is lazy of me.

Q. 4) I do written repetition to practice the spelling of the new word.

Agree because:
1. My teacher encourages me to use this strategy.
2. This strategy is helpful.
3. This strategy is fast and easy.
4. This strategy is fun.

Disagree because:
1. My teacher did not teach me this strategy.
2. This strategy is not helpful.
3. I do not have enough time to use it.
4. It is lazy of me.

Stage three: Getting the word meaning:

Q. 1) To learn the new word meaning, I only use my English-English dictionary.

Agree because:
1. My teacher encourages me to use this strategy.
2. This strategy is helpful.
3. This strategy is fast and easy.
4. This strategy is fun.

Disagree because:
1. My teacher did not teach me this strategy.
2. This strategy is not helpful.
3. I do not have enough time to use it.
4. It is lazy of me.
**Q. 2** Using English-English dictionary helps me learn other aspects of the new word such as its synonyms, antonyms, collocations and different uses of it.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Agree because:</th>
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<td>1. My teacher encourages me to use this strategy.</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q. 3** I make use of the icons and pictures in my English-English dictionary to learn the meaning of the new word.

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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. It is lazy of me.</td>
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</table>

**Stage four: Consolidating word form and meaning in memory:**

**Q. 1** I make use of grouping words strategy to consolidate the form and meaning of the new word.

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<th>Agree because:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My teacher encourages me to use this strategy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. I do not have enough time to use it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. It is lazy of me.</td>
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</table>

**Q. 2** I use encoding strategies such as imaging the meaning of the new word.

<table>
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<th>Agree because:</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1. My teacher encourages me to use this strategy.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. It is lazy of me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q. 3 I connect the new word to personal experiences in order to consolidate its meaning in my memory.

Agree because:
1. My teacher encourages me to use this strategy. 2. This strategy is helpful. 3. This strategy is fast and easy. 4. This strategy is fun.

Disagree because:
1. My teacher did not teach me this strategy. 2. This strategy is not helpful. 3. I do not have enough time to use it. 4. It is lazy of me.

Q. 4 I apply verbal repetition by using the new word in 5-16 different verbal examples.

Agree because:
1. My teacher encourages me to use this strategy. 2. This strategy is helpful. 3. This strategy is fast and easy. 4. This strategy is fun.

Disagree because:
1. My teacher did not teach me this strategy. 2. This strategy is not helpful. 3. I do not have enough time to use it. 4. It is lazy of me.

Q. 5 I apply written repetition by using the new word in 5-16 different written examples.

Agree because:
1. My teacher encourages me to use this strategy. 2. This strategy is helpful. 3. This strategy is fast and easy. 4. This strategy is fun.

Disagree because:
1. My teacher did not teach me this strategy. 2. This strategy is not helpful. 3. I do not have enough time to use it. 4. It is lazy of me.

Stage five: Using the word

Q. 1 I connect new words to already known words and use them in chunks and collocations.

Agree because:
1. My teacher encourages me to use this strategy. 2. This strategy is helpful. 3. This strategy is fast and easy. 4. This strategy is fun.

Disagree because:
1. My teacher did not teach me this strategy. 2. This strategy is not helpful. 3. I do not have enough time to use it. 4. It is lazy of me.

This is the end of the questionnaire. Thank you for participation.
Appendix B:  

Semi-structured Interview

Research title:

Factors Determining Saudi Learners' Difficulties in Attaining EFL Vocabulary

• Complete the information below:

((Student's information))

Educational level (class): .................................................................
English marks of the last year: ..........................................................
General final grade of the last year: ...............................................
Interview Questions

Stage one: Encountering the word:

Q. 1) When you encounter a new English word for the first time, what do you think the best methods are to learn the meaning of that word? Why? *(The interviewer asks for an example).*

Q. 2) When you encounter a new English word for the first time, do you think that guessing can help you learn the meaning of that word? *Ex. The man drank a cup of soso.*

Q. 3) Do you think that knowing what part of speech the new word is helps you guess its meaning? *Ex. The soso drank a cup of tea.*

Q. 4) Some students believe that knowing the grammatical feature of the new word helps them guess its meaning, do you agree? Why? *Ex. The man soso a cup of tea.*

Q. 5) As a student, do you make use of the pictures that come with vocabulary lessons to guess the meaning of the new vocabulary in those lessons? *(The interviewer shows some examples from the English student’s book).*

Q. 6) Do you think that morphology can help you guess the meaning of many new words? If ‘yes’, how? If ‘no’, why?

Q. 7) In this stage (stage 1), do you think it is better if you apply the abovementioned strategies yourself without your teacher’s help? Why? Why not?

Stage two: Getting the word form:

Q. 1) From your own viewpoint, what are the best methods to learn the form of a new English word? Why?

Q. 2) Do you prefer using your dictionary to get the form of a new word, or asking someone you trust such as your teacher or a classmate?
Q. 3\ How often do you do spoken or written repetition to practice the pronunciation and spelling of the new word? Why?

Q. 4\ In this stage (stage 2), do you think it is better if you apply the abovementioned strategies yourself without your teacher’s help? Why? Why not?

**Stage three: Getting the word meaning:**

Q. 1\ What are the best methods to learn the meaning of a new English word? Why?

Q. 2\ Do you prefer using an English-English dictionary to get the meaning of a new word? Why, or why not?

Q. 3\ From your point of view, what do you think the benefits you get when you use English-English dictionaries?

Q. 4\ If you use English-English dictionaries, do you make use of the icons and pictures in those dictionaries to learn the meaning of the new word?

Q. 5\ In this stage (stage 3), do you think it is better if you apply the abovementioned strategies yourself without your teacher’s help? Why? Why not?

**Stage four: Consolidating word form and meaning in memory:**

Q. 1\ What do you think the best methods are to consolidate the form and meaning of a new English word in your memory? Why?

Q. 2\ Do you make use of ‘grouping words strategy’ to consolidate the form and meaning of the new word in your memory?

Q. 3\ Some students believe that ‘imaging or drawing’ the meaning of the new word is a helpful way to consolidate the meaning in their memories, do you agree? Why or why not?

Q. 4\ Do you connect the new word to personal experiences in order to consolidate its meaning in your memory? (*The interviewer asks for an example*).
Q. 5\ Do you apply verbal or written repetition? If ‘yes’ how many? If ‘no’, why?

Q. 6\ In this stage (stage 4), do you think it is better if you apply the abovementioned strategies yourself without your teacher’s help? Why? Why not?

**Stage five: Using the word:**

Q. 1\ What do you think the best methods are to employ new words? Why?

Q. 2\ Do you connect new words to already known words by using them in chunks and collocations? If ‘yes’, how often? If ‘no’, why?

Q. 3\ In this stage (stage 5), do you think it is better if you apply the abovementioned strategies yourself without your teacher’s help? Why? Why not?

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

This is the end of the interview. Thank you for participation.
العوامل المحددة لصعوبات تعلم كلمات اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية لدى الطلاب السعوديين.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>الدرجات النهائية</th>
<th>المعدل العام للالغة الإنجليزية للعام الماضي</th>
<th>المرحلة الدراسية</th>
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<tr>
<td>الدرجات النهائية</td>
<td>لا تتوفر</td>
<td>المرحلة الدراسية</td>
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استبانة الطلاب

ضع دائرة حول أحد الخيارات التالية: (وافق، لا أوافق) ثم حدد سبب أو أسباب اختيارك:

مثال:

س 1/ عندما تواجهي كلمة إنجليزية لا أعرفها أحاول أولا أن أخم معناها:

- لا أوافق:
  1. لأن الامتحاني يشجعني لفعل ذلك.
  2. لأن هذه الطريقة مفيدة.
  3. لأن هذه الطريقة مسلية.
  4. لأن هذه الطريقة سهلة وسريعة.

- لا أوافق:
  1. لأن الامتحاني يشجعني لفعل ذلك.
  2. لأن هذه الطريقة غير مفيدة.
  3. لأنأي ليس لدي الوقت الكافي لاستخدامها.
  4. لأن فأتيه قصورا مئاً.

المرحلة الأولى/ مواجهة الكلمة:

س 1/ عندما تواجهي كلمة إنجليزية لا أعرفها أحاول أولا أن أخم معناها:

- لا أوافق:
  1. لأن الامتحاني يشجعني لفعل ذلك.
  2. لأن هذه الطريقة مفيدة.
  3. لأن هذه الطريقة مسلية.
  4. لأن هذه الطريقة سهلة وسريعة.

- لا أوافق:
  1. لأن الامتحاني يشجعني لفعل ذلك.
  2. لأن هذه الطريقة غير مفيدة.
  3. لأنأي ليس لدي الوقت الكافي لاستخدامها.
  4. لأن فأتيه قصورا مئاً.

س 2/ معرفة تصرف الكلمة (فعل، اسم صفة... إلخ) يساعدني على تخمين معانيها:

- لا أوافق:
  1. لأن الامتحاني يشجعني لفعل ذلك.
  2. لأن هذه الطريقة مفيدة.
  3. لأن هذه الطريقة مسلية.
  4. لأن هذه الطريقة سهلة وسريعة.

- لا أوافق:
  1. لأن الامتحاني يشجعني لفعل ذلك.
  2. لأن هذه الطريقة غير مفيدة.
  3. لأنأي ليس لدي الوقت الكافي لاستخدامها.
  4. لأن فأتيه قصورا مئاً.
### معرفة مزايا الكلمة نحوياً (جمع، مفرد، ماضي، مستقبل... إخ) يساعدني على تخمين معناها:

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<td>1.</td>
<td>لأن هذا الاسم يستخدم في فعل ذلك.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>لأن هذه الاسم سهلة وسريعة.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>لأن هذه الاسم مشابهة.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>لا لأن هذا الاسم يستخدم في فعل ذلك.</td>
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### معرفة الصور التي في كتاب اللغة الإنجليزية على تخمين عدد كبير من الكلمات الجديدة:

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<thead>
<tr>
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<td>لأن هذا الصور مفيدة.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>لأن هذا الصور سهلة وسريعة.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>لا لأن هذا الصور غير مفيدة.</td>
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### معرفة أجزاء الكلمة (الوافقات الكلمات مثل البداية واللاحقة) يساعدني على تخمين معناها:

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<td>3.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>لا لأن هذا الاسم يستخدم في فعل ذلك.</td>
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### المرحلة الثانية/ استيعاب شكل الكلمة:

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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>لأن هذا الاسم يستخدم في فعل ذلك.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>لأن هذه الاسم سهلة وسريعة.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>لأن هذه الاسم مشابهة.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>لا لأن هذا الاسم يستخدم في فعل ذلك.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
المرحلة الرابعة: دمج وتعزيز شكل ومعنى الكلمة في الذاكرة:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>السؤال 1/ استفيد من طريقة دراسة الكلمة الجديدة ضمن مجموعة كلمات قريبة منها لتذكر شكلها ومعناها:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># أوافق:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. لأن هذه الطريقة مفيدة.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. لأن هذا الطريقة سهل وسريعة.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. لأن هذه الطريقة طالبة.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># لا أوافق:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. لأن هذا الطريقة غير مفيدة.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. لأن هذا الطريقة غير سهل وسريعة.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. لأنني أستطيع ذلك قصراً مني.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>السؤال 2/ استخدم أساليب الترميز (رسم صورة) لتعلم معنى الكلمة الجديدة:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># أوافق:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. لأن هذا الطريقة مفيدة.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. لأن هذا الطريقة سهل وسريعة.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. لأن هذه الطريقة طالبة.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># لا أوافق:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. لأن هذا الطريقة غير مفيدة.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. لأن هذا الطريقة غير سهل وسريعة.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. لأنني لا استطيع ذلك قصراً مني.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
س 3/ أربط بين الكلمات الجديدة وتجاري الشخصي من أجل تثبيت معانيها في ذاكرتك:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>أوافق:</th>
<th>لا أوافق:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. لأن استاذي يشجعني لفعل ذلك.</td>
<td>لأن هذه الطريقة مفيدة.</td>
<td>لأن هذه الطريقة غير مفيدة.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. لأن هذه الطريقة سهلة وسريعة.</td>
<td>لأن هذه الطريقة مسلية.</td>
<td>لأن اعتبر ذلك قصورة مني.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

س 4/ أطبق الترديد الذكوري للكلمة وذلك باستخدامها ضمن 5 إلى 16 مثالًا مختلفًا:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>أوافق:</th>
<th>لا أوافق:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. لأن استاذي يشجعني لفعل ذلك.</td>
<td>لأن هذه الطريقة مفيدة.</td>
<td>لأن اعتبر ذلك قصورة مني.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. لأن هذه الطريقة سهلة وسريعة.</td>
<td>لأن هذه الطريقة مسلية.</td>
<td>لأن ليست لدي الوقت الكافي لاستخدامها.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

س 5/ أطبق الترديد الكتابي للكلمة وذلك باستخدامها ضمن 5 إلى 16 مثالًا مختلفًا:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>أوافق:</th>
<th>لا أوافق:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. لأن استاذي يشجعني لفعل ذلك.</td>
<td>لأن هذه الطريقة مفيدة.</td>
<td>لأن اعتبر ذلك قصورة مني.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. لأن هذه الطريقة سهلة وسريعة.</td>
<td>لأن هذه الطريقة مسلية.</td>
<td>لأن ليست لدي الوقت الكافي لاستخدامها.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

المرحلة الخامسة/ استخدام الكلمة:

س 1/ أربط بين الكلمات التي أعرفها مسبقًا وبين الكلمات الجديدة واستخدمها ضمن مجموعة متنوعة من الأمثلة:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>أوافق:</th>
<th>لا أوافق:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. لأن استاذي يشجعني لفعل ذلك.</td>
<td>لأن هذه الطريقة مفيدة.</td>
<td>لأن هذه الطريقة غير مفيدة.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. لأن هذه الطريقة سهلة وسريعة.</td>
<td>لأن هذه الطريقة مسلية.</td>
<td>لأن اعتبر ذلك قصورة مني.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

وفي الختام... أشكركم على المشاركة في هذا الاستبيان.
العوامل المحددة لصعوبات تعلم كلمات اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية لدى الطلاب السعوديين.

الرجاء إكمال البيانات التالية:

((معلومات الطالب))

المراحل الدراسية:

الدرجة النهائية لاختبار مادة اللغة الإنجليزية للعام الماضي:

الدرجة النهائية العامة للعام الماضي:
Ex. The man drank a cup of 'soso'.

Ex. The 'soso' drank a cup of tea.

Ex. The man 'soso' a cup of tea.
س 3/ هل تقوم بترديد الكلمة الجديدة عدة مرات لحفظ طريقة لفظها وكتابتها؟ إذا كانت الإجابة
بتسم، هل تقوم بذلك استمراراً أم أحياناً؟ وإذا كانت لا، فلماذا؟

س 4/ في هذه المرحلة (المرحلة الثانية)، هل تعتقد أنه من الأفضل أن تطبق استراتيجيات تعلم
الكلمات الجديدة المذكورة أعلاه لوحدك دون مساعدة استاذك؟ لماذا لم لا؟

المراحل الثالثة/ استيعاب معنى الكلمة:

س 1/ من وجهة نظرك، ما أفضل الطرق لتعلم معاني الكلمات الجديدة؟ ولماذا؟

س 2/ هل تفضل استخدام قاموساً أحادي اللغة (الإنجليزي – إنجليزي) لتعلم معنى الكلمة الجديدة؟
لماذا؟

س 3/ من وجهة نظرك، ما فوائد القواميس أحادية اللغة (الإنجليزي – إنجليزي)؟

س 4/ إذا كنت تستخدم قواميس أحادية اللغة، هل تحاول الاستفادة من الرموز والصور الصغرى
في القاموس لمعرفة معنى الكلمة الجديدة؟

س 5/ في هذه المرحلة (المرحلة الثالثة)، هل تعتقد أنه من الأفضل أن تطبق استراتيجيات تعلم
الكلمات الجديدة المذكورة أعلاه لوحدك دون مساعدة استاذك؟ لماذا لم لا؟

المراحل الرابعة/ دمج وتعزيز شكل ومعنى الكلمة في الذاكرة:

س 1/ ما أفضل الطرق لحفظ شكل ومعنى الكلمة الجديدة؟ ولماذا؟

س 2/ هل تستفيد من طريقة دراسة الكلمة الجديدة ضمن مجموعة كلمات قريبة منها لتذكر
شکلها ومعناها؟

س 3/ بعض الطلاب يعتقدون أن استخدام أساليب الترميز (رسم صورة) يساعدهم على تعلم
معنى الكلمة الجديدة؟ هل توافق على ذلك؟ ولماذا؟

س 4/ هل تربط بين الكلمات الجديدة وتجاربك الشخصية من أجل تثبيت معانيها في ذاكرتك؟
(يطلب المقابل مثالًا).

س 5/ هل تطبق الترديد اللفظي والكتابي للكلمة في أمثلة مختلفة؟ إذا كان نعم، فكم مرة تقوم
بذلك؟ وإذا كان لا، فلماذا؟

س 6/ في هذه المرحلة (المرحلة الرابعة)، هل تعتقد أنه من الأفضل أن تطبق استراتيجيات تعلم
الكلمات الجديدة المذكورة أعلاه لوحدك دون مساعدة استاذك؟ لماذا لم لا؟
المرحلة الخامسة/ استخدام الكلمة:

س 1/ ما أفضل الطرق لاستخدام وتوظيف الكلمات الجديدة في رأيك؟ ولماذا؟

س 2/ هل تربط بين الكلمات التي تعرفها سابقاً وبين الكلمات الجديدة وتستخدمها ضمن مجموعة متنوعة من الأمثلة؟ إذا كان نعم، فكم غالباً تقوم بذلك؟ وإذا كان لا، فلماذا؟

س 3/ في هذه المرحلة (المرحلة الخامسة)، هل تعتقد أنه من الأفضل أن تطبق استراتيجيات تعلم الكلمات الجديدة المذكورة أعلاه لوحدك دون مساعدة استاذك؟ لماذا؟ لم لا؟

وفي الختام... أشكرك على المشاركة في هذه المقابلة.
Appendix E:

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Notification of Expedited Approval

To Chief Investigator or Project Supervisor:  
Dr Jean Harkins

Cc Co-investigators / Research Students:  
Mr Mohammed Albousaif

Re Protocol:  
Factors Determining Saudi Learners’ Difficulties in Attaining EFL Vocabulary

Date:  
21-Aug-2009

Reference No:  
H-2009-0205

Date of Initial Approval:  
19-Aug-2009

Thank you for your Response to Conditional Approval submission to the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) seeking approval in relation to the above protocol.

Your submission was considered under Expedited review by the Chair/Deputy Chair.

I am pleased to advise that the decision on your submission is Approved effective 19-Aug-2009.

For noting: Please ensure that the translated documents reflect the amendments made. Please also update the version number and date on the letter to the principal and the consent form.

In approving this protocol, the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) is of the opinion that the project complies with the provisions contained in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, 2007, and the requirements within this University relating to human research.

Approval will remain valid subject to the submission, and satisfactory assessment, of annual progress reports. If the approval of an External HREC has been "noted" the approval period is as determined by that HREC.

The full Committee will be asked to ratify this decision at its next scheduled meeting. A formal Certificate of Approval will be available upon request. Your approval number is H-2009-0205.
If the research requires the use of an Information Statement, ensure this number is inserted at the relevant point in the Complaints paragraph prior to distribution to potential participants. You may then proceed with the research.

Conditions of Approval

This approval has been granted subject to you complying with the requirements for Monitoring of Progress, Reporting of Adverse Events, and Variations to the Approved Protocol as detailed below.

PLEASE NOTE:

In the case where the HREC has "noted" the approval of an External HREC, progress reports and reports of adverse events are to be submitted to the External HREC only. In the case of Variations to the approved protocol, or a Renewal of approval, you will apply to the External HREC for approval in the first instance and then Register that approval with the University's HREC.

- **Monitoring of Progress**

Other than above, the University is obliged to monitor the progress of research projects involving human participants to ensure that they are conducted according to the protocol as approved by the HREC. A progress report is required on an annual basis. Continuation of your HREC approval for this project is conditional upon receipt, and satisfactory assessment, of annual progress reports. You will be advised when a report is due.

- **Reporting of Adverse Events**

  1. It is the responsibility of the person **first named on this Approval Advice** to report adverse events.
  2. Adverse events, however minor, must be recorded by the investigator as observed by the investigator or as volunteered by a participant in the research. Full details are to be documented, whether or not the investigator, or his/her deputies, consider the event to be related to the research substance or procedure.
  3. Serious or unforeseen adverse events that occur during the research or within six (6) months of completion of the research, must be reported by the person first named on the Approval Advice to the (HREC) by way of the Adverse Event Report form within 72 hours of the occurrence of the event or the investigator receiving advice of the event.
  4. Serious adverse events are defined as:
     - Causing death, life threatening or serious disability.
     - Causing or prolonging hospitalisation.
     - Overdoses, cancers, congenital abnormalities, tissue damage, whether or not they are judged to be caused by the investigational...
agent or procedure.
  o Causing psycho-social and/or financial harm. This covers everything from perceived invasion of privacy, breach of confidentiality, or the diminution of social reputation, to the creation of psychological fears and trauma.
  o Any other event which might affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

5. Reports of adverse events must include:
   o Participant's study identification number;
   o date of birth;
   o date of entry into the study;
   o treatment arm (if applicable);
   o date of event;
   o details of event;
   o the investigator's opinion as to whether the event is related to the research procedures; and
   o action taken in response to the event.

6. Adverse events which do not fall within the definition of serious, including those reported from other sites involved in the research, are to be reported in detail at the time of the annual progress report to the HREC.

- **Variations to approved protocol**

If you wish to change, or deviate from, the approved protocol, you will need to submit an Application for Variation to Approved Human Research. Variations may include, but are not limited to, changes or additions to investigators, study design, study population, number of participants, methods of recruitment, or participant information/consent documentation. **Variations must be approved by the (HREC) before they are implemented** except when Registering an approval of a variation from an external HREC which has been designated the lead HREC, in which case you may proceed as soon as you receive an acknowledgement of your Registration.

**Linkage of ethics approval to a new Grant**

HREC approvals cannot be assigned to a new grant or award (ie those that were not identified on the application for ethics approval) without confirmation of the approval from the Human Research Ethics Officer on behalf of the HREC.

Best wishes for a successful project.
Associate Professor Alison Ferguson
Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee

For communications and enquiries:
Human Research Ethics Administration

Research Services
Research Office
The University of Newcastle
Callaghan NSW 2308
T +61 2 492 18999
F +61 2 492 17164
Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au
Appendix F:

Information Statement for the Research Project:

Factors Determining Saudi Learners' Difficulties in Attaining EFL Vocabulary.
Document Version 2; dated 13/07/09

You are invited to participate in the research project identified above which is being conducted by Mohammed Albousaif from the School of Humanities and Social Science/ Faculty of Education and Arts at the University of Newcastle. The research is part of Mohammed's studies at the University of Newcastle, supervised by Dr Jean Harkins from the School of Humanities and Social Science/Faculty of Education and Arts at the University of Newcastle.

Why is the research being done?

Many studies on the subject of learning/teaching English in Saudi Arabia show that there is weakness in attaining English vocabulary. Most of those studies prove that such weakness is due to many factors; mainly, the lack of appropriate learning strategies. This research will concentrate on exploring:

1. What are the vocabulary learning strategies that are most preferred and most utilized by Saudi EFL learners?
2. What are the learners' reasons for using/disusing those strategies? What learning strategies do and don’t engage the learners cognitively in ways that contribute to their overall SLA?

The purpose of the research is to specify those strategies and explain how they
affect EFL learning/teaching process in Saudi Arabia. A specific sample of data will be collected, examined and analyzed to provide a new understanding of those factors causing the difficulties.

**Who can participate in the research?**

The research project is expected to recruit approximately 200 EFL Saudi learners. This project will involve participants from higher level (university students), secondary level and intermediate level, apart from that, selection will be random.

**What choice do you have?**

Participation in this research is entirely your choice. Only those people who give their informed consent will be included in the project. Whether or not you decide to participate, your decision will not disadvantage you. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason and have the option of withdrawing any data which identifies you. However, once the anonymous questionnaire is returned, it cannot be withdrawn.

**What would you be asked to do?**

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to freely and honestly give your responses to the questions in the questionnaire. The questionnaire items are provided in English and Arabic. The questionnaire has a structured multiple-choice format and the options you can choose from are: "Agree" or "Disagree", and then tick at least one possible reason for your choice. If you, also, would like to participate in a short interview which will be held immediately after the questionnaire session, then you will be asked to sign the attached consent form. Only 10% of the total number of the participants is needed to respond to the questions of a short semi-structured interview. The interviews will be held in a separate room in the same school, during the class time or break time. You will also be asked to complete an information sheet and provide some information in relation to your educational level, degree, classes, etc. You will not, however, be asked about any personal information such as your name or any other indications
of your identity. Your participation will be effectively anonymous. Each interview participant will have the opportunity to listen to the recording and edit or erase any part of it. Only when the participant is satisfied with the recording will it be transcribed.

How much time will it take?
The questionnaire should take about 30 minutes to complete in one session during the class time, while the semi-structured interview may take sixty minutes.

What are the risks and benefits of participating?
The proposed research involves no real or potential risks for participants. Participants will not get direct or indirect benefits from their participation in the research. This project will not involve participants in any kind of potential risks, physical or psycho-social harm. Participants will not be exposed to any kind of risk and harm as collection of data will take place in the participants’ normal daily environment (during classes).

How will your privacy be protected?
The questionnaire and the interview are anonymous and it will not be possible to identify you from your answers. Your privacy will be protected during the recruitment process, and there will be no unauthorized access to records such as the questionnaires and personal information. Names, addresses and other contact details will be stored in a secure filing cabinet in the School of Humanities & Social Science at The University of Newcastle. All non-selected participants’ data will be destroyed at the completion of the research project.

How will the information collected be used?
The data obtained from the research will be analysed and the results will be presented in the form of a PhD thesis. The student researcher also anticipates that some of the results may be published in relevant scholarly publications, such as conference proceedings or journals. Individual participants will not be identified
in any reports arising from the project. The participants will be offered a summary of the results after the completion of the research project.

**What do you need to do to participate?**

Please read this Information Statement and be sure you understand its contents before you consent to participate. If there is anything you do not understand, or you have questions, contact the researcher. If you would like to participate, please complete the attached Consent Form and the anonymous questionnaire (and the interview if you are interested). This will be taken as your informed consent to participate.

**Further information**

If you would like further information please contact Dr Jean Harkins from the School of Humanities and Social Science/Faculty of Education and Arts at the University of Newcastle at Jean.Harkins@newcastle.edu.au.

Thank you for considering this invitation.

Your participation will be very highly appreciated.

Chief Investigator:  
Researcher:  

*Dr Jean Harkins*  
Mohammed Albousaif

**Complaints about this research**

This project has been approved by the University’s Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval No. H-2009-0205. Should you have concerns about your rights as a participant in this research, or you have a complaint about the manner in which the research is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or, if an independent person is preferred, to the Human Research Ethics Officer, Research Office, The Chancellery, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan NSW 2308, Australia, telephone (02) 49216333, email Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au or you can contact: Dr. Khalid Almasha’al from Imam Mohammed Ibn Saud University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on +96612580000.
نشرة توضيحية عن مشروع البحث:

عنوان البحث: العوامل المحددة لصعوبات تعلم كلامات اللغة الإنجليزية ككلية ثانية لدى الطلاب السعوديين.

وثيقة رقم 2 - تاريخ: 13/7/2009

أنت مدعو للمشاركة في مشروع البحث الموضح أعلاه والذي يقوم به محمد بن عبده العزيز البوسيف من كلية العلوم الإنسانية والاجتماعية / قسم التربية والآداب بجامعة نيوكاسل. هذا البحث هو جزء من دراسة محمد البوسيف في جامعة نيوكاسل لمرحلة الدكتوراه حيث تقوم الدكتورة جين هاركنز من كلية العلوم الإنسانية والاجتماعية / قسم التربية والآداب بجامعة نيوكاسل بالإشراف على البحث.

ما الهدف من القيام بهذا البحث؟

تشير العديد من الدراسات المتعلقة بتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية في المملكة العربية السعودية إلى وجود ضعف في اكتساب كلامات اللغة الإنجليزية. ومعظم تلك الدراسات تعزو ذلك الضعف إلى عدة أسباب أهمها: عدم معرفة الأساليب الصحيحة لتعلم كلامات اللغة الإنجليزية وكذلك استخدام طرق تدريس غير مدفوعة في تعلم كلامات اللغة الإنجليزية. وسيركز هذا البحث على إجابة سؤالين مهمين وهما:

1. ما هي الأساليب التعليمية الأكثر استخدامًا من قبل الطلاب السعودي في تعلم كلامات اللغة وما هي الأساليب التي يتبناها؟

2. ما هي الأسباب وراء استخدام أو عدم استخدام الطلاب السعودي لتلك الأساليب التعليمية، وما هي الأساليب التعليمية التي تحفز الطلاب فكرًا بشكل يسهم في تطور لغتهم الإنجليزية؟
و الهدف من القيام بهذا البحث هو اختيار وتحليل نتائج النقطتين ومن ثم شرح مدى تأثيرها على تعلم وتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية في المملكة العربية السعودية. سوف تجمع بيانات عينة (عدد من المشاركين) ثم تحلل نتائج تلك البيانات للخروج بهم أعمق للكل العوامل المسببة لصعوبات تعلم وتعلم كلمات اللغة الإنجليزية.

من هم الأشخاص الذين يحق لهم المشاركة؟

من المتوقع أن يشمل هذا المشروع 200 طالباً سعودياً ممن يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية. وسيشمل هذا المشروع مشاركين من مراحل متقدمة كالجامعات والكليات وكذلك مراحل الثانوي والمتوسط والابتدائي، وما عدا ذلك فإن اختيار العينة سيتم بشكل عشوائي.

ما الخيارات المطروحة؟

تعتبر المشاركة في هذا البحث اختيارية. حيث أن حياز المشاركة متاح فقط لم يوقع بالموافقة على استمارة الإقرار الموقعة. وفي حال عدم اتباعكم بالمشاركة فإن هذا لا يؤثر عليك بأي حال من الأحوال. كما أنه في حال موافقتكم بالمشاركة ثم أردت أن تنسحب لاحقاً فإن هذا من حقك وفي أي وقت من دون إعطاء أي تفسير لنسحبكم من المشاركة ومن دون إعطاء أي بيانات شخصية. علما بأنه لا يحق لك إلغاء المشاركة بعد تسليم الاستبانة للباحث.

ما المطلوب منك؟

في حال موافقتكم بالمشاركة، سيطلب منك إعطاء رأيك بكل حرية وأمانة والإجابة على أسئلة الاستبيان المرفق. أما بشأن الاستبانة الخاصة بالطلاب المتقدمين باللغتين العربية والإنجليزية. يتكون الاستبيان من عدد من الأسئلة ذات الإجابات المتعددة الاختيارات. وتلك الخيارات هي: "أوافق"، "لا أوافق". ثم يطلب منك وضع إشارة على السبب أو الأسباب التي تؤدي اختيارك. كما يمكنك المشاركة في مقابلة شخصية قصيرة بعد المشاركة في الاستبيان إذا ركنت ترغب في ذلك. حيث ستوجه الدعوة لـ 10% من المشاركين للمشاركة في الإجابة على أسئلة بسيطة خلال مقابلة شخصية قصيرة يتم إجرائها في غرفة مستقلة في مركن التعليمي خلال إحدى الحصص الدراسية أو فترات الاستراحة. كما سيطلب منك إكمال ورقة المعلومات المتعلقة بمستوى الدراسي، والدرجة العلمية، والفصل، إلخ والتوقيع على ورقة الموافقة. ومن يوجه إليك أي سؤال طلب بياناتك الشخصية مثل اسمك أو أي بيانات شخصية أخرى. إن مشاركتك ستكون مجهولة المصدر بشكل كامل. لكل مشارك في مقابلة الشخصية الحق الكامل في الاستماع إلى إجابته المسجلة وحذف أو تعديل ما لا يناسبه منها ولن يُعتمد تسجيل أو كتابة إلا ما يرغب المشارك بتسجيله.
ما المدة المطلوبة للمشاركة؟

 تستغرق مدة المشاركة للإجابة على أسئلة الاستبيان حوالي 30 دقيقة خلال لقاء واحد وأثناء وقت الحصة أو المحاضرة. بينما تستغرق المشاركة في المقابلة الشخصية 60 دقيقة.

هل يترتب على مشاركتي أي أضرار أو فوائد ربحية؟

 لا يترتب على مشاركتك في هذا البحث أي خطرة عليك. كما أنه ليس هناك من عوائد ربحية مباشرة أو غير مباشرة. ولن يتضمن هذا البحث أي أضرار جسدية أو نفسية. الاجتماعية متحتلة على المشاركين فيه حيث أن المشاركة في الإجابة على أسئلة الاستبيان ستكون أثناء الدوران الرسمي للمشاركين (أي أثناء الحضور أو المحاضرات).

كيف ستحفظ خصوصيتي؟

 لن نكتب أسماء المشاركين في الاستبيان وسيكون من المستحيل التعرف على شخصيتكم من خلال إجاباتك. إن خصوصياتك ستحفظ أثناء عملية المشاركة لمن يكون هناك أي وسيلة غير مصرفية للوصول إلى سجلك الشخصي. وستحفظ أي معلومات تتعلق بك في خزانة أمنة في مبنى كلية العلوم الإنسانية والاجتماعية في جامعة نيوس컬س. أما الأشخاص الذين لن يتم إدراج مشاركاتهم فسيتم إتلاف أي بيانات تتعلق بهم عند اكتمال مشروع البحث.

كيف ستعالج المعلومات بعد جمعها؟

 ستخطئ نتائج البيانات التي سيحصل عليها الباحث وستقدم النتائج ضمن أطروحة علمية في رسالة الدكتوراه. ويجعل الباحث علما بأن تلك النتائج قد تنشر في أي نشر علمي سواء كان كتابا أو مجلة أو غيره أو المشاركة في مؤتمر علمي. ولن يتم نشر أي بيانات خصوصية عن المشاركين في أي مما سبق. وسيؤخذ المشاركين بملخص عن نتائج مشروع البحث بعد اكتماله.

ما الذي احتاجه للمشاركة؟

 رجاء، قام بقراءة هذه النشرة التوضيحية وتتأكد أنك استوعبت كل ما فيها قبل أن توقع إقرار المشاركة. إذا كان هنالك أي أمر لم تقهمه أو إذا كان لديك أي استفسار فرجاء اتصال بالباحث. وإذا رغبت بالمشاركة فقم بتعبئة نموذج الإقرار والاستبيان المرفق مع هذا النشرة. وهذا يعني أنك موافق على المشاركة.
ملومات إضافية:

إذا كنت ترغب في الحصول على معلومات إضافية، فرجاء الاتصال بالدكتورة جين هاركنز - كلية العلوم الإنسانية
والعلوم الاجتماعية/قسم التربية والآداب بجامعة نيوكاسل على البريد:
Jean.Harkins@newcastle.edu.au

شكرًا لك على قبولك للدعوة ومشاركتك في هذه الدراسة. مشاركتك محل اهتمامنا وتقديرنا.

الباحث:

رئيسة الباحثين:

الطالب/ محمد اليوسف

د. جين هاركنز

في حال وجود شكوك بشأن البحث:


البريد الإلكتروني: Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au

الإسلامية بالرياض في المملكة العربية السعودية على الرقم: 9661258000000.
Appendix H:

To the principal/dean of school/college/university of:

Your school/college/university is invited to participate in the research project: "Factors Determining Saudi Learners’ Difficulties in Attaining EFL Vocabulary" which is being conducted by Mohammed Albousaif from the School of Humanities and Social Science, Faculty of Education and Arts at the University of Newcastle, Australia. The research is part of Mohammed's PhD studies at the University of Newcastle, supervised by Dr Jean Harkins from the School of Humanities and Social Science at the University of Newcastle. A specific sample of data is needed to be collected, examined and analyzed to provide a new understanding of those factors causing the above-mentioned difficulties for our Saudi students. Your help is needed to allow us to invite some EFL students from your school to participate. They would be invited to complete a questionnaire which takes no more than 30 minutes to complete in one session during the class time, as well as a short follow-up interview with about 5 students. For more information, please read the information statement, consent forms, the students’ questionnaires and the interview questions which are all enclosed with this letter. If you would like further information please contact Dr Jean Harkins at the University of Newcastle, Jean.Harkins@newcastle.edu.au, telephone +61-2-4921-5179, or contact: Dr Khalid Almasha’al from Imam Mohammed Ibn Saud University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on +9661258000. If you agree to participate, a summary of the results will be sent to you after the completion of the research.

Your co-operation in the project will be very highly appreciated.

Chief Investigator: Jean Harkins

Student Researcher: Mohammed Albousaif

Complaints about this research
This project has been approved by the University’s Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval No. H-2009-0205. Should you have concerns about your rights as a participant in this research, or you have a complaint about the manner in which the research is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or, if an independent person is preferred, to the Human Research Ethics Officer, Research Office, The Chancellery, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan NSW 2308, Australia, telephone (02) 49216333, email Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au or you can contact: Dr. Khalid Almasha’al from Imam Mohammed Ibn Saud University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on +9661258000.
Appendix I:

سعادة مدير/عميد جامعة/كلية/مدرسة . حفظه الله.

إن مؤسستكم التعليمية الموقرة مدعوة للمشاركة في مشروع بحث دكتوراه بعنوان: "العوامل المحددة لصعوبات تعلم كلمات اللغة الإنجليزية كلمة ثانية لدى الطلاب السعوديين" والذي يقوم بإجراء الباحث محمد بن عبد العزيز البوسيف من كلية العلوم الإنسانية والاجتماعية/قسم التربية والآداب في جامعة نيوكاسل، أستراليا. هذا البحث وهو جزء من دراسة محمد البوسيف في مرحلة الدكتوراه في جامعة نيوكاسل وتقوم بالإشراف عليه الدكتور جين هاركنز من كلية العلوم الإنسانية والاجتماعية/قسم التربية والآداب بجامعة نيوكاسل. يقوم الباحث بجمع عينة من الباحثين وتحليلها للوصول إلى نتائج أشمل لأسباب تلك الصعوبات المذكورة أعلاه. سيطلب من المشاركين مساعدتهم لعدة على 30 دقيقة وخلال وقت تجربة باحثية بالإضافة إلى مشاركة حوالي 5 طلاب في مقابلة شخصية قصيرة عن آرائهم، إنها بحاجة إلى مساعدتهم في تحديد بعض ملاحظات اللغة الإنجليزية لتمكين الباحث من فهم أوجه القوة في الشروط التوضيحية المحفزة في مشروع البحث والإصلاح على استبانة الطلاب واسطة المقايضة الشخصية (متوفرة باللغتين العربية والإنجليزية). إذا كنت ترغبون في الحصول على بيانات إضافية، فرجاء الاتصال بالدكتورة جين هاركنز - كلية العلوم الإنسانية والعلوم الاجتماعية/قسم التربية والآداب بجامعة نيوكاسل على الاتصال على الرقم: 7919-4921-61. البريد الإلكتروني: Jean.Harkins@newcastle.edu.au

كما يمكنكم الإتصال بالدكتور خالد بن عيد الرحمن المشعل عن طريق الاتصال عبر البريد الإلكتروني: Jean.Harkins@newcastle.edu.au

شكرا لقبولكم هذه الدعوة. تعاونكم مهل اهتماما وتقديرنا.

الباحث:

الباحث: د. جين هاركنز

في حال وجود شكوك بشأن البحث:

تصادق لجنة مشاركة الأفراد في البحث العلمي بالجامعة على هذا المشروع برقمه H-2009-0205 وفقاً لجوابيد أي تسجيل عن حقوق في المشاركة في هذا البحث. في حال وجود أي شكوك بشأن أساس أو طريقة إجراء البحث، فإنكم يمكنكم التحدث مباشرة مع الباحث أو في حالة الضرورة للتحدث إلى شخص مساعد في الجامعة لبحثة مشاركة الأفراد في البحث العلمي بالجامعة على الرقم: 49216333-02. البريد الإلكتروني: Ethics@newcastle.edu.au

السعودية على الرقم: 96612580000000
Appendix J:

Adult Students’ Consent Form for the Research Project:

Factors Determining Saudi Learners’ Difficulties in Attaining EFL Vocabulary.

Researcher: Mohammed Albousaif

Document Version 1; dated 23/06/09

I agree to participate in the above research project and give my consent freely. I understand that the project will be conducted as described in the Information Statement, a copy of which I have retained. I understand I can withdraw from the project at any time and do not have to give any reason for withdrawing. I consent to:

☐ participate in a semi-structured interview.

I understand that my answers to the interview questions will be tape-recorded and I will be allowed to listen to my tape-recorded response and erase any part of it or make any changes to it. I completely understand that my personal information will remain confidential to the researchers. I have had the opportunity to have questions answered to my satisfaction.

Print Name: __________________________________________
Signature: _____________________________ Date: _________________________
Contact no: _________________________ Email: __________________________
Appendix K:

Parents’ Consent Form for the Research Project:

Factors Determining Saudi Learners’ Difficulties in Attaining EFL Vocabulary.

Researcher: Mohammed Albousaif

Document Version 1; dated 02/06/09

I agree for my child to participate in the above research project and give my consent freely. I understand that the project will be conducted as described in the Information Statement, a copy of which I have retained. I understand that my child can withdraw from the project at any time and does not have to give any reason for withdrawing. I consent for my child to:

☐ Complete a questionnaire.

☐ Participate in a semi-structured interview.

I understand that my child’s personal information will remain confidential to the researchers. I have had the opportunity to have questions answered to my satisfaction.

Consent of child / young person < 18 years:

Print Name: ____________________________________________________________

Signature: ___________________________ Date: _________________________

Contact no: _________________________ Email: __________________________