Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master in English

Title:

Investigating Students' Use of Vocabulary Learning Strategies in the Department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou:

The Case of First-Year Students.

Presented by:

Ms KAIDI Fazia

Ms KETTEB Dihia

Supervised by:

Mr AMZIANE Hamid

Board of examiners:

Prof AMZIANE Hamid; Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou. Supervisor

Mrs. AMMOUR Kamila; MAA, Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou. Chair

Mrs. BERDJANE Ouiza; MAB, Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou. Examiner

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N° d'Ordre:

N° de Série:

I dedicate this modest work:

To my loved parents,

To my dear husband who always encourage me,

To my brothers,

To my sisters,

To all my family members,

To all my lovely friends, with whom I shared the most memorable lifetime moments,

To all my teachers.

Ketteb Dihia

To my dear parents,

To all my family members,

To my fiance,

To all my lovely friends, with whom I shared the most memorable lifetime moments,

To all my teachers.

Kaidi Fazia

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Special thanks go to first year LMD students of the Department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-ouzou who took part and contributed to the present research.

Finally, we would like also express our particular and sincere thanks to all those who helped us in accomplishing this modest work and who contributed in a way or another to the fulfilment of this dissertation.

This present study aims to investigate Vocabulary Learning Strategies used by first year students in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou in order to learn English vocabulary. To achieve this objective, Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy of Vocabulary Learning Strategies is used. To investigate, a mixed methods approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative data has been followed. Thus, a questionnaire has been distributed to sixty (60) LMD students. In order to analyze the data, the SPSS (statistical package for social sciences) is used for statistical data analysis while qualitative content analysis helped to interpret the qualitative data. On the basis of the results of the study, it is concluded that first year students use both discovery and consolidation strategies in order to enrich their English vocabulary.

Key words: Vocabulary Learning Strategies, English vocabulary, discovery strategies, consolidation strategies.

- LMD : Licence Master Doctorat

- LLS : Language Learning Strategies

- VLS: Vocabulary Learning Strategies

- L1: Mother Tongue

- L2: Second Language

- FL: Foreign Language

- TL: Target Language

- MMUTO: Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou

- SPSS: Social Package for the Social Sciences

- QCA: Qualitative Content Analysis

Contents

General Introduction

> **Chapter one : Review of the Literature**

- **Statement of the Problem**

Nowadays, Vocabulary learning plays a crucial role in language teaching and learning, especially in the context where English is taught as a foreign language, because all learners should possess a wide range of word knowledge, good lexical competence on the English language in order to comprehend and to communicate effectively during the learning process. In fact, the majority of learners pay more attention to vocabulary aspect more than the other ones, when they start to learn the language; since it is considered as the basic element in the language. As stated by Zimmerman (cited by Subekti and Lawson, 2007: 485) *"Vocabulary is crucial to language and of great importance to language learners"*. However, vocabulary is seen as one of the most challenging tasks for almost all learners because they lack particular vocabulary knowledge, which mainly affect their speaking, reading, listening and writing skills. So, students can overcome these difficulties, if they make use of Vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) that can help them to learn the unknown words easily (Schmitt, 1997).

VLS seem to be necessary and useful strategies that are used by second/ foreign language learners in order to gain a good lexical baggage about the English language. They are actually a component of language learning strategies, so, VLS are of great importance. "With the help of vocabulary learning strategies, learners acquire a large amount of vocabulary, those strategies are very useful for students of different levels" (Nation, 2001) In fact, learning the meaning of new words in a second or in a foreign language require some specific techniques or strategies which can affect the success of a foreign vocabulary learning. We will try to shed light on the use of VLS by first year students in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou (MMUTO) because at this level learners need to acquire a big size of vocabulary knowledge that they will use during their learning process.

A brief glance at the literature points out that in recent years, vocabulary learning has attracted more and more interest from researchers, scholars, and linguists who have pointed

out the significance of vocabulary learning strategies. Among them, we can cite Mc McCarthy (1990), Schmitt (1997), Nation (1990), Laufer (1986). Their ultimate goal is trying to discover the most effective ways in which new vocabulary items can be learnt in a quick and pleasant way. Many works have been conducted in this field such as: *Vocabulary learning strategies of the advanced students* by Katarzyna Maria NosidlaK from School of English, Adam Mickiewicz University. Her aim is to present and analyze the findings of the survey conducted in order to specify which vocabulary learning strategies are used by the advanced students and to discover whether the kind of strategies is related to proficiency.

In the Algerian context, works were conducted in the field of VLS like the work of Ms. Sana Dernouni from the University of Biskra that introduced "An investigation of the effects of vocabulary learning strategies on developing learners' lexical competence". Her aim is to find more about VLS that students use when studying English as a foreign language in order to increase their lexical competence, and to find out what are the most and the least frequent VLS they use.

During our discussion with first year students at MMUTO, we noticed that there is a lack of awareness of which strategies to follow in order to learn English vocabulary. For this reason, in this research, we will attempt to investigate the different vocabulary learning strategies that are proposed by Schmitt (1997).

As far as our dissertation is concerned, it is a case study which tries to investigate the vocabulary learning strategies used by first year students of the department of English at MMUTO. In other words, it is an attempt to see how first year students learn English vocabulary.

- **Aims of the Study**

The overall aim of this study is to investigate the strategies used by first year students to learn English vocabulary. In more precise terms, it seeks to find out the different strategies used by first year students to increase their English vocabulary.

- **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

This is the fundamental question that we aim to answer through this study.

Q1-How do first year students learn English vocabulary?

The following hypothesis is advanced in order to predict the possible results:

H1-First year students learn English vocabulary by using different strategies.

- **Research Techniques and Methodology**

This work adopts the mixed method approach as methodology. This means that the research uses both quantitative and qualitative methods for the collection and analysis of the data that will be collected from one basic tool which is a questionnaire. It is designed for first year students to obtain information about Vocabulary learning strategies used by students. Concerning the quantitative data will be transformed into numerical results by using the statistical method of analysis (SPSS), and the qualitative data will be interpreted through qualitative content analysis (QCA). As a sample to our research, we will randomly select a group of first year LMD students in the English department at MMUTO.

- **Structure of the Dissertation**

The dissertation follows the traditional complex structure. It is composed of a general introduction, four chapters, and general conclusion.

First, the general introduction presents the background of the study, the aim, research questions and hypotheses, research techniques and methodology, and at the end structure of the dissertation. In the first chapter we intend to review the key concepts that are related to our work, and some taxonomies of VLS in relation to Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy of VLS upon which our study is based. The second chapter labelled "Research Design", presents data collection and the analysis procedures, it describes the research methods, the research instrument, procedures of data analysis, the participants and the context of the study. The third chapter is entitled "Presentation of the Findings", it introduces the results gathered from the questionnaire. The last chapter is named "Discussion of the findings", its function is to discuss the results obtained from the research tool. Finally, the research work ends with "general conclusion" which is an overall restatement of the main points explored and discussed in our study, and indicates some recommendations.

Introduction

This part is a review of the literature to account for the major works and to clarify the main concepts related to Vocabulary Learning Strategies. It consists of three sections; the first one is named language learning strategies since Vocabulary Learning Strategies are considered as part of LLS. It presents definitions and some classifications proposed by researchers. The second one is entitled vocabulary learning; it provides some definitions of the concept of vocabulary, its kinds and its importance. The third section is restricted to Vocabulary Learning Strategies, and to Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy of VLS upon which our study is based on.

Section one: Language Learning Strategies (LLS):

1. Definitions of LLS

LLS research began in the 1970s. Since then, a number of definitions of LLS have been provided by many researchers within the field of second and foreign language education.

A broad definition of learning strategies has been provided by Rubin (1975: 43) as *'the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge''*. That's to say, in order to gain a good knowledge of a language, learners use some plans. In the same sphere, O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 1) viewed LLS as *"the special thoughts or behaviours that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn or retain new information"*. It means that learning strategies are specific actions that are used by learners in order to understand and to facilitate the learning process. In addition, these strategies are used by learners in order to facilitate their language learning and become more responsible and independent learners. In this regard, Oxford (1990: 8) argues that LLS are *"the specific actions taken by the learner to*

make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations'' .

To sum up, language learning strategies are techniques used by learners to make the learning process easier and useful.

2. Classifications of LLS

Since the late seventies, a number of scholars tried to identify all possible strategies used by L2 learners and classify them in systematic way. The results of these studies are summarized as follows:

2.1. Rubin's (1987) Classification System of LLS

Rubin classified learning strategies into two categories: strategies that may contribute directly to learning and those that may contribute indirectly to learning. These two categories are further classified into three sub categories: learning, communicative, and social strategies. In other words, Rubin divided Learning Strategies to direct strategies and indirect strategies. Direct strategies involve Learning Strategies which are divided into cognitive and metacognitive strategies; however, indirect strategies involve communicative and social strategies.

2.1.1. Direct Strategies

- **Cognitive Strategies:**

They are defined as "*steps or operations used in learning or problem-solving that requires analysis, transformation, or synthesis of learning materials*" Rubin (1987: 23). Rubin proposed six (6) main classifications of cognitive learning strategies contributing directly to language learning:

- ✓ Clarification/ Verification

- ✓ Guessing/Inductive referencing

- ✓ Deductive reasoning

- ✓ Practice

- ✓ Memorization

- ✓ Monitoring

- **Metacognitive Strategies**

These strategies are used to regulate or self-direct learning. They involve various processes as planning, setting goals, and self managment

Indirect Strategies

- **Communicative Strategies**

They are less directly related to language learning since their focus is on the process of participating in a conversation and getting meaning across or clarifying what the speaker intended. Communicative strategies are used by the speaker when faced with some difficulties during his speech in the sense that the speaker uses some techniques in order to clarify or explain to the hearer what he means.

- **Social Strategies**

They are those strategies that create opportunity for learners to be exposed and allow them to practice their knowledge. They include creating favourable chances to initiate communication in the target language and using facilities like TV and Radio and reading books.

2.2. Oxford's (1990) Classification of Language Learning Strategies

Oxford's taxonomy is "perhaps the most comprehensive classification of learning strategies to date" (Ellis, 1994). She classified LLS into two main groups: direct and indirect learning strategies which are further subdivided into six groups.

2.2.1. Direct Learning Strategies: are classified into memory, cognitive, compensation strategies.

- **Memory Strategies**

They are techniques used for storing new information and remembering them latter. These strategies are mainly used to learn vocabulary items, including images like a mental picture of the meaning of the word or the word itself; body movement, as using physical actions, and mechanical means such as flash cards.

- **Cognitive Strategies**

These strategies relate to manipulation or transformation of the language material in direct ways like note-taking, summarizing, and practicing.

- **Compensation Strategies**

They are used to make up for limited knowledge in the sense that these refer to the techniques used by learners in order to understand the target language when they require a particular knowledge, such as guessing meaning from context and using synonyms and gestures to convey meaning.

2.2.2Indirect Strategies: this type of strategies involve metacognitive, affective, social strategies.

- **Metacognitive Strategies**

These are relating to students' managing of their own learning. This means that these techniques help learners to planning, organizing and evaluating their progress in language learning.

- **Affective Strategies:** are the techniques that help learners control their emotions, motivation, and attitudes related to Language learning.

- **Social strategies:** enable learning a language through interacting with others.

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│   Direct     │──────────────────────│     Memory       │
│  Strategies  │                      └──────────────────┘
│              │──────────────────────┌──────────────────┐
└──────────────┘                      │    Cognitive     │
                                      └──────────────────┘
                                      ┌──────────────────┐
                                      │   Compensation   │
                                      └──────────────────┘


┌──────────────┐                      ┌──────────────────┐
│   Indirect   │──────────────────────│  Metacognitive   │
│  strategies  │                      └──────────────────┘
│              │──────────────────────┌──────────────────┐
└──────────────┘                      │    Affective     │
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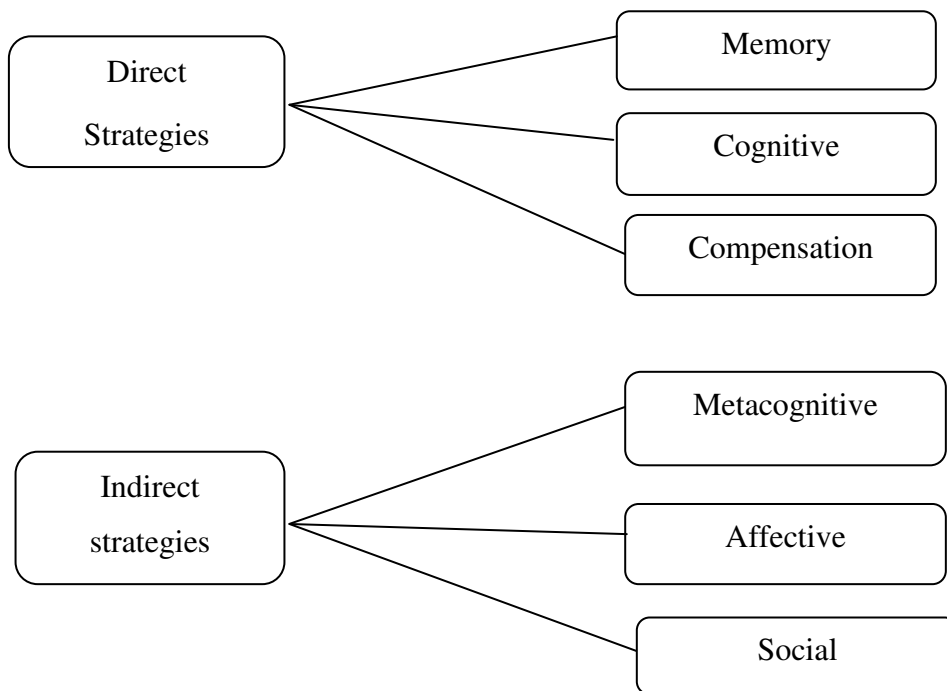
Figure 1: Oxford's (1990) Taxonomy of Language Learning Strategies (LLS)

Section two: Vocabulary Learning

1. Definition of Vocabulary

Vocabulary has been defined in various ways by different researchers. According to Richard and Renandya (2000), vocabulary is the central part of language proficiency and offers much of the basis for how learners read, write, listen and speak. In the same vein, Neuman and Dwayer, 2009, P.385) defined vocabulary as *"words we must know to communicate effectively; words in speaking (expressive vocabulary) and words in listening (receptive vocabulary)"*. *Vocabulary refers to Words that are needed in any language in order to be able to communicate successfully and understand what others say.*

Another definition of vocabulary stated from Hatch and Brown (1995:1), "*vocabulary refers to list or set of words for a particular language or a list of words that individual speakers of language might use*". In addition, Ur (1994:60) defines vocabulary as "*the words we teach in the foreign language*".

2.1 Kinds of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is divided into two main kinds:

2.1.1 Receptive Vocabulary

It is also named passive vocabulary since it involves the words that can be recognized and understood by the learners while reading or listening, but they cannot produce it in writing or speaking. In precise terms, receptive vocabulary refers to words we understand when others use them

2.1.2 Productive Vocabulary

It is called also active vocabulary; it refers to those words that students understand, can produce correctly and use constructively in speaking and writing. To explain these two kinds,

Nation (2001) asserts:

Essentially, receptive vocabulary use involves perceiving the form of a word while listening or reading and retrieving its meaning. Productive vocabulary use involves wanting to express a meaning through speaking or writing and retrieving and producing the appropriate spoken or written word form. Nation (2001: 24-25)

2.1.2. The Importance of Vocabulary

EFL learners need to learn and expand their vocabulary because it is an important element in learning a language since it helps students in language comprehension and language production.

The linguist David Wilkins (1972) concluded the importance of vocabulary learning by saying that "*without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed*". It means that even a person has good grammar knowledge; it will be useless if he does not have an extensive vocabulary. This is supported by Ur's statement (1996: 60) "*vocabulary is one of the important things to be taught in learning a foreign language because it will be impossible to speak up without variety of words*". Besides, vocabulary is central to reading comprehension since one cannot understand a text without having a large amount of vocabulary. Nation (2001) states that "*readers need to know at least 97% of the vocabulary in a text for an adequate understanding of it*". The idea is that, in order to understand the message of the text, students need to know the meaning of majority of words included in that text. McKeon (2002) argued that "*vocabulary knowledge is the heart of language comprehension and use*".

McCarthy (1990, in Schmitt and McCarthy, 1997: 140) added;

> No matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wider range of meanings, communication in an L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way.

This reveals that even the student has a good grammatical knowledge, it is still insufficient for meaningful communication without knowing good vocabulary knowledge.

2. Vocabulary Learning

Rubin and Thompson (1994) find that "*vocabulary learning is the heart of mastering a foreign language, since one cannot speak, understand, read, or write a foreign language without knowing a lot of words*". Learning vocabulary is important in the four language skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening). Similarly, Schmitt and McCarthy (1997) pointed out that "*vocabulary learning has been regarded as the most important parts in second or foreign language acquisition*". Expanding the vocabulary is one of the main aims of vocabulary learning since a learner with rich vocabulary stock will succeed both in classroom as well as in his social life. According to Nation (2001), vocabulary learning can be increased through the four skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking). Through reading books, articles, novels learners face new words, word groups several times, and it is a good chance of learning them because reading extensively helps learners to see and understand the words used in different contexts. It is also possible to learn a lot of vocabulary through daily conversations and interactions with friends or native speakers.

Section three: Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS)

1. Definition of VLS

Learning the meaning of new words in second or foreign language learning requires some specific techniques for the learners to follow. These techniques are called vocabulary learning strategies which are regarded as a subcategory in the framework of language learning strategies. The term VLS has been defined differently by different researchers.

Nation (2001: 217) makes clear that "vocabulary *learning strategies are one part of language learning strategies which in turn are part of general learning strategies*". Sökmen (1997) defined VLS as *"actions made by learners in order to help them to understand the meaning of a word, learn them and to remember them later."*

Cameron (2001: 92) stated a general definition that vocabulary learning strategies are "*actions that learners take to help themselves understand and remember vocabulary*". In short, vocabulary learning strategies are the specific techniques used by learners in order to construct their vocabulary knowledge.

2. The Importance of VLS

Nation (2001: 222) believes that "*a large amount of vocabulary can be acquired with the help of vocabulary learning strategies and that the strategies prove useful for students of different language levels*". This means that VLS are helpful and useful techniques for EFL learners to have a big size of vocabulary. Furthermore, vocabulary learning strategies make the learning process easier. This can be supported by Schmitt (2000) who argues that the employment of these strategies can facilitate learning vocabulary. Besides to, to explain more the importance of VLS, Nation (2001) says;

> The important benefit gained from all learning strategies, including strategies for vocabulary learning, is the fact that they enable learners to take more control of their own learning so that learners can take more responsibility for their studies (Nation, 2001).

The idea is that, the main benefit gained from learning strategies is to make learners more independent and self-regulated learners in their own learning as they can decide for themselves how to learn.

3. Schmitt's (1997) Classification of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

In the field of vocabulary learning, Schmitt (1997) proposed a very comprehensive taxonomy of VLS that consisted of fifty eight (58) individual strategies. He primarily referred to Oxford's (1990) classification of LLS and adopted four of her categories (social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive), and he added a new category which is

determination strategies. In this light, Catalan (2003) *argued that "this taxonomy is popular because it offers a number of advantages not found in other taxonomies"*.

Schmitt's taxonomy categorizes six strategy groups under the two new main strategy groups of discovery strategies and consolidation strategies. In other terms, Schmitt divided VLS into two main groups: the ones to determine the meaning of new words when met for the first time, they included two sub groups: discovery, and social strategies, and the ones to consolidate the word once it has been encountered, they included four sub groups social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive. Social strategies are included in the two categories since they can be used for both purposes. Discovery strategies included 9 types of determination strategies and 5 types of social strategies, while consolidation strategies included 3 types of social strategies, 27 types of memory strategies, 9 types of cognitive strategies and 5 types of metacognitive strategies. He defined each category as follows:

3.1. Discovery Strategies

Involve discovering the meaning of new words. This category refer to strategies used to uncover the meaning of words presented to the learner for the first time by guessing the meaning of unknown words with the help of context, referring to reference materials like dictionaries or asking someone else. To explain this Schmitt says;

> When encountering a word for the first time, learners must use their knowledge of the language, contextual clues, or reference materials to figure out the new meaning (Determination Strategies), or ask someone else who knows (Social Strategies) (Schmitt, 1997: 205).

- **Determination Strategies**

They are used "*when learners are faced discovering a new word's meaning without recourse to another person's experience*" (Ibid). This means that these

strategies help learners to discover the meaning of new words by themselves without getting help from others such as their teachers, friends and so on. In this type Schmitt proposed (9) strategies: analyze part of speech, affixes and roots, check for L1 cognate, analyze pictures and gestures, guess from textual context, bilingual dictionary, monolingual dictionary, word lists, and flash cards.

- **Social Strategies**

They are used to understand a word *"by asking someone who knows it"* (Schmitt, 1997: 210). It is a second way for discovering the meaning of words. In this type he proposed (5) strategies: ask teacher for L1 translation, ask teacher for paraphrase or synonym of new word, ask teacher for a sentence including new word, ask classmates for meaning,and discover new meaning through group work activity.

3.2. Consolidation Strategies

These techniques involve remembering words once their meaning has been discovered. The idea is *"once learners have been introduced to a new word, it is worthwhile to make some effort to remembering it using strategies from the Social, Memory, Cognitive, or Metacognitive Strategy groups"* (Ibid). That is, consolidation strategies are applied to help the learner internalize or memorize the words when he encounters them for the second time.

- **Memory Strategies**

They are *"approaches which relate new materials to existing knowledge"* (ibid). These strategies also known as mnemonics; they play an important role in helping learners to store new words into memory, and in the process of vocabulary learning. For this type, Schmitt proposed (26) strategies: study word with a pictorial representation of its meaning, image

word's meaning, connect word to a personal experience, associate the word with its coordinates, connect the word to its synonyms and antonyms, use semantic maps, use 'scales' for gradable adjectives, pegword method, logic method, group words together: to study them spatially on page, use new word in sentences, group words together within a storyline, study word spelling, study sound of word, say word aloud, image of word form, underline initial letter, configuration, use keyword method, affixes and roots/parts of speech, paraphrase word meaning, use cognates in study, learn words of an idiom together, use physical action,and use semantic feature grids.

- **Cognitive Strategies**

According to Schmitt (1997: 215), "*cognitive strategies are similar to memory strategies but they do not concentrate on manipulative mental processing but rather on repetition and mechanical means to study vocabulary*". In his taxonomy of VLS, cognitive strategies primarily refer to written and verbal repetition as well as some mechanical means involving vocabulary learning. These are popular and useful among learners and may help them achieve high levels of proficiency .This type included (9) strategies: verbal/written repetition, word lists, flash cards, note-taking, use vocabulary section in textbooks, listen to tape of word lists, put L2 labels on physical objects, keep vocabulary notebook.

- **Metacognitive strategies**

Schmitt described metacognitive learning strategies as those which involve "*a conscious overview of the learning process and making decisions about planning, monitoring, or evaluating the best way to study*" (Ibid). In more precise words, metacognitive strategies are techniques used by learners to control and evaluate their learning. To do that, students should check if the learning strategies used meet their needs or not; for

instance, they regulate how to study FL vocabulary and the time spent on doing this. This type included (5) strategies: use L2 media, testing oneself with word tests, use spaced word practice, skip/pass new word, and continue to study word over time.

- **Social Strategies**

These are techniques used by learners to learn new words through interacting with others. This type included (3) strategies: study and practice meaning in a group, teacher checks students' flashcards or word lists for accuracy, interact with native speakers.
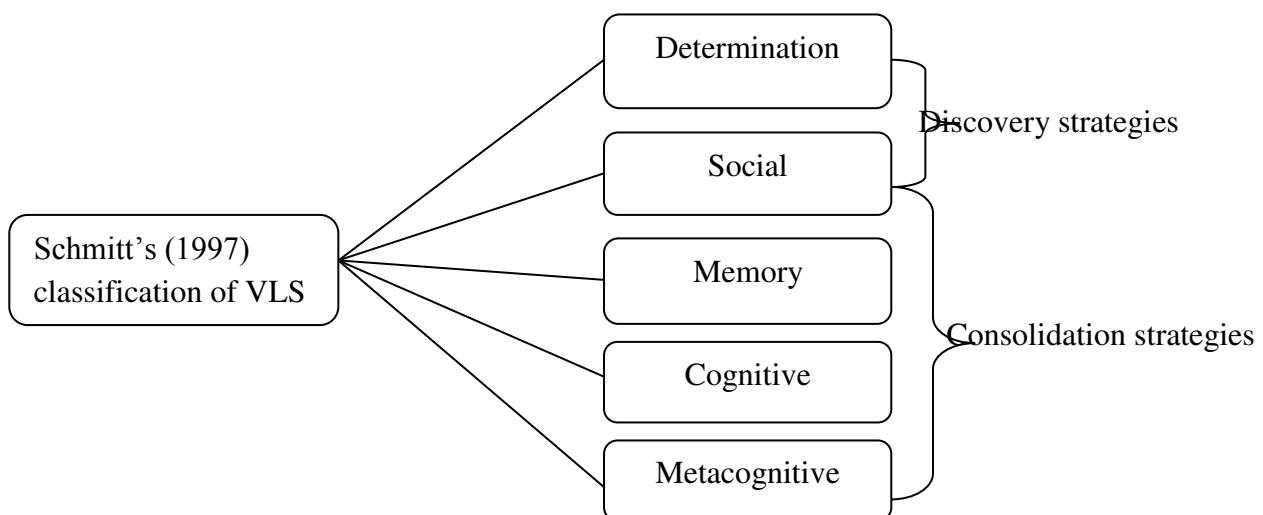
Figure 2: Schmitt's (1997) Taxonomy of VLS

This present study is based on Schmitt's VLS taxonomy because it is viewed as more useful, practical and less ambiguous than other lists. Sixteen out of 58 strategies were selected in order to deal with and obtain our objective:

Concerning discovery strategies we have selected six strategies to see how first year students discover the meaning of new words:

- Analyze the form of the word

- Guess from context

- Use a bilingual dictionary

- Use a monolingual dictionary

- Ask the teacher for an L1 translation

- Ask classmates or someone else

For consolidation strategies, we have selected ten strategies to know how students are consolidating a word once it has been encountered. They are as follows:

- Memorizing the form of the word

- Using physical actions

- Connecting the word with its synonyms or antonyms

- Study the spelling form of a word

- Study the sound of a word

- Say new word aloud when studying

- Verbal repetition

- Written repetition

- Note take in class

- Use English language media (song, movies, newscasts etc)

Conclusion

To conclude with, this chapter reviewed the literature related to our topic. It is composed of three main sections. The first section investigates the definition of LLS, some classifications proposed by Rubin, O'Malley, and oxford. The second section deals with the definition of the concept of vocabulary, its kinds, its importance, and vocabulary learning. The third section is devoted to Vocabulary learning strategies; it

demonstrates the importance of these techniques in learning vocabulary, and describes

Schmitt's classification of VLS on which our study is based.

Introduction

This section is concerned with the research methodology that the study adopts to answer the research questions asked in the general introduction. First, it describes the methods on which we rely in the present study and the context of the study as well as the participants involved. Second, it presents the procedure of data collection tool which is a questionnaire. Then, it explains the procedures of data analysis which are the statistical method named package for social sciences (SPSS) and qualitative content analysis (QCA).

1. Research Method

In this present study, data collection and data analysis techniques from both quantitative and qualitative methodologies are used. Therefore, the mixed research method is adopted since it assures great flexibility and guarantees credibility in reporting the findings.

In our investigation, Quantitative method allowed us to gather a large number of data which are then analyzed by the statistical method named statistical package for social sciences (SPSS), and quantitative method permitted us to analyze the qualitative data gathered from the open-ended questions.

2. Context and Participants of the Study

This investigation is carried out in a realistic setting; that is, in the department of English at MMUTO. The population, which is considered as the source of the data in this research, comprises first year LMD students (418). However, because of the impossibility of dealing with all the subjects, a representative sample is randomly chosen. Thus, in our research, we have selected sixty (60) students from first year LMD level. We have selected first year because students at this level are in need to acquire a large amount of English vocabulary.

3. Procedures of Data Collection

In order to answer our research questions, we have adopted   a technique to collect data which is a questionnaire administered for students of the first year LMD students in the Department of English at MMTO. The corpus consists of 60 handed-back questionnaires administered to participant students .In fact, we have distributed seventy(70) questionnaires, but we have collected just sixty(60).

3.1. The Questionnaire

"*Questionnaires are any written instruments that presents respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers*" (Brown, 2001: 6). In other words, a questionnaire is one of the most frequently used tools for gathering information and views from individuals. Generally, questionnaires include two types of items: closed and open-ended ones (Cohen et al., 2007). The first type is known as closed- items, in which the researcher suggests the possible answers that can be chosen by the respondents. The second type is known as open-ended questions, in which the respondents answer in a less restricted or oriented way and express their own thoughts and ideas. So, the questionnaire is used as part in our work, and it is addressed to first year LMD students in the department of English at MMUTO.

3.1.1. Questionnaire to Students:

The questionnaire that we have designed is based on taxonomy of Schmitt (1997) in order to collect both qualitative and quantitative data about the (VLSs) that are used by students to learn English vocabulary. Its aim is to find out their views and opinions about English vocabulary and vocabulary learning strategies they use to learn vocabulary. It is made up of twenty (20) questions that are of different types: closed and open- ended questions. They are

organized into three sections: the first one is about the attitudes of students towards English vocabulary, it contains seven (6) closed- ended questions, in which respondents were asked to select the suitable answers. The second section was devoted to EFL vocabulary learning; it contains five (5) multiple choice questions, one (1) open-ended question, and two (2) closed-ended questions. The third section is about VLS; it contains four (4) multiple choice questions and two (2) open-ended questions. Tthe closed-ended questions seek to gather statistical data, and some of them allow the respondents to justify their choices that allow us in turn to gather qualitative data. It is worth mentioning that our questionnaire is distributed to the participants on September, 2017.

4. Procedures of Data Analysis

This part describes the qualitative and the quantitative methods that are used to analyse the collected data obtained from the questionnaire. It deals with the statistical and qualitative content analysis (QCA) methods.

The analysis of the questionnaires includes the analysis of both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions, which contain numerical data, are analyzed through the use of the statistical analysis software program SPSS version 21. As for the open-ended questions, which contain qualitative data, are analyzed and interpreted by adopting qualitative content analysis (QCA).

4.1. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)

The closed-ended questions of students' questionnaire provide quantitative data. This type of data is analysed basically following the statistical and numerical analysis of data. That is, the data is transformed into various forms like visual statistical histograms, and pie charts

by using a computer program called (SPSS), which provides statistical description of the numerical data.

4.2Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA)

In order to describe, analyse and interpret the qualitative data obtained from the open-ended questions of the student's questionnaire, we have adopted the qualitative content analysis (QCA). Hsieh and Shannon (2005: 1278) define it as "*a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data, through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes and patterns*". That is, QCA is a method of interpreting the meaning of texts. In fact, the analysis of the open-ended questions is based on the conventional approach. It gives the researcher the opportunity to get information directly from the sample of the investigation without *"imposing preconceived categories or theoretical perspectives"* (Ibid: 1279). Therefore, this method allows us to describe, explain and interpret the outcomes obtained from open-ended questions.

Conclusion

This chapter explained the research design used in our study. First, it has explained the methods that we selected for conducting our research. Second, it has presented the context and the participants of the study. Third, it described the data collection tool that is a questionnaire. Finally, it shed lights on the methods used for the analysis of the collected data. SPSS as a statistical technique is used to transform the quantitative data gathered from the questionnaire into numerical data; however, qualitative content analysis is used to interpret the open-ended questions of the questionnaire.

Introduction

This section is empirical. It presents the results reached through the questionnaire administered to sixty (60) first year students in the department of English at MMUTO. This section aims at determining student's perception about vocabulary in general, and it seeks at gathering results about their vocabulary learning, and determines their vocabulary learning strategies. The results are presented in percentages and displayed by using pie charts and histograms for the sake of readability and visibility.

1. Presentation of the Questionnaire Results

1.1. Results of the First Section: The Attitudes of Learners Towards Vocabulary

Question 1: Learning vocabulary is very important:
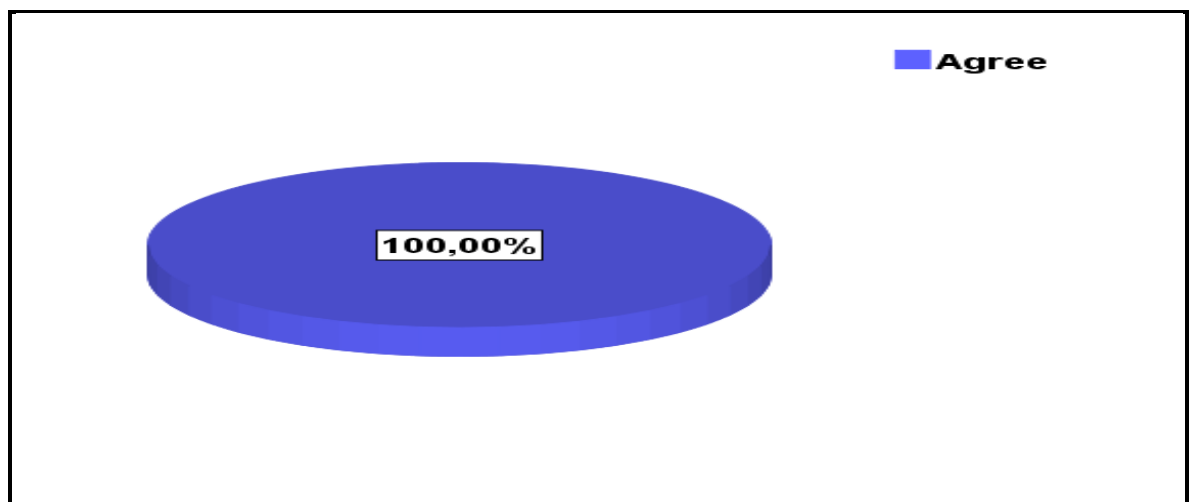
a. Agree
b. Neutral
c. Disagree

Diagram 1: Student's perception towards the importance of vocabulary

These results show clearly that (100%) of students agreed that vocabulary is important to learn a language.

Why: To justify their answer, all the students argued that vocabulary is the main part of a language, and learning it helps them to express their ideas, thoughts and to be able to communicate easily.

Question 2: Do you enjoy learning vocabulary?

    a. Yes
    b. No
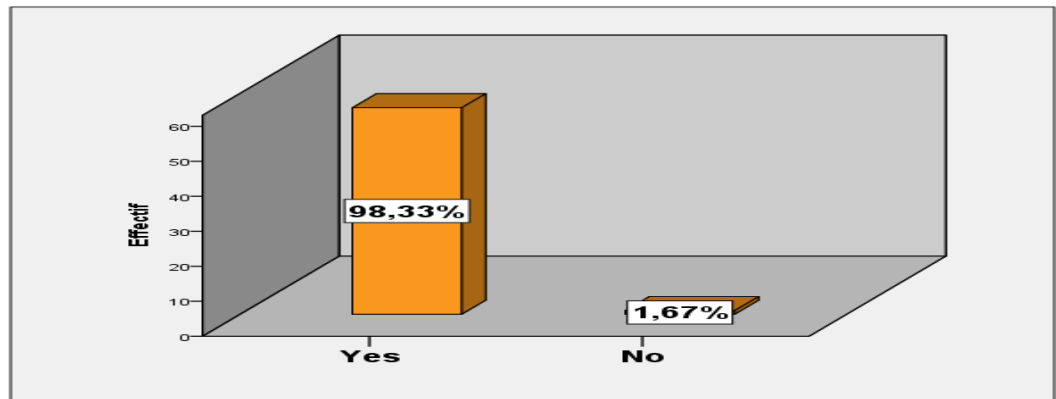
Diagram 2: Student's perception towards learning vocabulary

As shown in the diagram above, almost all the students (98.33%) do enjoy learning vocabulary; most of them argue because they like it and others they think that it is important because it improves their language ability. However, one participant (1.67%) states that he/she does not enjoy English vocabulary because he/she dislikes it.

Question 3: Learning vocabulary is hard and takes a great effort:

    a. Agree
    b. Neutral
    c. Disagree
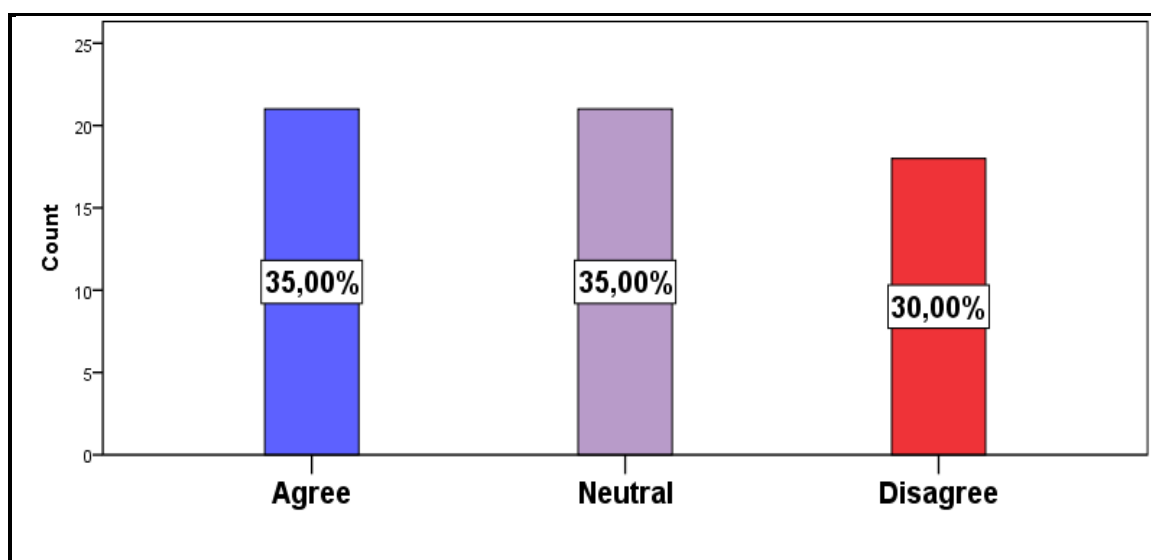
Diagram 3: **Level of agreement or disagreement among the participants about the question (3)**

Diagram 4 demonstrates that (35%) of the students agreed on this statement, most of them argued that there are a lot of difficult words in English and this take time to learn and to remember them. As we can see in the diagram we have found equal percentages (35%) for students who held a neutral view on this statement, arguing that learning vocabulary depends on the willingness of the students; however, we noticed that (30%) of students disagreed on this statement because learning vocabulary is an easy task for them.

Question 4: Do you think that if you know more words, your English ability will be improved?

    a. Agree
    b. Neutral
    c. disagree
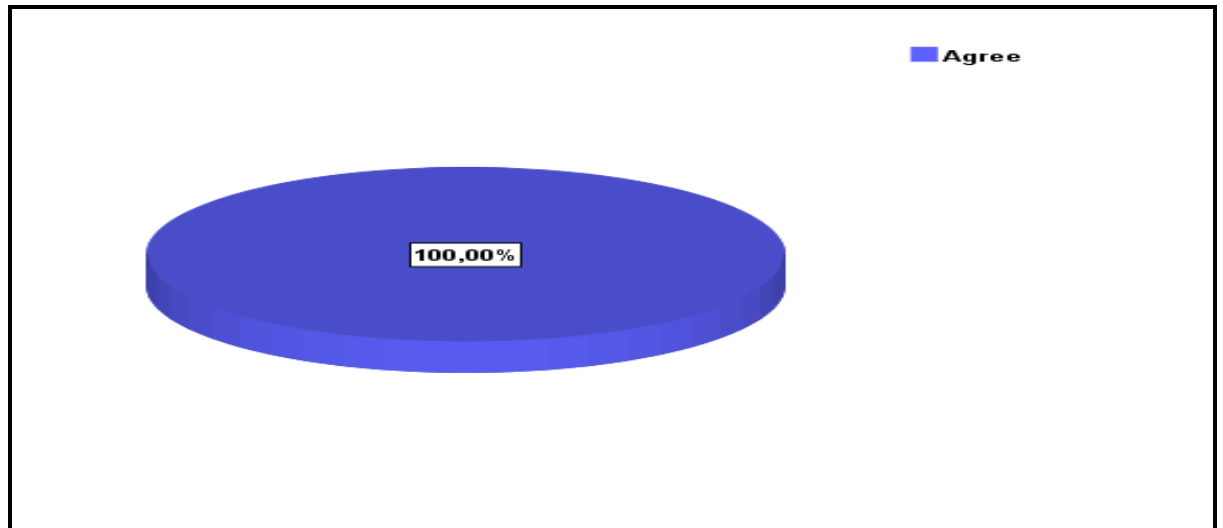
Diagram 4: degree of agreement or disagreement about the question 4

As we can see above, the entire participant (100%) agreed on this statement; it means that if they know more words, their English ability will be improved.

Question 5: Do you think that you have enough vocabulary about the English vocabulary?

a. Yes
b. No
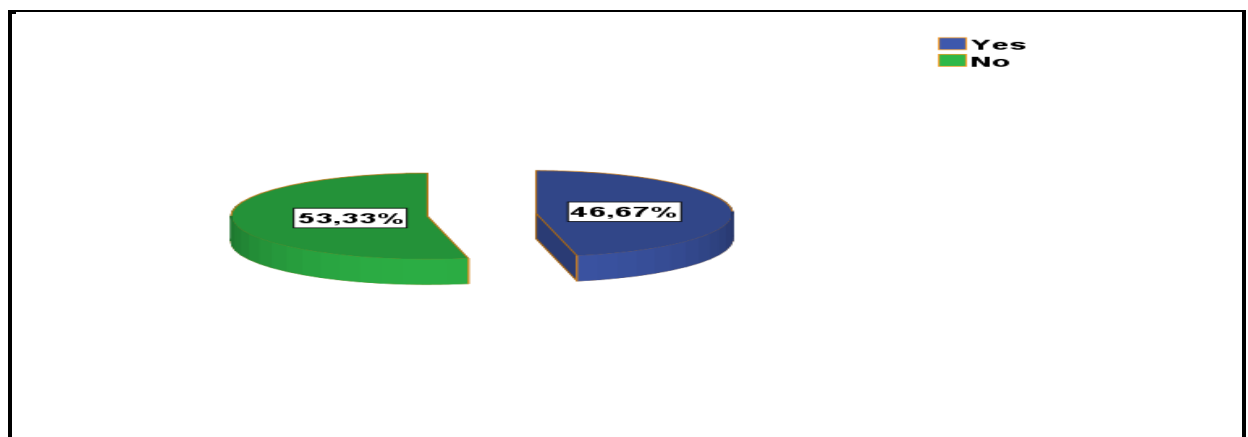
Diagram 5: Student's responses about their vocabulary size

As indicated in this diagram, more than half of the respondents (53.33%) do not think that they have enough vocabulary knowledge while (46.67%) state that they have enough vocabulary about the English language.

Section two: EFL Vocabulary Learning

Question 6: Where do you find difficulties when you meet new words?

a. In pronunciation
b. In spelling
c. In meaning
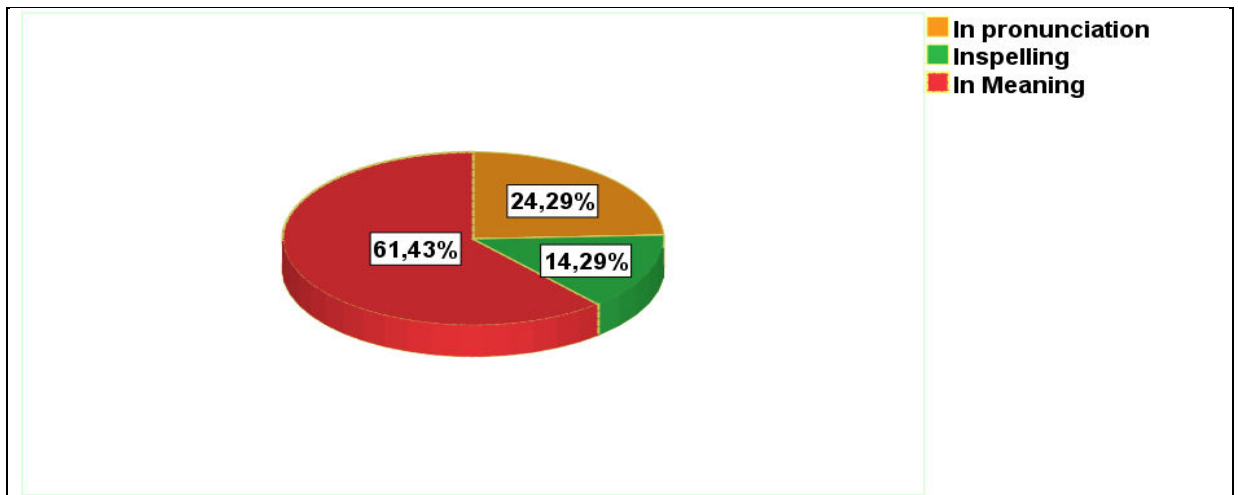
Diagram 6: Student's difficulties in the aspects of vocabulary

As shown above, the majority of students (61.43%) encounter more difficulties in word's meaning, while (24.29%) of students find difficulties in pronunciation. Few students (14.29%) assert that they find difficulties in word's spelling.

Question 7: How do you learn unknown vocabulary items?

Most of the respondents say that they learn unknown words by using dictionaries, the internet, guess the from context, asking the teacher, asking classmates, watching movies and listening to songs; on the other hand, nineteen (19) students did not answer this question.

Question 8: How do you learn vocabulary in the classroom?

a. As isolated words
b. In context
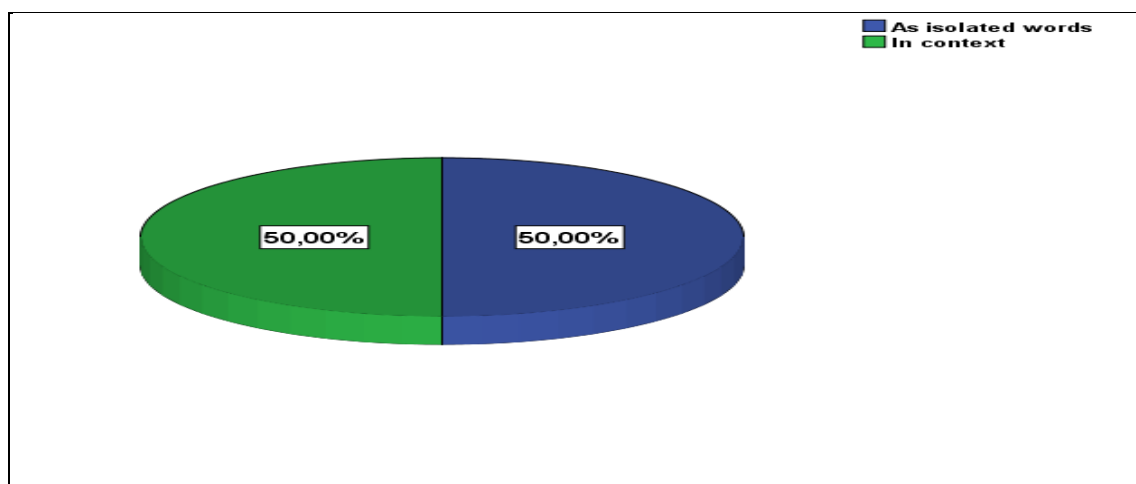
Diagram 8: The way of learning vocabulary in the classroom

As the diagram above shows that half (5o%) of the participants claim they learn vocabulary in context, and the others (50%) state that they learn vocabulary as isolated words.

Question 9: What is your major purpose when you are learning English vocabulary?

a. To understand a sentence
b. To be able to communicate
c. To be able to write
d. To understand English language movies, songs, conversations...etc
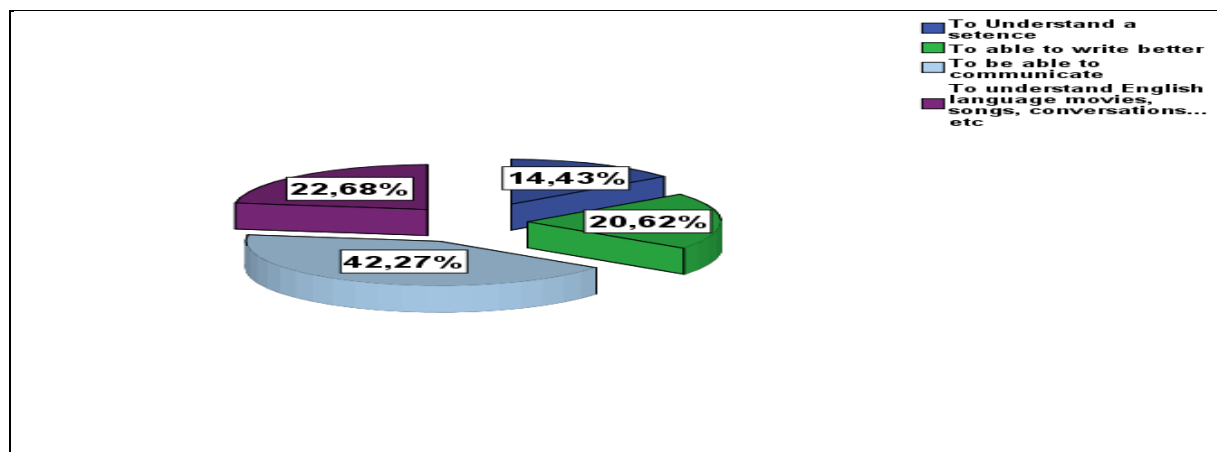
Diagram 9: Students' purposes of learning English vocabulary

As highlighted in diagram 11, it is apparent that (42.27%) of the students agree that their major purpose when they are learning English vocabulary is to be able to communicate. (22.68%) assume that they learn English for the purpose of understanding English movies,

songs, conversations...etc. Then (20.62%) claim that their major aim when learning English is to be able to write better; however, few participants (14.43%) say that they English vocabulary is learned just to understand a sentence.

Question 10: In which language skill the lack of vocabulary may cause difficulties?

    a. In writing
    b. In speaking
    c. In reading
    d. In listening
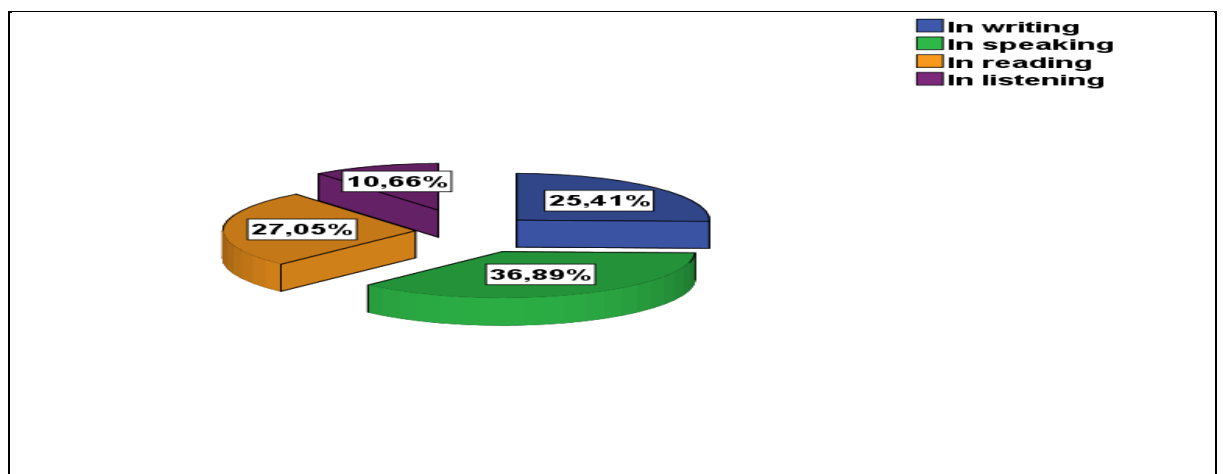
Diagram 10: The difficulties resulted from the lack of vocabulary

From this diagram, it appears that (36.89%) of the respondents state that the lack of vocabulary may cause difficulties in speaking. (27.07%) assume that the lack of vocabulary causes difficulties in their reading skill while (25.41%) claim that having a limited vocabulary knowledge cause problems in writing. Only (10.66%) argue that the lack of vocabulary leads to listening difficulties.

Question 11: How your vocabulary will be improved?

    a. Through Reading
    b. Through Writing
    c. Through Listening
    d. Trough Speaking
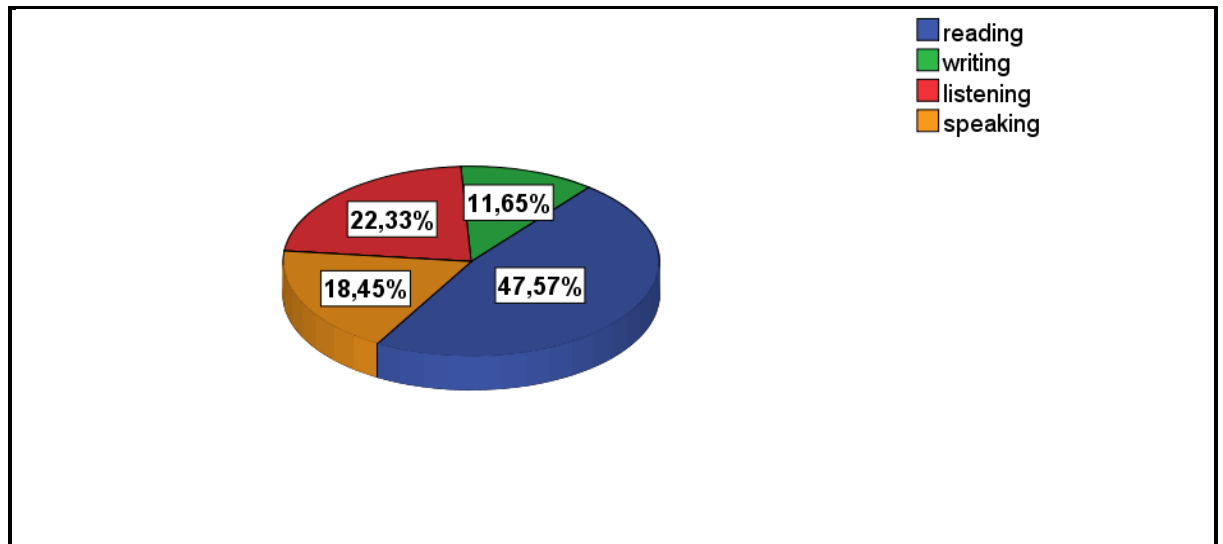
Diagram 11: Student' ways of improving their vocabulary

As highlighted in diagram 7, the majority of students (47.57%) assert that their vocabulary will be improved through the reading skill. They justify that while reading books, newspaper and articles they discover and learn a lot of words while (22.33%) of students assume that listening may help them to expand their vocabulary. For them, listening to English songs, or conversations of the native speakers allow them to learn new words and to learn accurate pronunciation. (18.45%) of students note that speaking can help them to gain a good lexis by arguing that while speaking they put words into practice and use them in context. However, few participants (11.65%) respond that writing can help them to improve their vocabulary.

Section II: Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Question 12: How do you discover the meaning of new words?

  a. Analyze the form of the word
  b. Guess from context
  c. Use a bilingual dictionary
  d. Use a monolingual dictionary
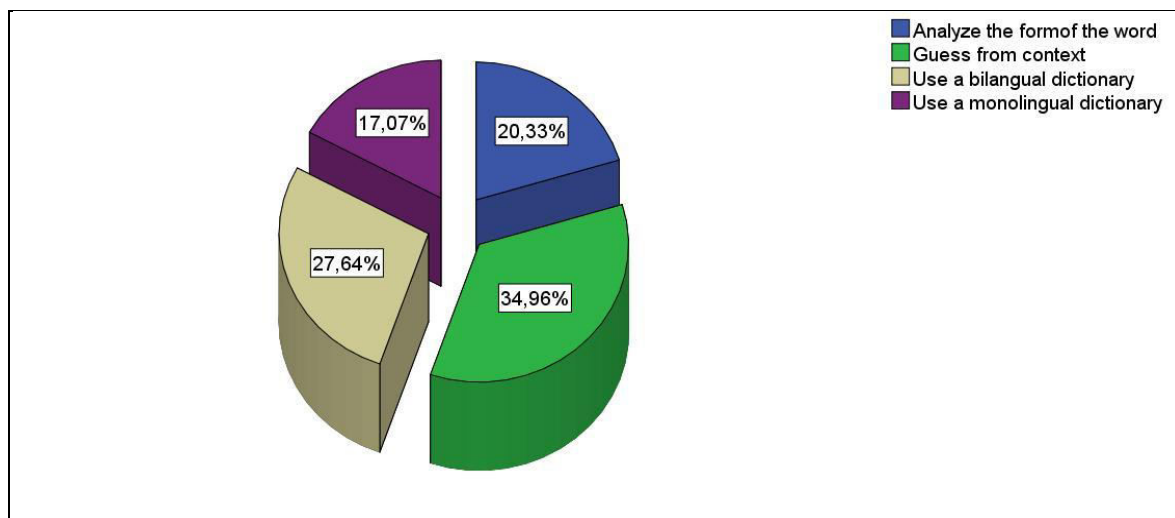
Diagram 12: Student's strategies for discovering the meaning of the word

As displayed in diagram 1, (34.96%) of students claimed that guessing from context is the first strategy they use when they discover the new word, (27.64%) of students use a bilingual dictionary to guess the meaning of the word, while (20.33%) assert that they analyze the form of speech when they first meet new word, and (17.07) of respondents use a monolingual dictionary as a strategy to find the meaning of new words.

Question 13: From whom do you get help when you face unknown words?

a. Ask the teacher for an L1 translation
b. Ask classmates or someone else
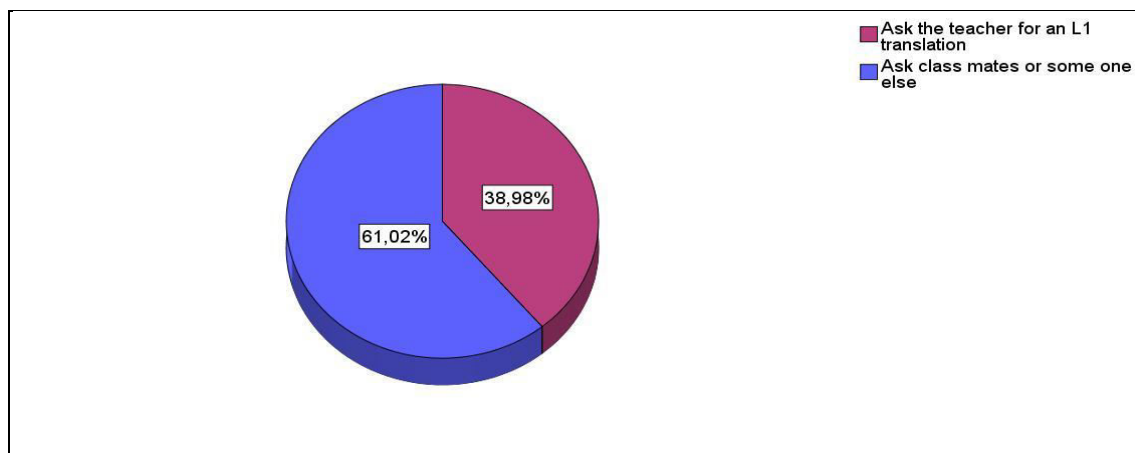
Diagram 13: Student's strategies when facing unknown words

As presented in diagram above (61.02%) of students prefer to ask their classmates or someone else to give them the meaning of the new words. In contrast, (38.98%) choose to ask their teachers for an L1 translation when they face unknown words.

Question 14: How do you memorize the meaning of new words?

    a. By memorizing the form of the word
    b. By using physical actions
    c. By connecting the word with its synonym and antonym
    d. By studying the spelling form of the word
    e. By studying the pronunciation of the word
    f. By saying the word aloud
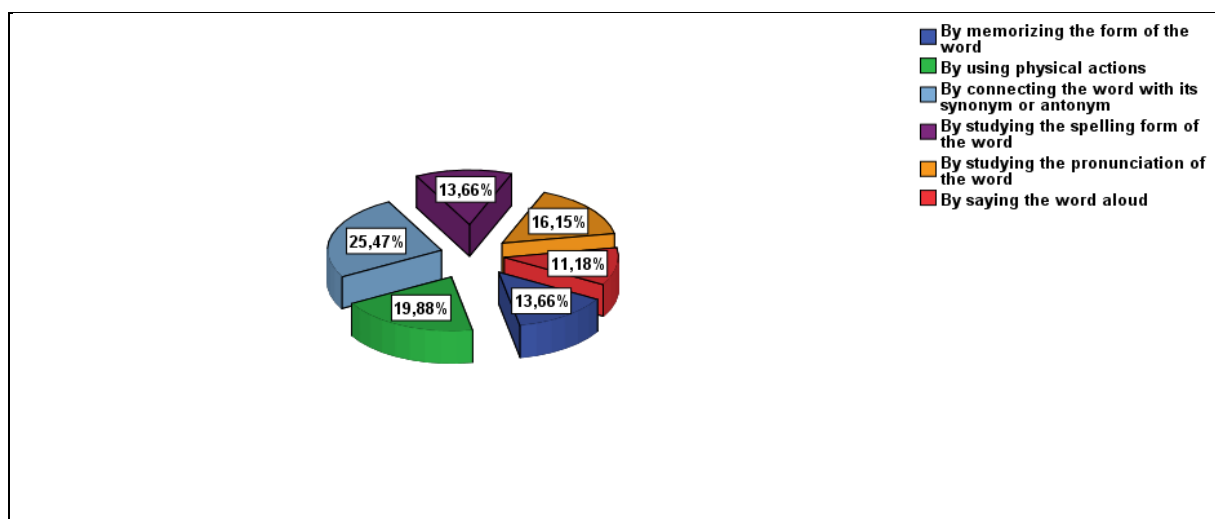
Diagram 14: Student's strategies for memorizing the meaning of new words

It is noticed that (25.47%) of students assert that connecting words with its synonyms or antonyms help them to memorize new words. (19.23%) of respondents prefer to use physical actions, like gestures to keep the words in their mind. While the (16.15%) presents studying the pronunciation of the word, while the same percentages (13.66%) reveal that students memorize the words by memorizing its form and spelling. Few participants assert that saying the word aloud can help them to memorize the new word.

Question 15: How do you consolidate new words?

   a.   Note taking in class
   b.   Verbal repetition
   c.   Written repetition
   d.   Use of English language media
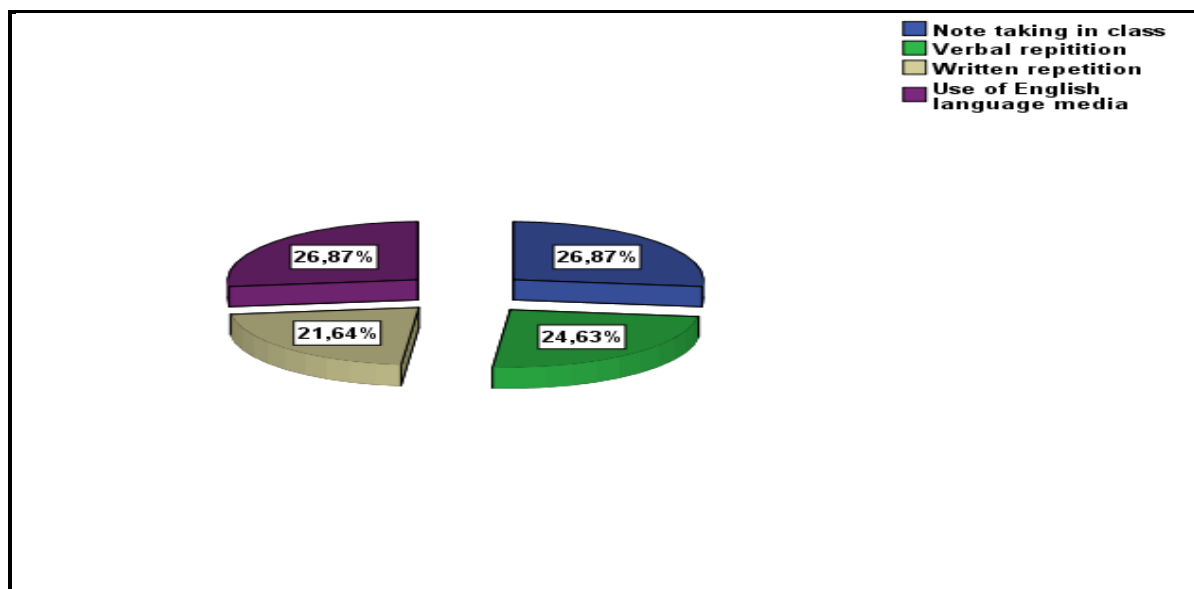
Diagram 15: Student's strategies to consolidate the new meaning

The results gathered in diagram above, shows an equal number of students (26.87%) use note taking in class and use English language media as strategies to consolidate new words. (24.63%) of students prefer to use verbal repetition, and (21.64%) affirm that written repetition may help them to consolidate new words.

Question 16: could you mention other strategies that you use in order to learn English vocabulary?

The majority of students answer this question by saying that using social media is a source for learning English vocabulary because it provides them with authentic language, and shows how it is used in real situations. Talking with native speakers, chatting with friends on facebook in English are other ways suggested by some of them, they justify their answers by stating that "*these are useful ways in order to learn new words and communicate in English*".

However, for others, reading short stories, and using Google translation are helpful ways to discover new words in English language. Additionally, one of them adds that *"talking to myself is a good way to learn and practice new terms and expressions".*

Question 17: in your opinion what are the strategies mentioned above do you consider are helpful for learning new vocabulary?

According to the majority of the students the helpful strategies for their learning of vocabulary are using a dictionary, guess from context, the use of English language media, verbal repetition, and written repetition. One of the respondents answers this question by saying that *"all the vocabulary learning strategies are helpful at the same time because it helps him to acquire more vocabulary".*

Conclusion

This chapter provides the results obtained from the student questionnaires answered by sixty (60) first year LMD students in the department of English at MMUTO. According to these results we deduce that students use different strategies in order to learn English vocabulary. In addition, first year students hold positive attitudes towards English vocabulary, but they state that when learning it they face difficulties. These findings are going to be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

Introduction

This section aims at discussing the results of the study. The findings, which are obtained from the students' questionnaires are interpreted and discussed in relation to the literature presented in the first chapter. This chapter is divided into three main sections; each is trying to provide an answer to the research question that were asked, and confirm or refute the hypotheses stated in the general introduction. The first section deals with students' attitudes towards English vocabulary. Section two is about EFL vocabulary learning, and the third one is devoted to vocabulary learning strategies.

1. Discussion of the Students' Questionnaire

1.1 Students Attitudes Towards English Vocabulary

The results obtain from the first section of the questionnaire show the attitudes of students towards English vocabulary. It appears that learners are aware about the importance of English vocabulary. All the respondents (see diagram 1) support the idea that learning vocabulary is important in learning language because it is an essential part in any language, and this goes with the view of Schmitt and Mc McCarthy (1997) that *"vocabulary learning has been regarded as one of the most important parts in a second language (SL) and foreign language (FL) acquisition",* and as Lewis (1993) went further to argue, *"lexis is the core or the heart of language*". The results also reveal that almost all the students (98.33%) (See diagram 2) affirm that they enjoy learning vocabulary because they like it; for instance, one participant answers by saying *"I enjoy learning vocabulary because it improves my language ability"*. We noted; however, that only 35% of them (see diagram 3) think that vocabulary learning is hard and time consuming part of learning a foreign language (FL); for example, one student says, *"since English language contains a lot of complicated words, it is difficult to learn them in a limited time*". The same percentage, 35% of them, hold a neutral view about

this statement, the rest of the participants reveal that English vocabulary does not take a great effort because they think that it is an easy task. The results of the investigation reveal that 53.33% (see diagram 5) do not have enough vocabulary knowledge about the English language; moreover, all the whole sample (see diagram 4) agree that knowing a large number of words will improve their English ability. This view goes hand in hand with Rubin and Thompson view (1994) "*vocabulary learning is the heart of mastering a FL, since one cannot speak, read, or write a FL without knowing a lot of words*". From this one can say that having a limited vocabulary prevent students to read, to express and communicate well. For the sake of improving their vocabulary knowledge, the majority of students 47.57% (as shown in diagram 11) admit that extensive reading is a helpful skill to expand vocabulary; for instance, one respondent says "*when we read books, novels we learn a lot of words*". Another one argues that "*books are rich of vocabulary, more you, more you learn new words*". One of them adds that "*when we read we learn new words which we will use in our learning process*". Hence, reading in English will help students to learn new expressions and remember vocabulary as well as reading books helps using the context of a sentence to guess the meaning of words that they do not know. Besides, 22.33% of the students assert that listening helps them to increase their vocabulary size; for instance, one of them says "listening to English songs, movies, conversations of native speakers help me to learn more words with accurate pronunciations, and new expressions". Additionally, 18.45% of the students affirm that speaking is another way for increasing their vocabulary because through it learners can express and deliver their feelings and ideas directly in English language so that they produce and practice new words and new expressions. This paragraph answers the first research question which is "what are the attitudes of first year students towards English vocabulary?", and confirms the first hypothesis "first year students have positive attitudes towards English vocabulary".

1.2 EFL vocabulary Learning

This section is concerned with students' vocabulary learning. Concerning the data that are gathered from the question 'How do you learn vocabulary in the classroom?'; the results reveal that 50% (see diagram 8) of the participants learn new words better when they encounter them in various contexts since words make sense only when they are learnt in context. Students believe that contexts, in which words are used are helpful for vocabulary learning; however, (50%) of them prefer to learn it as isolated words in the sense each time they face new word they learn its meaning without putting or guessing it from context. For example, some students each time they heard new terms in the classroom they prefer to write them down in their notebook, then they look for their meanings.

Concerning students purposes of learning English vocabulary, it is apparent from (diagram 9) that (42.27%) of the whole participants state that their major purpose when they are learning English vocabulary is to be able to communicate. They recognize that English vocabulary is necessary to understand and communicate with others in English in the sense that, to communicate effectively students need to know a large number of words. In line with this, Schmitt (2000.p, 55) emphasizes that "*lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second language*". Other participants, on the other hand, 22.68% assert that their aim is to understand English language movies, songs, conversations…etc. The reason behind this is that most of adults nowadays like watching English movies, listen to English songs, and conversations made in English. From this, we can say that English media is becoming part of their daily life; therefore, it is necessary to enrich English vocabulary. As regarding students' difficulties that are caused from the lack of vocabulary 36.89% (see diagram 10) argue that their limited vocabulary causes them troubles in the speaking skill because, when they want to express themselves, they do not find the suitable expressions, or words to use. In this vein, Mc McCarthy (1990: 40) states that

"*without words to express a wider range of meanings, communication in an L2 cannot happen in any meaningful way*". Concerning difficulties encountered by students, 27.05% of the answers show that the lack of vocabulary may lead to poor comprehension while reading. This can be confirmed by Nation (2001) who states that *"that readers need to know at least 97% of the vocabulary in a text for an adequate understanding of it, without knowledge of the key vocabulary in a text, a learner may have serious trouble in understanding the message"*. 25.41% of the participants state that insufficient vocabulary may lead to difficulties in their writing skill; this idea appears to be in line with Nation's (Ibid) assertion: "*one way to measure vocabulary size and growth in written works is analyzing the vocabulary of students' written compositions*. That is, if students do not have sufficient vocabulary while writing their compositions, this will influence their writing proficiency. From these outcomes we can deduce that, limited vocabulary is seen as a great obstacle that can prevent learners to master the receptive (listening/reading) and the productive (speaking/writing) skills. As for the results that are obtained from the question "in which aspect of vocabulary do you meet more difficulties?", diagram 6 shows that a significant percentage of students (61.43%) point out that meaning is being the first problem in learning vocabulary, because several English words have various meanings and they are difficult to remember . An illustration for this, is the word 'hold' which has a number of distinct meanings, including "keep or sustain in a specific position", "embrace someone", "contain or store something". In this case, it is difficult for students to figure out which meaning is appropriate in a given context. A recognizable number of students (24.29%) face difficulties in pronunciation since most of English words are written in a way and pronounced in another way. This may confuse students.

From question 7, which is "how do you learn unknown vocabulary items?", we can notice that most of the students use dictionaries, the internet, guess from context, ask the teacher, ask

classmates, the teacher, watch movies and listen to songs. This leads us to say that students make use of a variety of materials as sources for learning new vocabulary

1.3 Vocabulary Learning Strategies

The aim of this section is to identify the different vocabulary learning strategies that are used by first year students to learn English vocabulary. Concerning the discovery strategies, when learners first discover a new word, they must make use of discovery strategies. Guessing from context is considered as being the first strategy that students use to determine the meaning of the word with the percentage of 34.96% (see diagram 12), and this can be explained by Schmitt's view (1997) who argued that "*learners try to discover the meaning of new word by guessing it with the help of context*". The same idea is confirmed by Nation (2001) claiming that "*the process of learning vocabulary dependent on guessing from the context is very efficient as the analysis of twenty studies shows that 50% of the unknown words are learnt from guessing in context*". Moreover, when students cannot infer the meaning of a new word from context, they use reference materials, i.e. generally, learners consult dictionary in order to check spelling, look up the meaning of unfamiliar words and confirm the meaning of unknown words. Dictionaries are easy tools for searching the meaning of new words because they are arranged in alphabetical order, they contain words spelling, syllables, pronunciation, and meaning…etc. Bilingual dictionary, as one kind of dictionaries is considered to be the second source used by 27.64% of students to determine the word's meaning since it provides a translation of the target words in the first language or in the second language. This goes hand in hand with the assertion of Baxter (1985) who claims that "*bilingual dictionaries seem to be used much more extensively than monolingual dictionaries by L2 learner*". From this point we can say that students prefer using bilingual dictionaries, like (English-French dictionary) or (English- Arabic dictionary) since French is our second language, and Arabic is first language. On the other hand, Monolingual

dictionaries(e.g. English-English dictionary) is another favorable type of dictionaries used by 17.07% of students for the reason that it presents the meaning of words in more analytical way, give synonyms, derivations and usage. Baxter (1985) in this context believes that "*more encouragement should be given to the use of monolingual dictionaries since it promotes fluency by offering definitions in context*" (Cited in Luppescu and Day 1993: 275). Based on the previous views, it is reasonable to conclude that dictionaries, whether bilingual or monolingual play an important role in language learning.

For Schmitt (1997), the second way to find the new meaning of a word is through using social strategies by asking someone for help for unknown words. The findings reveal that the great majority of them (61.02%) prefer to ask their classmates or friends to get the meaning of unknown words. Two possible reasons behind this are that students hesitate in asking their teachers to explain the unfamiliar words, or they feel shy. In other situations, teachers refuse giving them directly the meaning; they prefer to let them look for the meaning. The rest (38.98) ask their teachers for an L1 translation. When they meet a new word, students ask their teachers to give them the equivalent meaning in the mother tongue (in Arabic or in Berber) instead of searching it.

For memory strategies, 25.47% of students (see diagram 14) state that connecting the word with its synonym and antonyms is a strategy that can help them to memorize the meaning of new words because English words are related to each other in various ways, and there are a lot of words that have the same meaning such as irritated/annoyed, huge/big, small/tiny. In brief, students can determine the words' meaning by integrating it to their existing knowledge. 19.88% of them think that using physical actions (like facial expressions, gestures…etc) are an effective tool for remembering words. The idea is that using physical movements help enhancing memorization; for instance, some students use gestures when trying to learn action words or phrases in a foreign language, such as "knock at the door".

They perform the action of knocking at a door while saying the phrase aloud. Thus, facial expressions and hand gestures are helpful for memorizing common actions, like smiling, laughing, walking, setting and others. As it is argued by Saltz and Donnenwerth-Nolan, 1981) "*the use of physical actions when learning has been shown to facilitate language recall*". Thompson (1987) adds, "*if the information of a word or a sentence is enacted it can yield better understanding and recall*". (16.15%) of the participants claim that Studying the pronunciation of the word is another way that helps to memorize the word's meaning. When students learn new words, they should learn the pronunciation of each word to facilitate learning its meaning and to remember it later on; for example, a word like "present" as a noun or as a verb pronounced differently, and expresses different meanings. Present as an adjective is pronounced /ˈprɛz(ə)nt/ refers to " a period of time now occurring", but present as a verb pronounced /prɪˈzɛnt/ means "to introduce (someone) formally". From this it is clear that the pronunciation features (word stress, vowel and consonant sounds) play an important role in learning new words. So, we can deduce that such memory techniques are useful ways for enhancing vocabulary learning and recall. Another additional strategy used by 13.66% students in order to memorize the word's meaning is studying the spelling form of the word (see diagram 14). The spelling form involves focusing on accurate orthographical representation of a written word because this helps students to recall the word easily. Students memorize the spelling of the word, like breaking the word into parts, to underline the first letter, or make use of rhyming words like: hat/cat, plate/eight, walking/talking…etc.

The following paragraph is going to interpret and discuss the results of questions asked about cognitive strategies.

26.87% of the respondents (see diagram 15) state that they prefer taking notes in their vocabulary note book, on a piece of paper, along the margins or between lines during the lecture, when revising their lessons because this way helps them to record information, and to

learn new words. In this context, (Hartley and Davies, 1978; Kiewra, 1987 cited in badger et al.; 2011) suggest that "*the aim of note taking is to recall as much as possible of the lecture*". Furthermore, (White, 1996) claims "Note *taking strategies (NTS) were found to be among the most common cognitive strategies used by L2 learners*". In addition, two other types of memory strategies, verbal repetition and written repetition, are favored by first year students. 24.63% of them learn the new word by repeating it over and over; however, (21.64%) write it many times. For them writing the new words a number of times is a good way for remembering them. As it is argued by Cook (2008) "*repetition is the commonest approach in which the learner repeats a word again and again until he learns it by heart*". According to Oxford (1990), "*cognitive strategies are found to be the most popular strategies with language learners and crucial in learning a new language*".

From question 16 which is "could you mention other strategies that you use in order to learn English vocabulary?" we can notice that students add some strategies such as talking with native speakers, chatting with friends on facebook, using Google translation, practice the new word when interacting with others ,using social media, reading short stories, newspapers and books. One of them adds that "*talking to myself helps me to learn vocabulary*"; however, some of them repeat the proposed strategies. One possible explanation for these answers is that students consider these techniques as the most useful ones for learning new lexis. Schmitt (2000) argued that "*students should be exposed to the target language through all possible means (books, movies, the internet), and they should engage in communicative activities with native speaker*".

 The last question aims at finding the most helpful strategies according to students. The majority answered by saying that using a dictionary (either bilingual or monolingual), guessing from context, using English language media, verbal and written repetitions are the most helpful strategies for learning English vocabulary. The results discussed in this bloc answer

the third research question "how do first year students learn English vocabulary?", and confirms the third hypothesis stated in the introduction "first year students learn English vocabulary by using discovery, consolidation strategies".

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed and interpreted the results obtained from the students' questionnaire in order to answer the three research questions, and confirm the hypotheses suggested in the general introduction. The results reveal that the majority of first year students have positive attitudes towards English vocabulary; they are aware of the importance of English vocabulary, confirming then the first hypothesis. From students' responses, we can see that their limited vocabulary leads to difficulties in the four skills. The second hypothesis which states that the lack of vocabulary causes difficulties in speaking, listening, reading, writing skills is confirmed. In addition, the findings obtained from the third section of the questionnaire (VLS) clearly show that first year students use different strategies to learn English vocabulary. That is, the third hypothesis which, says that first year students use discovery and consolidation strategies, is also confirmed.

This dissertation is set out to investigate the students' use of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) to learn English vocabulary in the department of English at MMUTO. In addition, throughout this study it is apparent that first year students hold positive attitudes towards English vocabulary. Conducting such investigation in this era is important since first year students at this stage need to learn and expand their vocabulary; it is investigated upon one comprehensive taxonomy which is Schmitt taxonomy.

For the sake of answering the advanced research questions and confirming or refuting the hypotheses of this study, a mixed method approach is adopted and used, that is, both qualitative and quantitative methods are combined for the sake of collecting data and getting a better understanding of the research questions. Indeed, the data are gathered from one research instrument which is a questionnaire. Sixty (60) first years LMD students in MMUTO are randomly selected in order to respond to this questionnaire. For the sake of analysing the quantitative data, a software package known SPSS is used in order to evaluate the statistical data. In addition, to this statistical analysis, the Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) is used for analyzing and explaining the qualitative data obtained from the open ended questions of the questionnaire.

The discussion of the results of the questionnaire has provided answers to the research questions. The outcomes obtained from the questionnaire reveal and confirm that first year Students make use of both determination and consolidation strategies to learn new words meaning and these strategies are considered to be useful and helpful for learners. These results go hand in hand with Sökmen (1997: 237) who summarizes that "VLS are basically actions made by the learner in order to help them to understand the meaning of a word, learning them and to remember them later". The number of the percentages which are highlighted from each category revealed that first year LMD students use VLS.

Some limitations in our study are noticed; first, considering the small scale of our investigation, our findings cannot be generalized to the whole population since our sample consists only of 60 students out of 418 and the use of one tool only which is a questionnaire, we cannot generalize our results on the whole population.

Based on the research findings and evidence from the students' questionnaire, the present study offers some pedagogical implications for teachers as well as suggestions for future researchers. First, teachers should not ignore vocabulary since it is seen as the basic element of the language and it completes the other tasks, they should also provide their students with activities and strategies that can help them to learn this important aspect. In addition, teachers should teach vocabulary by using technology like: videos, songs, movies and so on, because these tools make students more motivated and more enjoyable to learn vocabulary.

The conclusion to be drawn from this study is that vocabulary learning is of great importance, it means that having a large vocabulary size help a lot in improving the language ability of the students, and if students have insufficient vocabulary about the English language may cause difficulties in various language skills including: writing, speaking, listening and reading. Therefore, students can overcome these difficulties if they rely on VLS.

To sum up, our dissertation is dealt with VLS used by EFL learners in the department of English at MMUTO. Yet, our corpus is only limited to first LMD students. Therefore, further research on the same issue in different settings with different levels can be conducted. Furthermore, other researches can be conducted using other tools like interviews and questionnaires with teachers.

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Appendix I

Questionnaire for Students

Vocabulary Learning Strategies Used by EFL Learners

Dear students,

This questionnaire is part of our work; it is designed for EFL students at the English department of MMUTO. It aims at gathering data to analyze the use of vocabulary learning strategies that you use to learn English vocabulary. So, you are kindly invited to answer the following questions. We promise that your answers will be used only for educational purposes; for this, please feel free to provide sincere responses.

Thank you very much for your contribution

Section one: EFL learners' attitudes towards English vocabulary

-Please put a tick (✓) on the option(s) that fits (s) your opinion, and use your own statements where required:

Q 1: learning vocabulary is very important in learning English

Agree ☐   Neutral ☐   Disagree ☐

Why……………………………………………………………………………………

Q2: Do you enjoy learning English vocabulary?

Yes ☐   No ☐

-please justify your answer..
....

I

Q 3: learning vocabulary is hard and takes great effort

Agree ☐   Neutral ☐   Disagree ☐

Why……………………………………………………………………………………………

Q4: If you know more words, do you think your English ability will be improved?

Agree ☐   Neutral ☐   Disagree ☐

Q5: Do you think that you have enough vocabulary knowledge about the English language?

Yes ☐   No ☐

Section two: EFL vocabulary learning

Q6: where do you find difficulties when meeting new words?

In pronunciation ☐

In spelling ☐

In meaning ☐

Q7: How do you learn unknown vocabulary items?

....

....

Q8: How do you learn vocabulary in the classroom?

a- As isolated words   ☐
b- In context   ☐

Q9: What is your major purpose when you are learning English vocabulary? (you can tick more than one answer)

-To understand a sentence ☐

-To be able to write better ☐

To be able to communicate ☐

-To understand English language movies, songs, conversations...ect ☐

Q10:In which language skill the lack of vocabulary may cause difficulties? (You can tick more than one answer)

In writing ☐
In speaking ☐
In reading ☐
In listening ☐

Q 11: how your vocabulary will be improved?

Through Reading a lot ☐

Through Writing ☐

Through Listening ☐

Through Speaking ☐

Please, justify your choice…………………..

……………………………………………………………………………………

Section three: Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Q 12: When meeting a new word how do you guess its meaning?

1. Analyze the form of the ☐

2. Guess from context ☐

3. Use a bilingual dictionary ☐

4. Use a monolingual dictionary ☐

Q 13: From whom do you get help when you face unknown words?

1. Ask the teacher for an L1 translation ☐

2. Ask classmates or someone else ☐

Q14: How do you memorize the meaning of a new word?

1. By memorizing the form of the word ☐

2. By using physical actions like gestures, or images, facial expressions…etc ☐

3. By Connecting the word with its synonym or hyponym ☐

4. By Studying the spelling form of the word ☐

5. By Studying the pronunciation of the word ☐

6. By Saying the word aloud ☐

Q15: what are the strategies do you use when consolidating new vocabulary?

1. Note-taking in class ☐

2. Verbal repetition (i.e. using the new word when speaking) ☐

3. Use of English language media (e.g. Songs, movies, newspapers…etc) ☐

4. Written repetition ☐

Q16: could you mention other strategies that you use in order to learn English vocabulary?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Q 17: In your opinion what are the strategies mentioned above do you consider are helpful for learning new vocabulary? Would you explain your answers?

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Thank you!