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**The Influence of Vocabulary Learning Strategies on
Reducing Reading difficulties
The Case of First Year EFL Students at Biskra University**

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Dedication

*In the Name of Allah, the most gracious, the most
Merciful*

With my love and respect

I would like to dedicate this modest and simple work

To:

*My parents who gladly brought me into life: to my
dear Mother Messouda and my Father Djemoui who
always motivate me,*

My husband who encourages me,

My sisters:

Zwina, Naziha, Fahima, Soumia, and Malika

My brothers:

Rabie and Rachid

All my nieces and nephews

My parents in law

My best friends

Souad, Kenza, and Sara

ALL my Teachers.

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To Allah the greatest thanks for giving me strength and ability. This work would not have been complete

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Abstract

The reading Comprehension skill is considered as one of the fundamental language skills, which plays a crucial role in developing EFL learners' performance of language learning process. Besides to the significance of vocabulary knowledge that helps in improving reading comprehension activities through the employment of vocabulary learning strategies. The function of those techniques is to promote vocabulary size and practice language skills at ease. In fact, most of EFL learners encounter many reading difficulties such as inability to recognize unfamiliar words and identify spelling forms; those disabilities and others prevent them to understand reading tasks and different units of the material. The main reason of those difficulties refers to lack of vocabulary knowledge, and shortage of lexical system. The present study is an attempt to investigate the common categories of strategies that EFL learners apply while reading to improve lexical competence and lessen reading problems; to collect valuable data, we adopted a descriptive method and distributed two questionnaires, one was for eighty first year learners and the second for ten teachers selected randomly at the English department of Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra. The study aims to respond the following research questions: What is the importance of vocabulary learning strategies in the foreign language learning? What are the difficulties that first year EFL students face when they read? What are the most used categories of vocabulary learning strategies used by EFL learners? The findings and the obtained results confirm the research hypothesis, because students apply different strategies and integrate them in their learning according to their needs and purposes, and teachers encourage and recommend them to read and use those techniques to gain lexical knowledge, developing reading comprehension.

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

FL: Foreign Language

L1: First Language (mother tongue)

L2: Second Language

LA: Language Aptitude

LMD: License, Master and Doctorate

MKU: Mohamed Kheider University

PRS: Pre-Reading Stage

PTRS: Post Reading Stage

SL: Second Language

TL: Target Language

VLS: Vocabulary Learning Strategies

WRS: While Reading Stage

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Nowadays, learning a second or foreign language is very important. In fact, it is not an easy task to be tackled, but it is one of the most challenging aspects that people decide to take part in their lives throughout the world. Moreover, within the acquisition of a target language process, the learner may encounter different difficulties in learning vocabulary and adapt with the large size of new words that takes more time and energy because of the lack of proficiency and competence. This problem increases when the learners want to read a book or any written material either in the classroom or outside, they will be uninterested because they do not comprehend or understand the ideas of the text since words are unknown to them. So most of learners give up and stop reading. Hence they are eradicating one of the important learning skills which is reading. Therefore, there are some learning techniques and ways that learners must follow to decrease those disabilities of reading; those ways are called vocabulary learning strategies (VLS). The exploitation of them will illuminate the complexities of reading, facilitate it, motivate learners to read more, and enhance their attainment. They can also boost their levels of proficiency and enable them to succeed in acquiring new language.

Background of the Study

During the last 25 years, the domain of second /foreign language acquisition has witnessed broad development in the interest of one of the most significant aspect of language which is vocabulary. New techniques have been discovered in the form of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS). This area emerged in the 1970's when researches focused on the actions and the ways that EFL learners follow to ameliorate their language acquisition .In addition, many researchers believe that the basis of high rank of proficiency depends on the use of a set of learning strategies such as the vocabulary learning strategies in reading tasks

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to diminish the difficulties learners face when they read.

Rubin (1987:19) defines “learning strategies are including any set of operations, steps, plans, and routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval and use of information, is what the learners do to learn and do to regulate their learning”

Nation (2001:378) claimed that “learners may need to change their knowledge, attitudes and awareness in order to feel responsible for their own learning .when they adopt a deliberate vocabulary learning strategy , they may be changing their knowledge attitudes and awareness to do this”.

Statement of the Problem

Foreign language teachers attempt to supply many of the direct instructions in practicing the classroom activities specifically reading tasks. As any EFL learners in the world, EFL Algerian learners also find that English language is a very difficult challenge at the beginning when they are exposed to reading activities since their vocabulary knowledge is poor. They will struggle with many difficulties in terms of reading comprehension and understanding the ideas of the text because of the lack of reading habit or the lack of the lexical cohesive devices. According to (Widdowson, 1970, as cited in Hedge, 2000, 188) “Reading can be seen as a kind of dialogue between the reader and the text or even between the reader and the author”. Moreover, Nation (2001, 150) argues that “unknown vocabulary slows down learner’s reading and make it more difficult to gain the smoothness and flow needed for pleasurable reading”.

For such problem, there is a set of vocabulary learning strategies that EFL learners should use consciously or unconsciously in order to decrease the reading complexities and cope with them. These strategies can also motivate their reading habit because reading is

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considered as a useful vehicle of vocabulary development, and they encourage learners to go deeper on the language and its culture too.

Nation (2001, 222) “Most of vocabulary learning strategies can be applied to a wide range of vocabulary and are useful at all stages of vocabulary learning. They also allow learners to take control of learning away from the teacher and allow the teacher to concentrate on other things”.

Aims of the Study

Any research should contain some exact points that must be reached. The present study aims:

- To find out more results about vocabulary leaning strategies and its efficacy in the success of foreign language learning process.
- To focus on the main difficulties that EFL learners face during the reading activities.
- To investigate the relationship between the significant role of VLS and the progress of reading skill, and the enlargement of lexical knowledge.

Significance of the Study

Mastering the vocabulary of a foreign language is considered as the initial goal of learners. They are just beginners on the field; they find the way to realize that ambitious goal very long because of the different difficulties they face when dealing with learning skills specially reading. This latter involves dealing with the meaning of new words implicitly in various contexts; thus, the learners quickly get discouraged and depressed .Therefore, the role of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) is very important whenever the learners encounter any dilemma that prevent them to cope with what they read and how they can understand the

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ideas. VLS tend to provide many ways as guessing the meaning from the context, using the dictionary, making deduction or asking for explanation from the teacher or classmates...

Moreover; since the acquisition of the language is not just a matter of linguistic competence, EFL learners need to read more and more for further semantic and lexical progression, and additional extension of cultural knowledge. Also, their minds will be more flexible due to VLS that give the EFL learners the chance to gain new concepts that they are going to be exposed to in the future; their memories will be able to retrieve the stored information easily thanks to the strategies used before. According to Schimtt (1997, 203) argued that “learning is the process by which the information is obtained ,stored ,retrieved , and used ;therefore vocabulary learning strategies could be any which affect this broadly defined process.”

The role of teacher is not neglected here, because he spends most of the learning time with the learners. He asks and recommends them to practice reading into and outside the classroom, and he tries to introduce many techniques to facilitate the reading tasks. Even if they are adults, they still need who can train them and boost them toward enriching their levels .In our present research we try to demonstrate that the use of vocabulary learning strategies at least is to minimize the obscurities of reading. Besides to developing foreign language learning process which is very dynamic and effective functioning in more practical way, VLS are very successful procedures to enlarge EFL learners' vocabulary luggage, enrich their lexical repertoire and motivate learners to have the reading habit by facilitating the completion of learning word meanings. The appropriate use of vocabulary learning strategies gives the chance and support to learn new languages effectively.

Research Questions

In this current study we aim to answer the following questions:

- 1-What are the most difficulties encountered by EFL learners in reading comprehension?
- 2- What are the most and the least frequently used categories of VLS by EFL learners at Biskra University?
- 3-what is the significance of VLS in improving the reading skill?

Hypothesis

We hypothesize that if EFL learners integrate the vocabulary learning strategies in their learning process, their reading comprehension will improve and their level of proficiency will increase.

Methodology

The aim of this present work is to investigate the crucial role of the vocabulary learning strategies in diminishing the reading difficulties in order to improve the EFL learners' reading skill and reach the high level of vocabulary proficiency. We intend to use in this study the descriptive method which relies on two questionnaires as a tool for gathering data, one for the students, and the second for the teachers. The questionnaires are the appropriate tools to obtain students' and teachers' opinions about the field of study, and for collecting information about the difficulties encountered by the Algerian EFL learners, and their perspectives about the strategies of developing vocabulary knowledge to enhancing the reading skill. Concerning the population and sampling, this research will deal with descriptive study on eight hundred eighty three LMD first year students, and 36 teachers of English at Mohamed Kheider University. A sample of eighty students and a sample of 10

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Teachers were selected randomly from the Department Foreign Languages, at Mohamed kheider University of Biskra during the academic year 2016/2017.

Limitations of the study

Basically, this current work is limited to a small sample of 80 students since we cannot deal with all the population of first year students , we cannot generalize the results on them Besides, time of that study was too constricted.

CHAPTER ONE

VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES

(VLS)

Chapter One: Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Introduction

The present chapter tries to spot some lights on the general view about one of the most relevant component of learning a foreign language which is vocabulary. Vocabulary knowledge of any new language is considered as the fundamental element that the learners should focus on. Besides, the first chapter aims to indicate an interest on the features of word knowledge, and it also deals with the relationship between vocabulary development and language aptitude, with mentioning the vocabulary size that learners should take into consideration. Moreover, it investigates the relationship between learning individual items and the lexical learning system of knowledge through exploring the denotative and connotative meaning. In addition, it looks into the distinction between the productive and receptive vocabulary without neglecting the relation between learners' psychology and its effects on learning vocabulary.

The great interest is oriented in this chapter to vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) and how many scholars had classified them, and the most popular common strategies among them. Foreign language learners need to be aware about the large number of different VLS, their classification and categories, and their Importance in enhancing learners' lexical development and performance. They are required to fit their learning purposes either in long or short term.

1. Definition of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is defined in the Merriam online dictionary as:

1-the list of collection of words or phrases usually alphabetically arranged and explained and defined lexicon

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2- A sum or stock of words employed by language group individual or work or a field of knowledge.

3- A list or collection of terms or codes available for use (as an indexing system).

4- The words that make up a language used by a person and related to particular subject.

According to Oxford online dictionary , vocabulary is a range of artistic or stylistic forms , techniques or movements .and a list of difficult and unfamiliar words with explanation or their meaning accompanying a piece of specialist or foreign language text and used in particular subject.

Many authors have similar definitions about vocabulary. According to Hubbard et al. (1983) vocabulary can be seen as a powerful carrier of meanings of words, also according to Diamond and Gulton (2006) vocabulary is related to the knowledge obtained in mind of words and their meanings, this means that without establishing strong vocabulary foundation at the beginning, comprehension and communication will not be achieved by foreign language (FL) or second language (SL) learners. When students learn new words, they can effectively and appropriately perform and they will be able to write, pronounce, comprehend and communicate easily with native or non-native speakers.

Vocabulary learning plays a crucial role in developing learners' linguistic package. Besides, vocabulary plays a major mission in authentic communicative competence within the process of learning target language (TL) when learners are engaging in and they need to know the maximum account of different vocabularies and meanings. Thus learners need also to enrich their lexical repertoire, and to be able to acquire adequate words to handle language texting and conversation. Siriwan (2007,19) argued that “vocabulary learning means learning a package of sub-set of words as well as learning how to use strategies to cope with unknown

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or unfamiliar words . He also noted that “vocabulary learning is referred to a collection or the total stock of words in language that are used in particular context (2007).

Vocabulary learning is not only a matter of words but it also involves lexical phrases system and knowledge. For instance, English vocabulary which is complex and hard to learn without three main aspects related to: the form, the meaning and the use, that is why learners should not just care for the form of words and structure ,and ignore its real use and meaning within the specific situations because learning here will be uncompleted (Nation & Meara, 2010) .

Mastering the language entails knowing its most basics, this can be used in accordance with a particular purpose and domain, and learners will be developed with time and more practice because even native speakers do not know all the vocabularies of their native language. Moreover, Vocabulary is more important than grammar as asserted by Harmer (1991) choosing words according to the situation needs more attention than using grammatical structures because learners cannot use grammar forms without knowing enough vocabularies; as wilkins (1972, 111) asserted that “without grammar, very little can be conveyed; without vocabulary , nothing can be conveyed”. Any failure in selecting and using those vocabularies will lead to misunderstanding and mis-communicating with others; therefore, Lessard-Clouston (1996,27) argues that “vocabulary –words, phrases, idioms... are the heart of all language usage in the skill areas of listening ,speaking, writing and reading as well as culture”.

2. Features of Word Knowledge

Knowing a word is defined according to Nation (1990) as the knowledge of word’s spelling, pronunciation, arrangement and appropriateness, and according to Ellis (1994) to know a word required conscious explicit learning mechanisms and the use of that word

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involved implicit learning and memorization. So, the ability to master vocabulary is not just knowing words with their meanings but also to cover a large range of information around that words inside and outside (the form and the use). To communicate in second language is very relevant for the learner. In addition, the ability to communicate is approximately the high level of language accumulation in terms of the production and comprehension which learners are supposed to reach.

Furthermore, it involves getting familiar with the maximum lexical size stored in mind, the general frequency of words use, the syntactical, situational limitation of its use, and also the various kinds of forms and structures that can be derived from that word according to the function and situation, without ignoring the association between that meaningful unit of language and the other structures and their usages. Moreover, knowing a word is defined by Richard as “knowing a degree of probability of encountering that word in speech or print”. (1976, 82). The learner is required to be ready whenever he faces that word to avoid linguistic learning problems. Therefore, Nation (2001, 24-25) argues that “Receptive vocabulary use involves perceiving the form of word while listening or reading and retrieving its meanings, whereas the productive vocabulary use involves wanting to express a meaning through writing and speaking and retrieving and producing the appropriate spoken and written form”. He proposed the following table that shows the distinction between receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge in terms of (word form, meaning, and use):

Table .1. What is involved in knowing a word (Nation 2001, 27)

	Spoken	R	-What does the word sound like?
		P	-How is the word pronounced?
	Written	R	-What does the word look like?
		P	-How is the word written and spelled?

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Form	Word parts	R	-What parts are recognizable in this word?
		P	-What word parts are needed to express the meaning?
	Form and meaning	R	-What meaning does this word form signal?
		P	-What word form can be used to express this meaning?
Meaning	Concept and referents	R	-What order words does this make us think of?
	Association	P	-What items can the concept refer to?
		R	-What other words could we use instead of this one?
	Grammatical Functions	P	- What other words could we use instead of this one?
R		-In what patterns does the word occur? -In what patterns must we use this word?	
Use	Collections	P	-What words or types of words must we use with this one?
		R	-Where, when and how often would we

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	(register, frequency)	P	expect to meet this word? -Where, when and how often can we use this word?
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R: receptive knowledge / P: productive knowledge

The table shows that knowing a word is a little bit a difficult conditioned process since it requires a great interest and focus on the different sides of the word. The word does not exist in isolation, but in association with explicit meaning based on cultural aspect and the implicitly inferential meaning based on the context that makes the nature of language well organized and well processed. This what the learner should keep in his mind until he reaches the mastery of different parts of language. Thus his vocabulary competence will improve and progress.

3. The Relationship between Vocabulary Development and Language

Aptitude

According to Carroll (1973) Language Aptitude (LA) does not mean to predict whether the learner can learn a second or foreign language or not, but it predicts the rate of progress that the learner is achieving, and also language aptitude refers to a collection of tests that the learner should be exposed to in order to evaluate his attainment and to measure his level of advancement in learning the language. Carroll (1973, 6) identified LA as “an optimal conditions of motivation, opportunity to learn, and quality of instruction”. Moreover; from an educational point of view, language aptitude makes an intuitive sense that such differences among individuals are related to their capacities to master a target language and make an emphasis on the abilities that reflect the appropriate language materials the teachers will use

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to cope with learners' needs and lacks. Also according to Carroll (1981) **language aptitude comprises four constituent abilities classified as the following:**

3.1. Language aptitude abilities

3.1.1. **Phonetic Coding Ability:** is considered the most important component; it is defined as “the ability to identify distinct sounds, to form associations between these sounds and symbols representing them, and to retain these associations” Carroll (1973, 105). Therefore, this ability involves the coding, assimilation, and remembering of phonetic material.

3.1.2. Grammatical Sensitivity Ability: is “the ability to recognize the grammatical functions of words (or other linguistic entities) in sentence structures” Carroll (1981, 105). Although this ability does not require any knowledge of grammatical terminology; it implies an awareness of grammatical relationships.

3.1.3. Rote Learning Ability: is “the ability to learn associations between sounds and meaning rapidly and efficiently and to retain these associations” Carroll (1981, 105). It refers to the capacity to remember large amounts of foreign language materials.

3.1.4. Inductive Language learning Ability: is “the ability to infer or induce the rules governing a set of language materials, given samples of language materials that permit such inferences” Carroll (1981, 105).

In fact, language aptitude is very important in learning new language vocabularies because it is a kind of needs analysis or diagnostic tests for the learners and motivational aid to them. As well, its most application is to select the suitable language materials and procedures which help the student to know his level, to work hard, and to succeed in mastering the language.

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3. Vocabulary Size

To be a successful and well developed language learner, it is compulsory to pass through a difficult step which is learning vocabulary in order to be able to easily practice the four skills of language besides to the communication activities. Thus, it involves a very wide extension of vocabulary knowledge size. The learner takes the challenge to expand his lexis glossary in his mind for a long term of his life, to fit the purpose of learning this language. In addition, he takes the risk to be responsible to preserve that language without breaking down its principles, rules or identity whatever level of mastering that language they reach.

Schmitt (2000, 157) asserted that “the number of words language learners need also depends largely upon the realistic goal: around 2,000 words families should be the threshold for daily basic conversations but this will not cover every conversational topic.” This means that for every day conversation the learner needs to have 2,000 words as a previous knowledge stored and linked to specific topic and with particular conversation on his memory. In addition, as proposed by Nation and Waring (2004) that around 2,000-3,000 words which the learner is required to get familiar with for practicing productive skills (Speaking and writing). They recommended that 3,000-5,000 word families are needed to provide a basis for comprehension of receptive skills, or to begin reading authentic texts or listening to authentic material. On the other hand, Hazenberg and Hulstijn (1996) mentioned that about 10,000 words are necessary for difficult academic texts comprehension such as in university textbooks, and about 15,000 to 20,000 to reach an equal educated native speaker of English.

To sum up, in dealing with the four language skills, it is crucial for a language learner to have enough vocabulary. Expanding the vocabulary is one of the main goals of vocabulary

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learning since a language learner with large vocabulary repertoire will succeed both inside and outside classroom as well as in his social life.

4. The lexical System: Denotative and Connotative Meaning

To understand better the task of learning the vocabulary of English language, we need to look at two aspects of meaning, because words are not limited to one single meaning and most of words have multiple meanings. They are categorized as either denotative or connotative meanings. The first one is concerned with the explicit definition as listed in a dictionary as a literal meaning, Hedge (2000, 112) argues that “if a word has reference to an object, action, or even the physical world this can be described as the referential or denotative meaning.”

There are learners who believe that learning new language items is a matter of a link between words and objects; but in fact, it is also this relation that reflects to language and the world in various ways and categories. For instance the word grandmother, each human being has two grandmothers, but there is only one word in English for both mothers. (The example is given by Hedge 2000, 112). In addition, the second is the connotative meaning which refers to the association between attitudes, emotions, of the user of language when selecting a word; for example, two words with the same reference or definition may have different connotative meanings, and that is often based on the phenomenon, the situation or the context, and the purpose of the use. According to Hedge (2000,113) the connotative meaning helps the learner to build his awareness about language and its external world through the use and the exposure to the authentic materials inside and outside the classroom, because it derives from a mixture of cultural, political, social, and historical sources.

5. The Relation between the Learners' Psychology and Learning

Vocabulary

Learning foreign language (FL) is more than learning skills or rules, but also it is considered as the self- image, because it deals with the adaptation for new social and cultural behavior. This has a strong influence on the learner himself as Marion William (1994, 77) asserts that “language after all, belongs to a person’s whole social beings: it is part of one’s identity and is used to convey this identity to other people”. Moreover; the learner’s language achievement is impacted by his psychological state such as his degree of motivation and self-confidence, because the encouragement of people and the personal desire to realize the oriented goals play an important role to avoid giving up and advance toward learning language accomplishment.

Dörnyei (2001, 50) affirms that “motivation to learn, just like the ability to acquire language is an innate characteristic of human species”. Foreign language learner’s psychology is characterized by been dynamic, interested, with lack of anxiety, no fear and stress, and also well encouraged and ambitious to move on his challenge and develop his performance, because it is difficult to learn something unwillingly and by obligation. Therefore, his desire of learning is supposed to be strong, energetic with powerful efforts and attitudes when dealing with the language, and the more people like something the more they work to reach it.

According to Clément, Gardner& Smythe (1977) the most important factor is self-confident; it refers to the ability to produce results, achieving a goal and perform a particular task perfectly. Along with high curiosity about the foreign world, the learner all the time wants to know more about that language and its milieu because that gives him opportunities to enrich his linguistic repertoire as Dörnyei (2001, 57) states that “ we learn best when we expect success”. The student must be conscious and aware that he is dealing with others’

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language which is distinguished from his own, so he must be responsible and his goals must be oriented towards success.

6. Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS)

7.1 The definition of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Teachers teach vocabulary to build students' knowledge of words and phrases and they help them to learn any language through different ways and strategies which enhance their proficiency whenever they face a difficulty in using or understanding a word. Moreover, learners have to be able to get information about unknown and unfamiliar vocabularies and analyzing words parts and differentiate between them, this means that it is necessary for learners to know the stem of words, the nouns, the adjectives, the adverbs, that derive from the unknown concept that they meet for the first time and which affixes suit it, in order to use it in future at advanced levels of the process of learning without problems.

In addition, the area of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) emphasizes more on paving the way to learner of foreign language (FL) toward the best performance and achievement in mastering that language.

That goal of success requires using many different strategies and techniques to cope with aspect of language and its contexts, and facilitate the process of acquisition, because any elementary learner can advances his level when he employs the strategies in his learning activities. Students and teachers often recognize the importance of VLS and they use them consciously to understand, to communicate, and to enrich their linguistic competence accordingly to their purposes and their interest.

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7.2. What is “Strategy”?

Winne (2001, 159) states that “A strategy is broader design or plan for approaching a high level goal and coordinates a set of tactics”. A strategy refers to military fields in which was taken to mean a plan to win a war, and derived from a Greek word but recently it has become useful for many fields such as education, and it is considered as the art of well planning, organizing methods, and directing operations to achieve one or more goals under conditions to solve a problem usually over a long period of time.

According to Oxford (2003, 315) a strategy is useful under these conditions:

- 1- The strategy relates very well to the SL task at hand
- 2- The strategy fits the particular student’s learning style preferences to one degree or another
- 3- The student employs the strategy effectively and links it with other relevant strategies.

Studies on the field of VLS have started in the mid of 1960, and the new recent studies have seen rapid increasingly advances in the last 20 years. Many scholars and linguists agreed that VLS are very important for learning a target language and they have variously interpreted those strategies respectively in a broad or narrow sense. Oxford (2003, 8) defines VLS as “ specific actions taken by the learners to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations”. Also, O’Malley and Chamot (1990, 1) considered them as “the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn or retain new information” . In addition, Cohen (1998, 4) identifies them as “those processes which are consciously selected by learners and which may result in action taken to enhance the learning use of a second or foreign language, through the storage, retention, recall, and application of information about that language”. Intaraprasert (2004, 9) claims that vocabulary learning strategies are “any set of techniques or learning

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behaviors, which language learners reported using in order to discover the meaning of a new word, to retain the knowledge of newly-learned words, and to expand their knowledge of vocabulary”.

In fact vocabulary learning strategies are the specific techniques applied by learners in responding activities in the target language learning process, as Nation (2001,217) claimed that “vocabulary learning strategies are a part of language learning strategies which in turn are a part of general learning strategies”. All in all, VLS are the various techniques and ways that students use to comprehend, store, and remember information and skills by employing and integrating those thoughts, steps, and behaviors to facilitate and organize the knowledge of that language in mind and develop the linguistic package to interact easily into the communication. According to Brown & Payne (1994) there are five steps for learning new words under the use of VLS, they are the following:

- 1- Have sources for encountering new word.
- 2- Get a clear image either visual or auditory or both forms of new word.
- 3- Learn the meaning of that new word.
- 4- Make strong connection in memory between the forms and the meanings of the word.
- 5- Use those new words in new situations.

7.3. The classification of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS)

Since VLS are so important for the learners to develop their acquisition of a target language, the classification of these strategies is a controversial. Scholars have proposed different taxonomies depend on their area of expertise and their proficiency; also student may use different strategies within one activity according to their learning styles and needs. These strategies make their learning more enjoyable and beneficial rather than using only one

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strategy and neglecting the others. The VLS are sub-class of framework for language learning strategies; therefore, they are useful to various language learning tasks. The most popular frequency used strategies and taxonomies are the following:

7.3.1. The VLS taxonomy suggested by Schmitt (1997) who divided it as two main groups of strategies:

- 1) **Discovery Strategies:** Strategies that are used by learners to discover meaning of words;
- 2) **Consolidation Strategies:** a word is consolidated once it has been encountered.

He categorized vocabulary learning strategies into five sub-categories:

- 1) **Determination Strategies:** they are individual learning strategies, when the learner meets new words, he can determine the meaning by guessing from an L1 background, guessing from context, using reference materials (Schmitt, 1997).
- 2) **Social Strategies:** they are learners learn new words through interaction with others and asking someone who knows, usually teachers and classmates or parents through translating to L1 if they know it, giving a synonym, defining by paraphrase, using the new word in a sentence (Schmitt, 1997).
- 3) **Memory Strategies:** they are strategies, whereby learners link their previous learning knowledge of new words to mental processing by associating their existing or background knowledge with the new words, through using some form of imagery, or grouping (Schmitt, 1997).
- 4) **Cognitive Strategies:** they are strategies that do not engage learners in mental processing but is more mechanical techniques to study vocabulary, such as written repetition and verbal, repeatedly writing or saying a word over and over again (Schmitt, 1997).

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5) **Metacognitive Strategies**: they are strategies related to processes involved in monitoring, decision-making, and evaluation of one's progress (Schmitt, 1997). **Table. 2.** better illustrates the complete classification scheme proposed by Schmitt.

Table.2. A taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies (Schmitt, 1997, 199-227).

Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS)	Discovery strategies	Determination strategies
		Social strategies
	Consolidation strategies	Social strategies
		Memory strategies
		Cognitive strategies
		Metacognitive strategies

6.3.2. In fact, there is another accepted classification as produced by (Oxford, 1990).

She differentiated between the: **direct** and **indirect strategies**.

- **Direct strategies** contain:

-**Memory strategies**: It shows that to relate to L2 proficiency in a course devoted to memorizing large numbers of L2 items. The use of memory strategies in a test-taking situation has a significant impact relationship to learners' performance in grammar and vocabulary. Memory strategies are often used for memorizing vocabulary and structures in

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initial stages of language learning, because learners need such strategies to store large range of vocabulary and structures.

-**Cognitive strategies:** which enable the learner to manipulate the language material in direct ways, e.g., through reasoning, analysis, note-taking, summarizing, synthesizing, outlining, and reorganizing information to develop stronger schemas (knowledge structures).

- **Compensation strategies:** are intended only for language use (e.g., guessing from the context in practicing the listening and reading activities and tasks ; using antonyms, synonyms ,talking around the missing word, or using gestures or pause words) in order to help the learner make up for missing knowledge.

- While **indirect strategies** include:

- **Metacognitive strategies:** are used for organizing and managing the learning process overall (e.g., identifying learning style preferences and needs, preparing and planning for an L2 task and tests , collecting and selecting materials, procedures and settings for teaching and learning, and controlling and monitoring mistakes and errors).

- **Affective strategy:** that is often used by the teacher in order to determine the mood and anxiety level, talking about feelings with their learners to supply for them the appropriate atmosphere to learn with rewarding them for good performance as a kind of motivation.

Students' progress will be oriented toward proficiency.

- **Social communicative strategies:** (e.g., asking questions to get verification, asking for clarification of a confusing point, asking for help in doing a language task, exposed to native-speakers conversation partner for exploring cultural and social norms).

7.3.3. The taxonomy of VLS presented by Hedge (2000, 117-118) explained that for the sake of learning new words, language learners are required to use a set of numerous strategies and techniques, two main strategies for learning vocabulary items are arranged as follows:

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- **Cognitive Strategies:** she considered them as the direct mental operations that deal with new words to understand, categorize and store them in the mental lexicon. Those operations are:

- Making associations between the unknown word and the other familiar vocabularies
- Learning words in groups
- Exploring range of meaning according to the context
- Using key words. A keyword is selecting a word from the mother tongue which is near to the new word in the target language, and try to make a link between those two words
- Inference strategy when the learner face a difficulty.

- **Metacognitive Strategies:** are indirect strategies that assist the learner to be active and remember new words consciously and gather new words by exposure to authentic contexts;

- Making word cards for instance by linking words to images;
- Listing words into categories;
- Reactivating vocabulary in internal dialogue;
- Making a word-network of vocabulary associated with a specific item.

In general, Vocabulary learning strategies identified by Hedge (2000) under two main types, namely, Cognitive strategies are concerned rather on repetition and mechanical means to learn vocabulary, handle and employ vocabulary for understanding how it works in different contexts. The metacognitive strategies are used by learners to monitor and evaluate their learning process and provide them with the opportunity to get maximum exposure to target language.

7.3.4. The vocabulary learning strategies are classified under four different categories

by Lawson and Hogben (1996, 118-119):

1/Repetition

- Reading of related word;
- Simple rehearsal;

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-Writing of word and meaning;

-Cumulative rehearsal;

-Testing

2/Word Feature Analysis

-Spelling;

-Word classification;

-Suffix;

3/Simple Elaboration

-Sentence translation;

- Simple use of context;

-Appearance similarity;

-Sound link;

4/Complex Elaboration

-Complex use of context;

-Paraphrase;

-Mnemonic.

7.3.5. What follow is vocabulary learning strategies classified by Gu and Johnson

(1996):

-Beliefs about vocabulary learning;

-Metacognitive regulation;

-Guessing strategies;

-Dictionary strategies;

-Note-taking strategies;

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- Memory strategies (rehearsal);
- Memory strategies (encoding);
- Activation strategies.

It is obvious that all of those strategies are approximately the same in content and differ in their classifications; therefore learners cannot use only one strategy throughout his learning process, and he is supposed to apply many of them depend on his purpose, need and situation, According to Fun (2003) there is no perfect classification of strategies or perfect single strategy because any strategy may fall into one category or in other depending on the focus and the purpose of use.

7.4. The Importance of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS)

On the whole, vocabulary is the central of language and its core. Although learner may have some troubles in learning vocabulary, but these problems can be solved through the employment of different learning strategies in learners' target language acquisition process.

Learners cannot focus on using one particular strategy and neglect the others because each one has its characteristic and use. In addition, vocabulary learning strategies are important to fit purposes and needs according to the learning subject and activity.

Learners attempt many ways and use many VLS, because it is impossible to memorize all the words of any language since even native speakers cannot master all their native vocabularies. Nevertheless, VLS can help them to cover the maximum basis of a target language, and aid them to understand, store, retrieve and communicate easily, either by guessing from context, using dictionary, asking for clarification, listing, making inference, note taking, using keywords, translating to L1 and many other strategies. EFL learner will be able to understand a text and delimit the reading troubles in a text that may face him, make

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him get boring and diminish his reading habit; a successful reading comprehension and understanding refers to the ability of learner to absorb the messages of the writer, depends on the knowledge and the exploitation of vocabulary learning strategies. Finally, VLS are effective actions of managing and facilitating language learning process

Conclusion

The field of vocabulary is wide and very important for learning foreign language, and this chapter attempts to cover many sides related to vocabulary in terms of the definition, the types of vocabulary knowledge, the vocabulary size that leads to mastery of communication and practicing language skills, also deals with aspects of knowing a word through the application of many kinds of categories of vocabulary strategies, those techniques plays an essential function in developing language and ameliorate the psychological state of the learner towards that language, additionally to their impact on diminishing the problems of reading skill that is going to be investigated in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

THE READING SKILL

Chapter two: The Reading Skill

Introduction

The present chapter attempts to shed some lights on a very crucial part of learning target language which is reading comprehension skill. It considered as the most effective language basic skill, and an active and dynamic task that helps the learner to move forward on learning new language. The main aim of this chapter is to cover the different realms related to reading. It begins with an overview and definition of reading, then the types of reading comprehension including extensive and intensive reading, moving to the set of stages that organize the task of reading a material, this chapter also offers the strategies of reading that learner follows when practice reading. Besides, it proposes the models of reading comprehension, Moreover, it shows how reading is regarded as a critical process, and else it deals with a collection of characteristics which make the learner a good reader, it is also concerned with the selection of texts and it indicates the role of memory on reading, it contains too the importance of reading in learning.

A part from this chapter points out t the most popular difficulties and obstacles that the learner may encounter in reading activities. Furthermore, it indicates the relation between the reading difficulties and vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) and their applications to decrease those problems and progress language performance and reading comprehension development.

Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Reducing Reading Difficulties

1. Reading Definition

Reading is the ability to identify printed words and construct their meanings and comprehend them smoothly. According to Dutcher (1990) reading is linked to the information gathered from the written forms in the text. It requires word recognition, comprehension, fluency, and motivation which makes the learner integrates with the text, the process of understanding meaning is comprehension.

Martin Long, Clare Wood, Karen Littleton, Terri Passenger & Kieron Shelly (2000, 245) state that “Reading is of course more than simply the ability to read separate words; it must also involve the ability to assemble grammatical structures and derive meaning from them”. Also they identify reading as a successive identification of words and access to their correct meaning.

According to Hedge (2000), the process of second language reading is based on certain knowledge represented by the mind depends on the given situation. Reading material such as text contains words and phrases which work as a stimulus for the brain to turn on the previous schematic knowledge and make a link between the ideas of that original material and the stored information. In addition, unlike oral communication that situated in a specific area of the brain, reading has not specific regions which dedicated for reading communication process because it involves networks of neurons which interfere with the reading comprehension skill.

Reading is one of the literacy skills which the learner struggle with to carry on the challenge of learning language, and the success of reading is getting more information when practicing reading tasks which deals with interactive of multiple cognitive, metacognitive, linguistic, and social aspect pointed by Dubin (1982,125) that “ the task of reading is a complex skill that contain a number of psychological, physical and social elements”

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Moreover, reading is an active receptive skill and River (1981,147) argued that “ reading is the most important activity in any language class not only as a source of information and a pleasurable activity, but also as a means of consolidating and extending one’s knowledge of the language” .

2. Types of Reading Comprehension

Reading skill in SLA process is a complex activity which occurs into two types: the intensive and the extensive reading for each one its advantages and purposes:

2.1. Intensive Reading

According to Hedge (2000) intensive reading involves the conscious study of short texts sometimes less than a hundred words long, but usually around 300-500 words and its aim is to analyze the text to understand it ,and it needs to pay more attention to accuracy in terms of vocabulary, grammar forms and discourse makers and others surface structures details for the purposes of understanding the literal meaning of that text. Usually the intensive reading refers to the classroom oriented tasks where the focus of the learner is on the linguistic or semantic details, and the implicit organization of the material they are intended to read. Moreover, within the intensive reading the reader studies the text line by line and often refers to the dictionary to help the learner to analyze language learning, translate and derive to the exact details meaning.

2.2. Extensive Reading

Generally it links to read large and long amounts of texts with the aim of getting an overall understanding of the material and emphasizing on fluency rather than accuracy (Hedge 2000). Moreover, the learners are more concerned with the general meaning of what they select to read by themselves, and often they practice it outside of the classroom, Hafiz and Tudor (1989, 5) assert that “the pedagogical value attributed to extensive reading is based

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on the assumption that exposing learners to large quantities of meaningful and interesting L2 material will, in the long run, produce a beneficial effect on the learners' command of the L2". The nature of extensive reading is vary according to the level of learners' motivation to deal with large quantities of long materials and the general meaning sometimes they read for pleasure, enjoyment, curiosity and for developing reading habit. Hedge (2000, 204) argued that "Extensive reading certainly has the benefit of greatly increasing a student's exposure to English and can be particularly important where class contact time is limited".

All in all, it is argued that both intensive and extensive reading are beneficial for language learners (LL) in order to achieve reading goals and to realize the mastery of target language and vocabulary growth gradually by combined them simultaneously Paran (2003) .

Table.3. Types of reading and vocabulary coverage, Hedge (2000, 150)

Types of reading	Learning goals	% Vocabulary Coverage
Intensive reading	Developing language Developing strategies use Knowledge	Less than 95% coverage
Extensive reading For language Growth	Incidental vocabulary learning	95-98% coverage
Extensive reading for fluency development	Reading quickly	99-100% coverage

The table shows that there is an appropriate range and balance between types of reading the intensive and extensive one, and their impact on the development of vocabulary knowledge.

3. The Importance of Reading Skill

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Reading is essential for successful acquisition and learning of any target language even the native one, it is a valuable means for the extension knowledge, and it is considered as the food of the mind to develop the intellectual abilities and competencies. Furthermore, people can read at any time and in any place that is why the book is the best friend. Reading is a serious national business and all countries encourage their citizens to read more because it opens up a door toward the world, it can offers safety, independence, peace, civilization, and also makes people aware and discover more about cultures, social studies, sciences, language, art and many other fields. Reading improves learner's critical thinking, imagination, socialization, and increases self-esteem self-confidence and shapes his personality too. As the proverb by" Amine El-Zawi" says "People who read a people that does not starve or enslave"

4. Reading Stages (phases)

Language learner (LL) performs the reading tasks through three stages or phases **pre-reading, while reading, and post reading**. They organize the reading skill process in a beneficial managed way; often teachers inside the classroom support the learners to apply those stages and to be aware of them because they are very important in order to develop the reading habit.

4.1. Pre-reading Stage (PRS):

It is a kind of warming up, before starting reading activities in order to attract the interest of the learner toward the topic of reading material, and prepare him to be able to read and to refresh his prior knowledge, Willis (2008, 131) asserts that "pre-reading prepares students for the content focus, organization, and level of difficulty of challenging comprehension material", also PRS aids him to approach more to the central points of reading tasks.

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Moreover, within the PRS the teacher applies the brainstorming of ideas, giving background knowledge about cultural, linguistic and stylistic characteristics of the text, and asking them questions to make them guess and predict more information and events.

4.2. While Reading Stage (WRS)

Harmer (2007, 283) claimed that “It is not enough to tell student to ‘read a lot’; we need to offer them a program which includes appropriate materials, guidance, tasks and facilities”, in that sense the second stage of reading deals with the practice where the learner in reading and pays attention to the structure of the text and details about the ideas, the events, the grammar forms vocabularies, phrases and other language forms to understand more and learn more. The teacher plays the role of the guidance and instructor for learners the appropriate strategies such as guessing unfamiliar words meaning from the context, and word formation clues that they use and control the achievement and the development of learners’ abilities.

4.3. Post Reading Stage (PTRS)

This stage refers to the activities and tasks provided by the teacher as a form of comprehension questions to evaluate and check the level of understanding the content of the text, and linking what learners know with what they recently learnt into and outside the classroom as a form of follow up. In that way, the learner not just acquires language but also skills, competence and proficiency of being an effective reader.

5. Reading Strategies

There are different types of reading strategies that help the learners to read more quickly and effectively to adjust their reading behavior and deal with different situation, types, input, and reading purposes. These techniques are similar in process and different in purposes such as **skimming, scanning, and predicting strategies.**

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5.1. Skimming: is a technique of quick eye movement over the text in order to get the main ideas and general reviewing of the content without detailed attention, and offer an accurate picture of the text.

5.2. Scanning: It is a fruitful technique followed to find out specific details and particular information about the text to accomplish reading comprehension activities such as looking for specific noun, date, or fact.

5.3. Predicting: is an important strategy, as Willis (2008, 133) argues that “this strategy gives students opportunities to activate prior knowledge as they consider what they know about the subject (prior knowledge), what they would like to learn (goal), and later, what they comprehend and learned.”, because learners use information from the text and personal experience and making prediction what they are reading and what comes next since it links what they know before and the text at hand.

6. Models of Reading Skill

Davies (1995, 59) defines reading models as “is a theory of what is going on in the reader’s eyes and mind during reading and comprehending (or miscomprehending) a text”. Reading comprehension refers to the learner’s capacity to replicate the text. Therefore, the reading models are breaking up into three types: **the bottom-up, the top-down and the interactive model.**

6.1. The Bottom-up Model

It occurs when the learner’s aim of reading is to understand language by decoding-encoding individual meanings or grammatical characteristics of the most basic language letters units of the text and moving from this to understand the whole text according to

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Gough (1985) this model requires the recognition of features of every letters, words, sentences till the reaching the text.

6.2. The Top- down Model

The learner focuses on the texts meaning and the interaction between though and language and the use of information in other words. In addition, the reader makes a prediction about the writer messages when reading to get information, according to Nuttall (1982) the readers emphasize more on getting a guess about rough ideas of writer's arguments on the text.

6.3. The Interactive Model

According to Rumelhard (1977) It tries to nearby between the bottom-up and the top-down model by formulating hypothesis about the meaning, and decoding letters and words since reading is an interactive operation which involves the simultaneous occurrence of the two preceded models, and the reader understands the text in accordance to the processing of the graphics information and his memory.

7. Reading as a Critical Process

Hedge (2000, 197) states that "texts are constructed in certain ways by writers in order to shape the perception of readers towards acceptance of the underlying ideology of text". Reading effectively requires approaching texts with critical eyes and evaluating what you read not just what it says, but how and why it says it and knowing the objective of reading can help the reader to read and use what he reads later. Generally, critical reading refers to certain processes, models, questions, and theories used by the reader in order to improve the comprehension of the text or any reading material.

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Clarke and Silberstein (1979, 56 -65) suggested that kind of critical questions as the following “For that purpose and for what audience is this intended?” “What knowledge and attitudes does the author presume of the audience?” “Are you convinced by the evidence presented by the author to support the claims made?” “Does your own experience support the conclusions reached by the author?” and “Do you share the author’s point of view?” Moreover, the learner can examine the academic text through these questions and others and get productive ideas with train for independent reading.

To read critically is not a rapid process, because many learners need more time and re-reading many times to understand and comprehend, and to distinguish between parts of the passage, and usually they tend to separate the texts into segments, and trying to tackle the meaningful features of that parts then make a general connection between them to grasp the writer’ messages in a summarized information.

8. The Characteristic of a Good Reader

Reading is more than just sounding out letters and words, and the good learner is not the one who opens a book and moving his eyes up and down on the page, or the one who reads a big collection of books in short time.

It is argued that the good reader is the one who:

- Motivated and often more engaged to read and gain opportunities to benefit and discover others experience.
- Enthusiastic student and love reading to enrich his life.
- Makes prediction when read.
- Visualizes and imagine the events of the story he I reading.

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- Recognizes the framework or the structure of the text as well as the organization of the text.
- Establishes and identifies the purpose and objective of reading.
- Reads fluently, accurately, and effortlessly with understanding.
- Interacts with the text.
- Has a critical eye when reading by asking questions, expressing opinions.
- Reads different kinds of texts differently.
- Synthesizes, and summarizes the information from the text.
- Distinguishes between the major and minor characters, and between the significant and supporting details also describing turning moments, conflicts, resolutions, and create a general view about the text or the story.
- Able to decode words, symbols, grammar, pronunciation.
- Able to realize the setting, and the interpretation.
- A good user of the dictionary with a pen and notebook to memorize new words.
- Has a strong desire to read, not obliged, self-reliant, and self-confident, enjoy reading, aware of the importance of reading skill.

These characteristics and more are cited by Cook (1997) in the following table:

Table .4. The Difference between Good and Poor Readers (Cook 1990: 116).

	Good or mature reader	Poor or immature readers
Before Reading	<input type="checkbox"/> Activate prior knowledge. <input type="checkbox"/> Understand task and set purpose. <input type="checkbox"/> Choose appropriate strategies.	<input type="checkbox"/> Start reading without preparation <input type="checkbox"/> Reading without knowing why. <input type="checkbox"/> Read without considering how to approach the material.

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During Reading	<input type="checkbox"/> Focus attention <input type="checkbox"/> Anticipate and predict. <input type="checkbox"/> Use fix-up strategies when lack or understand new terms. <input type="checkbox"/> Use text structure to assist. <input type="checkbox"/> Organize and integrate new information. <input type="checkbox"/> Self-monitor comprehension by: <input type="checkbox"/> Knowing comprehension is occurring. <input type="checkbox"/> Knowing what is being understood.	<input type="checkbox"/> Are easily distracted. <input type="checkbox"/> Read to get done. <input type="checkbox"/> Do not know what to do when lack of understanding occurs. <input type="checkbox"/> Do not recognize important of Vocabulary. <input type="checkbox"/> Do not see any organization. <input type="checkbox"/> Add on, rather than integrate new information. <input type="checkbox"/> Do not realize, they do not understand.
After Reading	<input type="checkbox"/> Reflect on what was read. <input type="checkbox"/> Feel success is a result of effort. <input type="checkbox"/> Summarize major ideas. <input type="checkbox"/> Seek additional information outside sources.	<input type="checkbox"/> Stop reading and thinking. <input type="checkbox"/> Feel success is a result of luck.

9. The Role of Memory and Reading Skill

Memory is very important for reading skill and for the whole process of learning any language. It deals with storing the meaning of individual words and the information gathered from different contexts in materials in mind. Furthermore, reading comprehension can be improved when the memory can easily and accurately reflect to the stored information and retrieve them whenever the reader encounters unfamiliar vocabularies. So, he tends to relating

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elements into coherent meaningful ideas of the whole material without problems in order to accomplish the reading demanding tasks.

According to (Baddeley & Hitch,1974) there is another kind of memory which is the **working memory** that refers to the system of storing and processing information and the ability to hold several facts and thoughts in the area of memory in the brain while solving tasks' problems.

Moreover, (Baddeley & Hitch,1974) proposed two components of the system of working memory, **the phonological loop** and **the central executive**, the central executive is situated in the frontal portion of the brain and its mission is to process information, whereas the phonological loop is for the process of rapid verbal repetition of the to-be remembered information and help in maintain it in the brain.

Working memory helps the learner to strength his vocabulary knowledge whether for short-term memory: for holding information in one own minds for only few seconds during processing, or by the long-term memory: when the processed information is permanently stored in mind. It was argued that reading skill requires activation of different brain processes; the reader decodes words and letters and their orders, also segments words into individual sounds in a kind of input that is sent through nervous system to the brain's cells exactly to the working memory area for synthesize and blend them to forming recognition of word and the same thing with sentences, and the learner with limited working memory capacity may become lost while reading materials that introduce new concepts, and they may find problems in taking notes and sentences comprehension relies on adequate working memory else the presentation of a word order is important to correctly and appropriately understand the sentences; so in that case he prefers to use the dictionary for each word but it is inflexible way for reading fluency, according to (Rivers 1968/1981) the meaning of an individual words is

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usually difficult to determine when it is separated from the a context of other words and phrases.(cited in Codady & Huckin 1997, 11).

10. The Selection of Reading Materials

The nature of selecting materials is very crucial in successful reading comprehension process inside or outside the school. It involves some efforts from the learner by himself or his instructor. Moreover, the teacher can improve reading process by providing the student with appropriate careful selection of texts and materials.

The selection of reading materials depends on a set of factors that organize reading skill and the language learning such as:

- .Student's level**
- . Interest**
- . Student's needs**
- . Student's background knowledge**
- . The content**
- . Authenticity of material**
- . Topic difficulty or clarity... ect.**

According to (Duffy & McIntyre, 1982), the teacher presents the appropriate material of target language reading (English) at the classroom from ESL/EFL primary to high school, because he is aware that the best learning comes from the best selection and organization, also

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he encourages them to be active and chooses the text which makes reading enjoyable, pleased, motivated, clear, interesting, purposeful, informative, and fits the learners' needs. Learners develop their achievement through following teacher's directions and instructions for short and long terms of their learning because they will remember every passages they read in futures as Day(1994, 20) points out that "if the chosen of the passage is inappropriate for whatever reasons, the chances of success for that particular lesson are substantially lessened".

11. The Difficulties of Reading Skill

Reading skill is essential for success and it is obvious that every person's goal is to succeed, it is the case of people who want to learn second language. Some EFL learners particularly at the beginning of the process of acquiring new language encounter various kinds of difficulties when reading. Reading difficulties are the individual normal distribution of reading abilities that leads to failure in acquiring language; they are unexpected obstacles that make him struggle with the material, and those disabilities can relate to the term **dyslexia**, according to Snowling (2000) dyslexia refers to the learning disorders of person who mixes letters, words or sequences and their interference which can make negative results on understanding what they read , there are some popular difficulties such as in identifying initial, medial, and final sounds in some words, and sometimes lead to wrong rhyming, and blending, segmenting, and deleting sounds, also difficulties in discriminating similar sounding letters as /b/and /p/, /f/ and /v/, /d/ and /t/ and cannot distinguish between some words like "bit", "bat", and "bat", according to (Donald, Lazaruse & Lolwana 2002) some problems are linked to alphabetical written principles in terms of visual differences and symbolic written sequences between words with similar letters forms and shapes such as b/d or their specific

Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Reducing Reading Difficulties

order, and words that phonologically seem the same such as “boss” and “bus”, and difficulties in dealing with auditory differences in sounds and problems in finding the correct sounds to relate the letters together or sounds together into whole words for example (th+ I + nk +s) and irregular grammatical structures, also the disordered distinguish pronunciation of words finished for example with the sound “s” and pronounced “z”. Moreover, the difficulties of understanding the meaning are frequently occur and learners also find the comprehension of connected texts hard if word recognition is inaccurate and lengthy. According to (Lundberg & Høien, 2001), and (Mather & Goldstein, 2001).

Reading disability may be characterized by:

- Difficulties in single word reading;
- Initial difficulties decoding or sounding out words;
- Difficulties reading sight words;
- Insufficient phonological processing; that is, the understanding that sentences are comprised of words, words are made up of syllables, and syllables are made up of individual sounds or phonemes;
- Expressive or receptive language difficulties; and
- Difficulties with comprehension the idioms and proverbs.

Learners with reading problems think that reading means recognition words only, and when they read orally the process of reading is succeeded, but in reality the main goal is to understand and comprehend. When students face problems they feel frustrated, depressed, stressed, discouraged, uninspired, shamed and lack of self confident, then the result is reading failure. In addition, both teachers and parents too are responsible for the learners’ reading and show for them how to react immediately when they suspect a problem through: determining

Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Reducing Reading Difficulties

the nature of the problem and its source, and provide them with sufficient instruction to remediate the difficulty and increase skills, also, through discover the weaknesses and transfer them to strengths points. They put in mind that not all students will develop in the same way or at the same rate but differently and each one learns according to his abilities.

12. The Relation between Reading Skill Difficulties and Vocabulary

Learning Strategies

Reading skill and vocabulary knowledge are necessary for learning second language, as Rubin (1993, 1) stressed that “A good reading go hand in hand, unless language learners know the meaning of words, they will have difficulties in understanding what is read. And the more one reads, the more words will add to one’s vocabulary”, because reading is considered as a method to develop vocabulary and this later is the essential element to successful reading process. Reading development depends on the improvement of vocabulary size which facilitates the tasks of reading, also vocabulary would be enlarged through the frequent exposure to reading in the target language.

Since reading is complicated skill, learners come across with various kinds of unfamiliar words that make the comprehension of the passage inflexible and the learner does not recognize the items and unable to attach the meaning.

The proportion of unknown vocabularies within a text needs adequate vocabulary knowledge, but a learner with lack of that knowledge cannot continue reading, in that case the teacher or any instructor (or even by himself if he read outside of the school context) is supposed to present different techniques and strategies in order to facilitate reading and at the same time gain new vocabularies items, therefore, those ways and strategies that make

Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Reducing Reading Difficulties

reading as the vehicle of continuing second language vocabulary acquisition and enhancing reading speed proposed by Hedge (2000) as the following:

- Using gestures, body language, face expressions as miming to create a visual image of the word.
- asking for explanation from the teacher or classmates which makes the learners guess the unknown word from the context and determining main ideas.
- Using synonyms or antonyms of that word and make the learner gain more than one vocabulary at one time.
- Pointing to the object which reflects to the word.
- Translating, predicting or interference techniques.
- Using the visual aids such as pictures, blackboard, and drawings.
- Checking the dictionary.
- Notebook taking to remember the meaning of new word.
- Making a word-network of vocabulary associated with a particular item.
- Word cards, vocabulary games...ect.

Furthermore, the early reading abilities improved through the encouragement of adults before schooling, and through taking different activities to help them in building their reading habit, their reading fluency and promote word knowledge gradually, because even native language readers find unknown words while reading and they need more skills practice to become efficient readers. Both reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge complete each other.

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Conclusion

All in all, this chapter focuses on reading skill importance to develop the performance of learning language, and its stages, strategies, models, that people follow in order to reach successful comprehension, and it shows the common difficulties that face them. It also deals with its relation with working memory and vocabulary learning strategies that are useful to solve those problems and create good readers. Moreover, the next chapter is going to be practical field about a case study that deals with diminishing reading difficulties through the application of different vocabulary learning strategies in learning foreign language process.

Chapter Three

FIELD WORK

Introduction

The present chapter is devoted to the practical part of the research work and the field work in which it presents the study that aims to reduce reading difficulties through the employment of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS), and attempts to present the results of data analysis related to the main study. The data gathering tool used for this study was questionnaires in order to verify our hypothesis, one questionnaire for students and the other for teachers to collect data about their opinions about the application of different VLS, and their influence on developing reading through minimize the disabilities that they face . Also it provides interpretation, data analysis and discussion of the research findings. The results of the data analysis are as follows:

1. Interpretation and Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

1.1. Sampling

The sample selected for the present study is first year EFL students at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra, at the department of English, during the academic year 2016/2017. Since we could not deal with the whole population of first year students which about eight hundred eighty five students, fifteen groups and three sessions, the sample of eighty students were selected randomly, eleven are males while sixty nine are females, they were more helpful and motivated to answer without any hesitation.

1.2. Description of Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire is designed to obtain data concerning students' point of views about learning vocabulary and their attitudes towards enhancing reading skill using vocabulary learning strategies.. The questionnaire consists of 13 questions divided into two sections. The

Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Reducing Reading Difficulties

first section is about the background information (age and gender) and a question about the reason behind their choice to study English ; while the second section is about their perceptions concerning the main strategies used to learn vocabulary and develop the reading comprehension skill. It also deals questions such as if they aware that learning vocabulary is interesting, and how they consider their levels in English, also what are the activities that they rely on to expand their vocabulary ,knowledge and which aspect of learning vocabulary that they find it difficult. Moreover, what is their favorite skill, what material do they prefer to read, how much do you face reading difficulties, what do students do when they face unknown words, and what do they do to memorize new words (this means which strategy do they use), a question about their practice of reading skill is included in the questionnaire and what kind of topics do they prefer to read, finally, they were asked to feel free to add any suggestions. The questions are divided into some open- ended questions where learners were required to give their own views on vocabulary learning strategies, and close- ended questions, and multiple choice questions in which respondents are asked to select the frequency use with (Always, Often, sometimes, rarely, never).

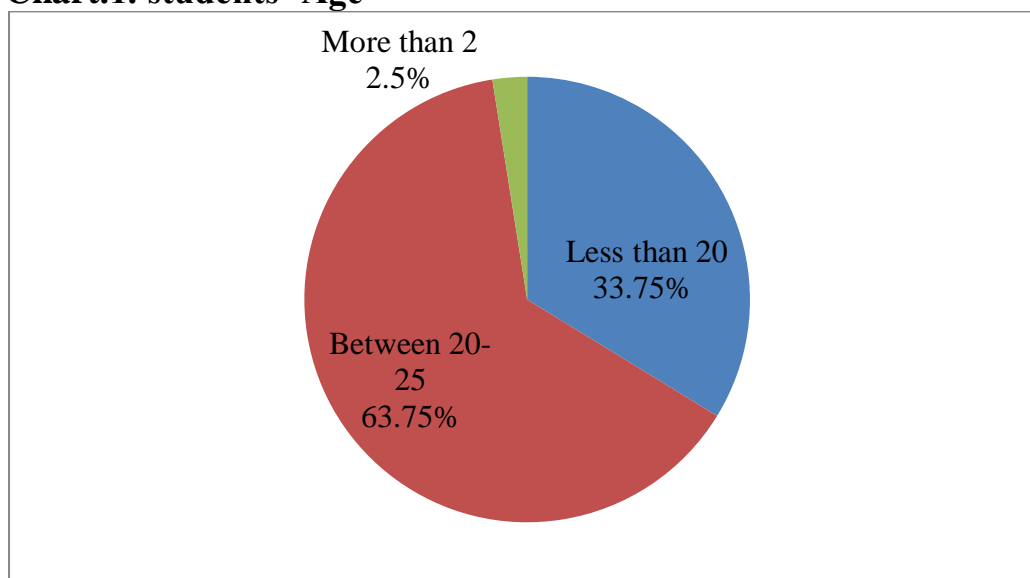
1.3. Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

Section One: Background Information

Question one: A) Student's Age:

Table.5. Students' Age

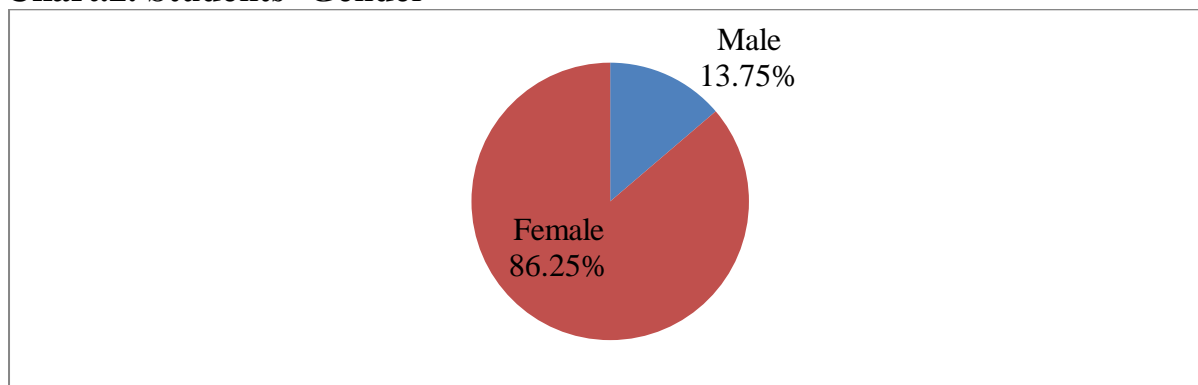
Age	Less than 20	Between 20-25	More than 25	Total
Participants	27	51	02	80
Percentage	33.75%	63.75%	2.5%	100%

Chart.1. students' Age

Since the sample of the main study was first year LMD students, the majority of students were between the ages (20-25 years); they are 51 students representing 63.75%, and the students of less than 20 years (18-19) are 27 students; they represent 33.75% and the minority is two students of more than 20 years who represent 2.5%.

B): Students' Gender**Table.6. Students' Gender**

Gender	Participant	Percentage
Male	11	13.75%
Female	69	86.25%
Total	80	100%

Chart.2. Students' Gender

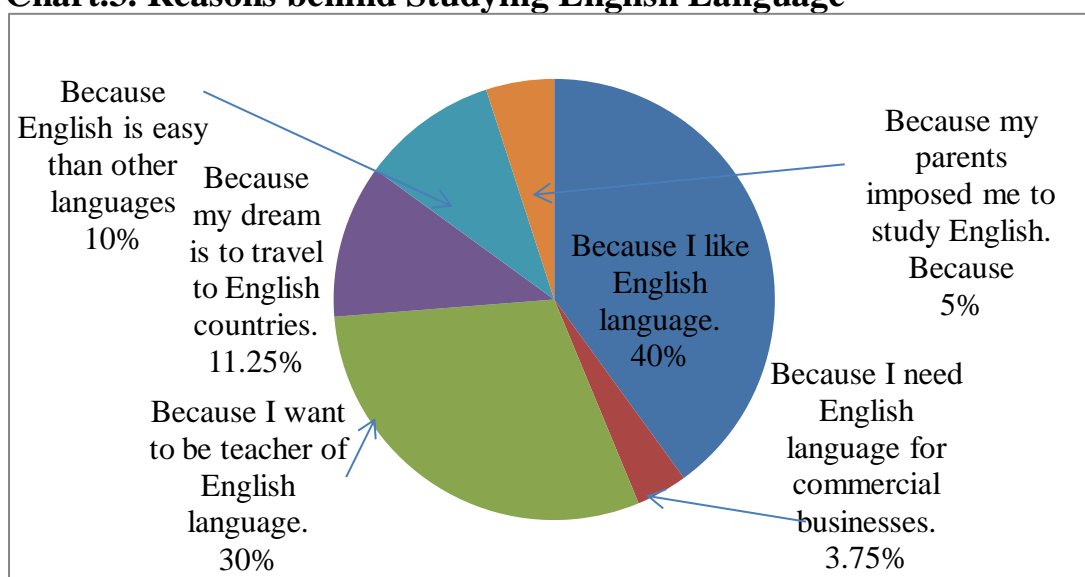
The whole sample of the present study contains 80 LMD students selected randomly from first year students. They are divided into males and females, thus constituting a percentage of 86.25% females (69 students), and 13.75% is the percentage of male respondents (11 students) as shown above. This variety can offer different views and attitudes toward the strategies used to enhance the reading achievements and generally females tend to study language branches more than males.

Question two: Why do you choose to study English?

The common answers are categorized as the following:

Table.7. Reason behind studying English

The reason	The number	percentage
Because I like English language.	32	40%
Because I need English language for commercial businesses.	03	3.75%
Because I want to be teacher of English language.	24	30%
Because my dream is to travel to English countries.	09	11.25%
Because English is easy than other languages.	08	10%
Because my parents imposed me to study English.	04	5%
Total	80	100%

Chart.3. Reasons behind Studying English Language

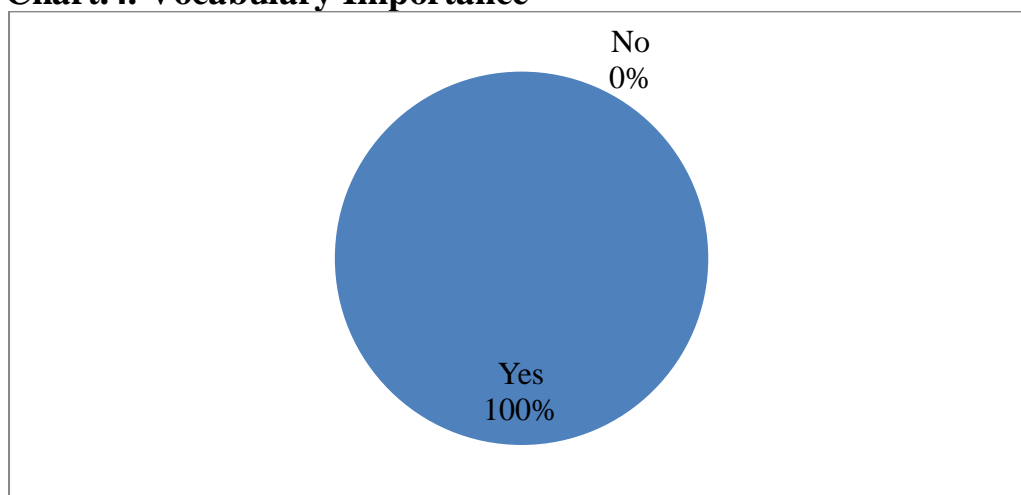
From the figure 3. above, it seems that most students (40%) chose to study English because it was their personal desire and they liked English, also (30%) from the students study English because their goal is to be teachers in the future, (11.25%) students prefer to learn English because their dream is to travel to English speaking countries and they need English to be able to communicate with native speaker there. (10%) from students find that English is easy to learn; that is why they decide to learn it rather than other foreign languages. (3.75%) from students tend to learn English because they need it for their commercial business activities with foreign people, and finally, (5%) from students responded that English is not their choice but their parents urged them to do so or they assert that their scores of the baccalaureate exam were not enough to select other branches.

Section two: Beliefs about reading skill and vocabulary learning strategies

Question 1): Do you find learning vocabulary interesting?

Table.8. Vocabulary importance

	students	percentage
Yes	80	100%
No	00	00%
Total	80	100%

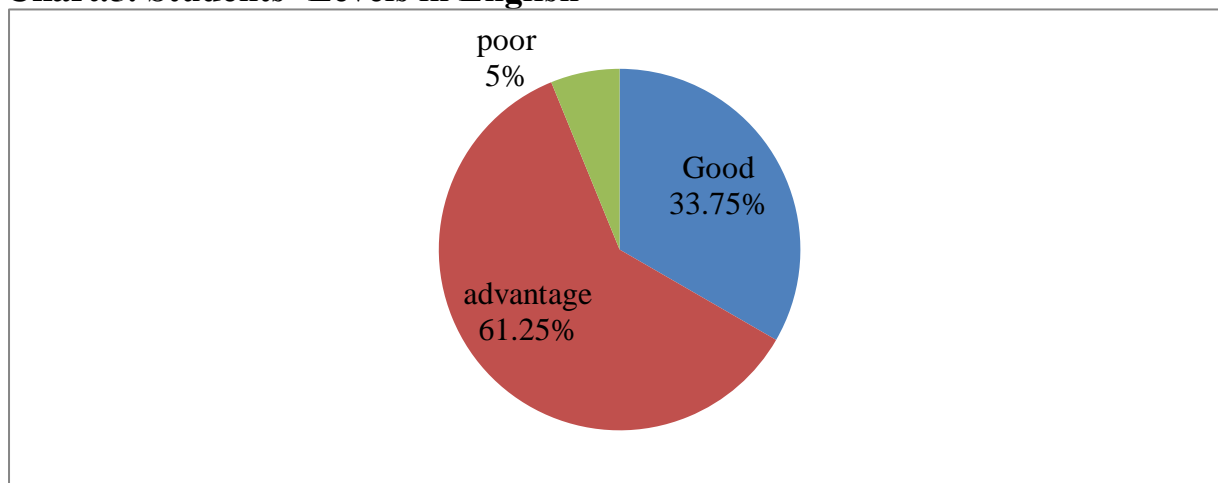
Chart.4. Vocabulary Importance

The answer on that question determined that all the participants in the questionnaire are aware that learning vocabulary is very important to master foreign language (English) and 80 students (100%) agreed on this point and their justifications were nearly the same that vocabulary is an essential element of English language. They said that they need to learn the wide amount of vocabularies to facilitate communication and understanding language skills and expressing ideas and thoughts, and each time they learn new items they become motivated to gain more and more knowledge.

Question2): Do you consider your Level in English as: Good/Average /Poor.

Table.9. Students' levels in English

Level	Number	Percentage
Good	27	33.75%
Average	49	61%
Poor	04	5%

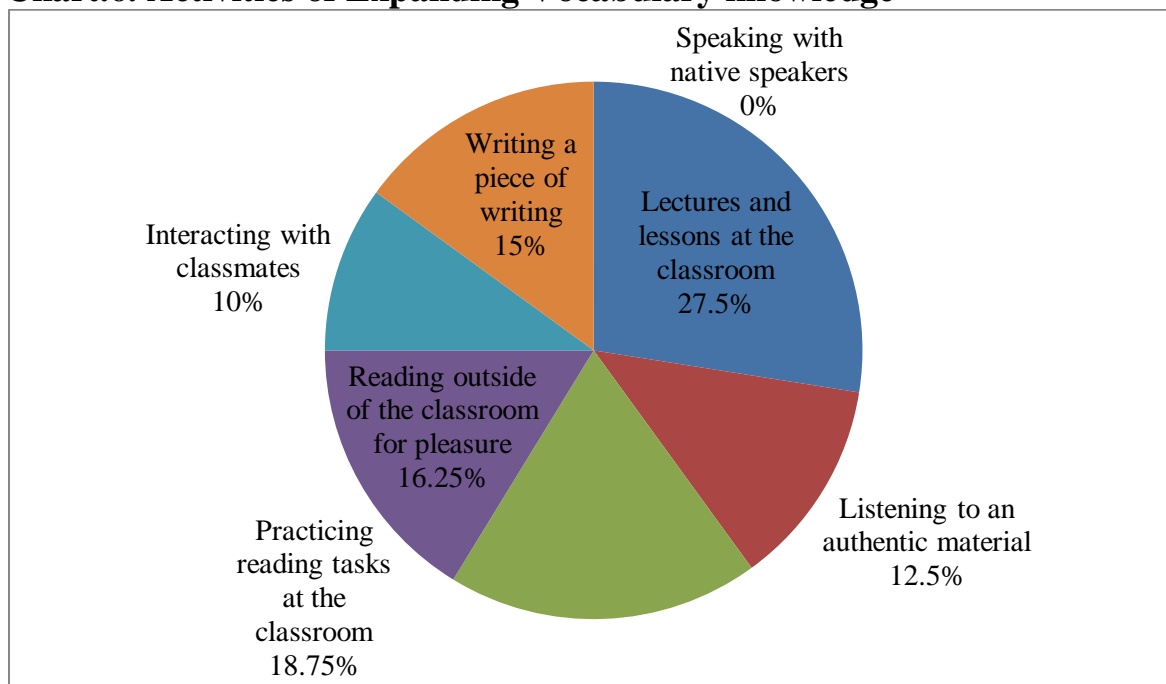
Chart.5. Students' Levels in English

Most of the students (61.25%) considered their levels as average and they did not master English language yet because they are beginners since they are first year students but they have a slight background knowledge from high school and from watching movies and songs. and 27 students (33.75%) considered their level good because they have strong desire to learn English and they read a lot. Finally, the minority of students (5%) see themselves as poor at English because they are not interested and they are obliged to study English.

Question 5): How do you expand your vocabulary knowledge?

Table.10. Activities of developing vocabulary knowledge

Activities	Number	percentage
Lectures and lessons at the classroom	22	27.5%
Listening to an authentic material	10	12.5%
Practicing reading tasks at the classroom	15	18.75%
Reading outside of the classroom for pleasure	13	16.25%
Interacting with classmates	08	10%
Writing a piece of writing	12	15%
Speaking with native speakers	00	00%
Total	80	100%

Chart.6. Activities of Expanding Vocabulary knowledge

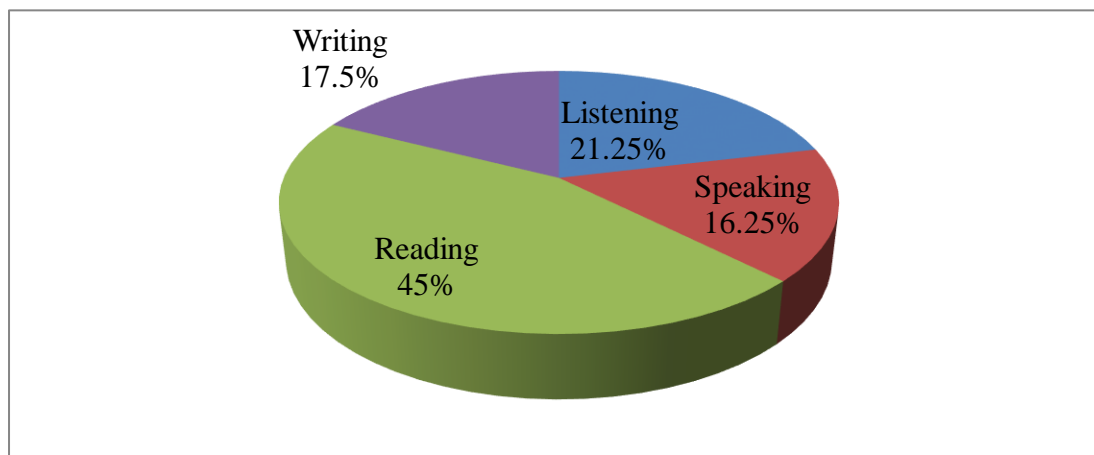
According to the table and figure above, EFL students follow many activities in order to increase their vocabulary knowledge, 22 students(27.5%) answered that lectures and lessons at the classroom helped them to improve their vocabulary. 15 students(18.75%) believed that the best way to expand their knowledge is practicing reading in the classroom. It is obvious that students are aware that the classroom context motivates them and supports them more than home. 13 students (16.25%) found that reading outside (extensive reading) and for pleasure is more beneficial to develop vocabulary repertoire, and 12 students (15%) answered that when they practice writing they learn also vocabulary. 10 students (12.5%) responded that when they listen to authentic material (English songs, films, records...) they also acquire vocabulary, 08 students (10%) found that when they interact and communicate with classmates they exchange information and vocabularies, finally no one (00%) chose speaking with native speakers because they are still beginners and they did not have an experience of contacting with native speakers.

Question 6): What is your favorite skill?

Listening Speaking Reading writing

Table.11.Students' Favorite Skill

Skill	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Total
Number	17	13	36	14	80
Percentage	21.25%	16.25%	45%	17.5%	100%

Chart.7.Students' Favorite Skill

The result above of the favorite skill shows that the majority of first year EFL students (45%) 36 students prefer reading skill. (21.25%) or 17 students like listening skill, and (17.5%) 14 students selected writing skill. Finally, (16.25%) or 13 students chose the speaking skill. Since they are beginners they need to receive knowledge and master English language through receptive skills (Reading and listening) then they tend to focus on the productive skills (writing and speaking) through using the information they learnt through receptive skills.

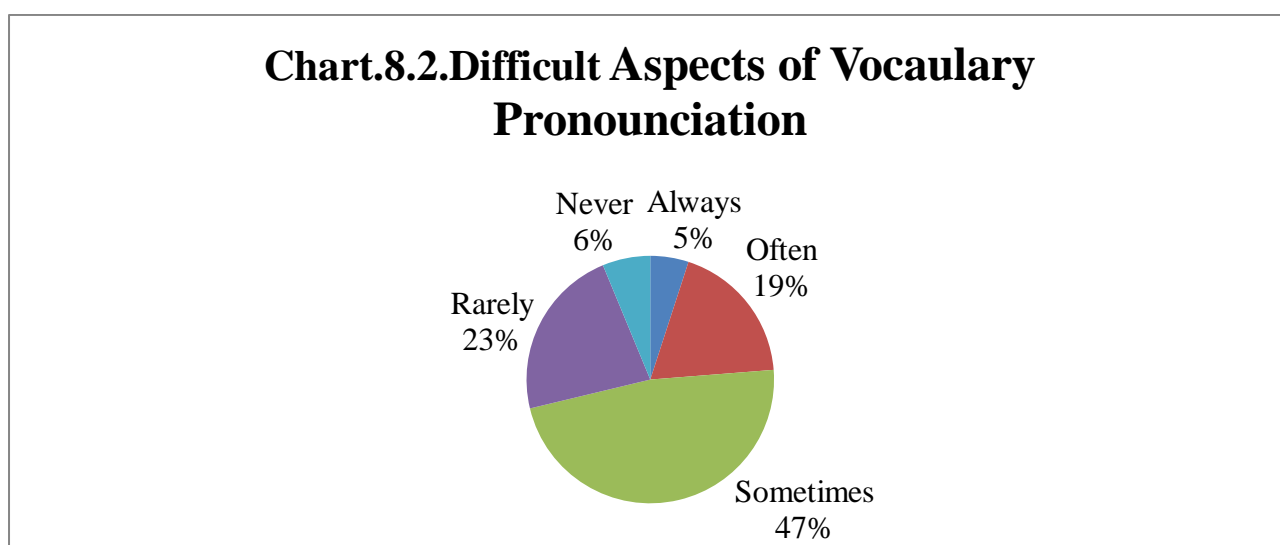
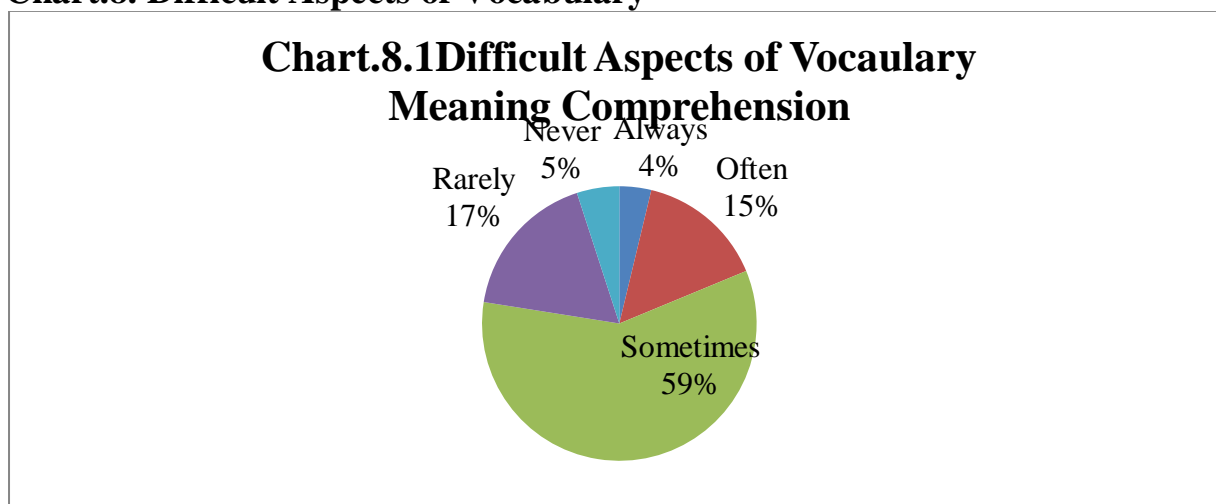
Question7): What is the difficult aspect of vocabulary for you?**Table.12. Difficult aspects of Vocabulary**

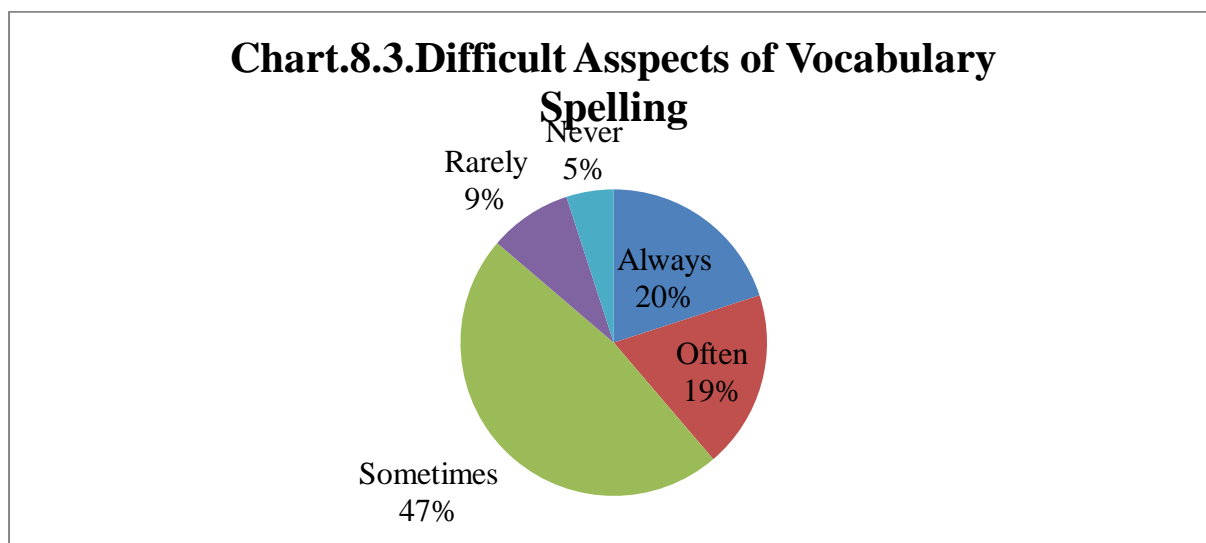
Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Reducing Reading Difficulties

	frequency	Always	often	sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
Meaning comprehension	Number	03	12	47	14	04	80
	Percentage	3.75%	15%	58.75%	17.5%	5%	100%
Pronunciation	Number	04	15	38	18	05	80
	Percentage	5%	18.75%	47.5%	22.5%	6.25%	100%
Spelling	Number	16	15	38	07	04	80
	percentage	20%	18.75%	47.5%	8.75%	5%	100%

This table is transmitted into three charts as following:

Chart.8. Difficult Aspects of Vocabulary





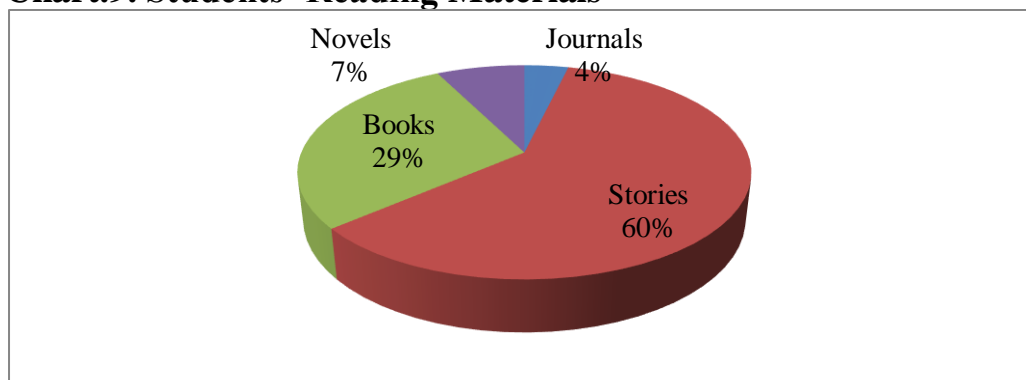
In order to know the most difficulties that EFL students encounter when they read, 80 students were asked this question and as the table above shows, three aspects of difficulties: meaning of word, pronunciation and spelling. First, meaning comprehension: 47 students (58%) responded that sometimes they face difficulty of understanding words, 14 students (17.5%) answered with rarely and 12 students (15%) answered by often, what can be deducted here is that meaning of words is important and cannot be ignored because there are English words that have multiple meaning. EFL students need to be aware about them as much as possible to facilitate language learning activities. Second, pronunciation: 38 students answer with sometimes, 18 rarely, 15 often, 05 never, and 04 respond with always. most English words write in a way and pronounced in another way which makes it confusing for students to learn them correctly. Finally, spelling: 38 students answer with sometimes, 16 always, 15 often, 04 never, and 07 rarely language, learners are not aware of the relationship of sound and spelling because many English words sound similar but they have different spellings.

**Question 8): What kind of material do you prefer to read? Journals
Stories/Books/Novels**

Table.13. Students' Reading Materials

Material	Journals	Stories	Books	Novels	Total
Number	03	48	23	06	80
Percentage	3.75%	60%	28.75%	7.5%	100%

Chart.9. Students' Reading Materials

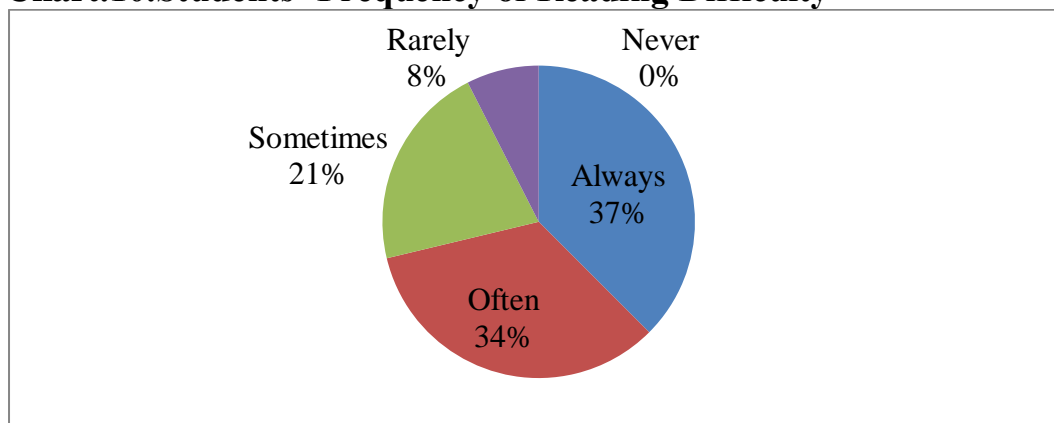


The majority of first year EFL students (60%) favored to read stories because they are beginners and they start developing their language through simple materials as short stories that contain easy language to improve their reading habit. (28.75%) students like to read books according to their interest, (7.5%) students prefer to read novels to benefit more and progress their vocabulary achievement. Finally only (3.75%) tend to read English journals because they are concerned with news of foreign countries and want to be aware about them at the same time they learn English language.

Question 9): How often do you face difficulties in reading?

Table.14. Students' Frequency of Reading Difficulty

frequency	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
Number	30	27	17	06	00	80
Percentage	37.5%	33.75%	21.25%	7.5%	00%	100%

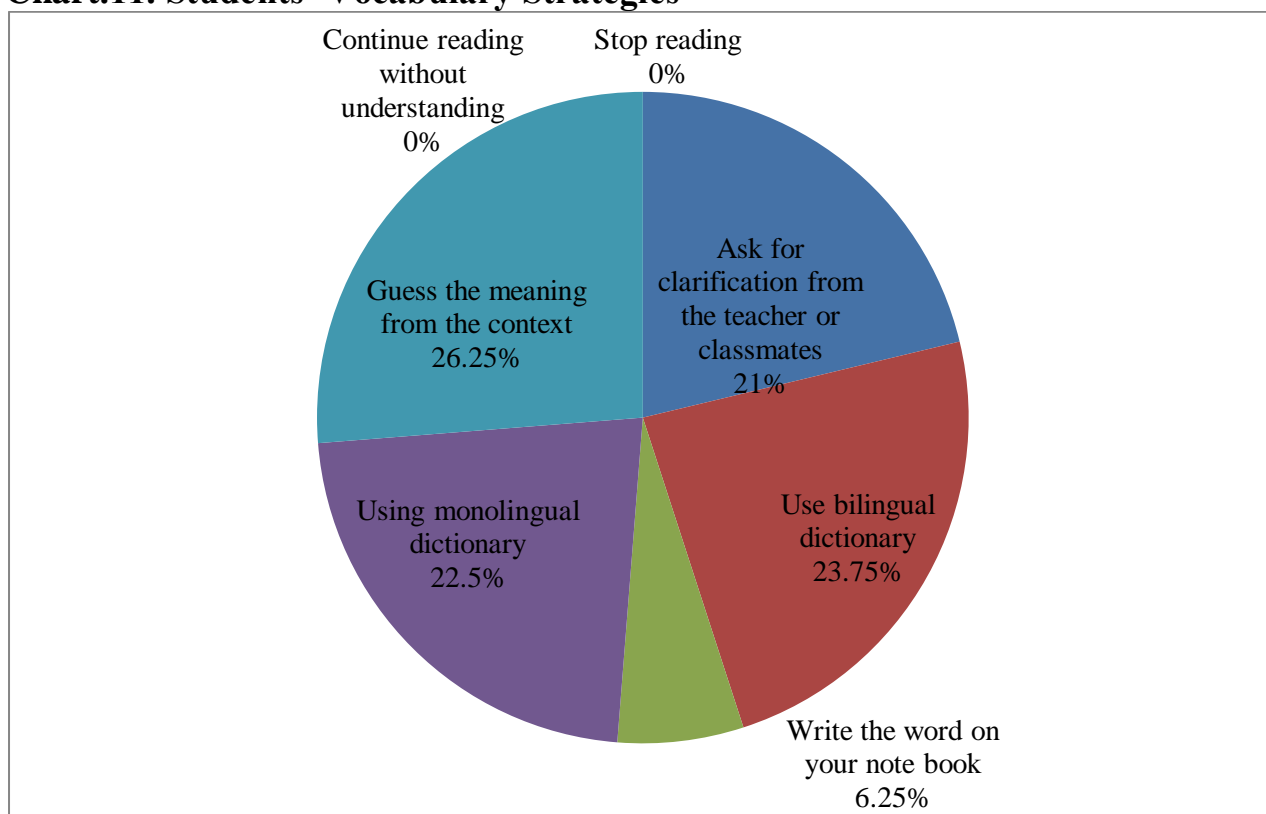
Chart.10.Students' Frequency of Reading Difficulty

Most of first year EFL students (33.75%) argued that they always encountered difficulties with reading tasks, (27%) or 27 students answered that they often cross disabilities with reading comprehension, 17 students (21.25%) responded that they sometimes face complexities of reading and 06 students (7.5%) rarely face reading difficulties, and no one is free from reading difficulties.

Question 10): What do you almost do when you meet new words while reading?

Table.15. Students' Vocabulary Strategies

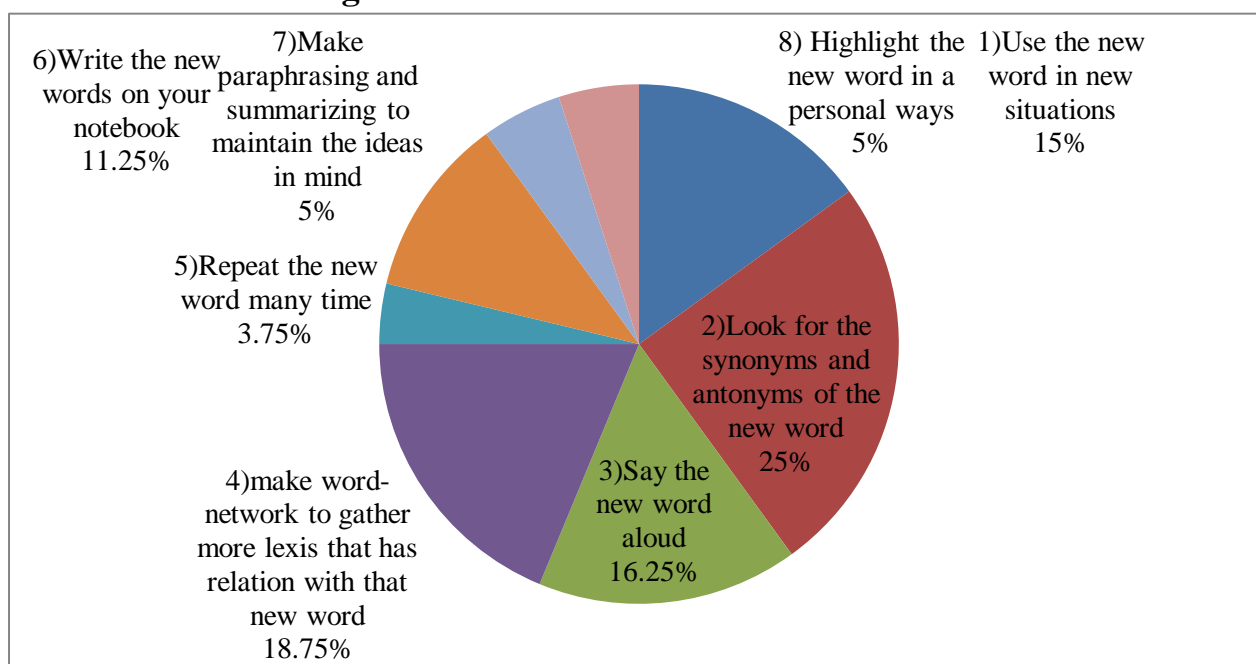
The action(strategy)	number	percentage
Ask for clarification from the teacher or classmates	17	21.25%
Use bilingual dictionary	19	23.75%
Write the word on your note book	05	6.25%
Using monolingual dictionary	18	22.5%
Guess the meaning from the context	21	26.25%
Continue reading without understanding	00	00%
Stop reading	00	00%
Total	80	100%

Chart.11. Students' Vocabulary Strategies

According to the Figure.11. above, most of first year EFL students (26.25%) prefer to guess the meaning of a new word from the context when they meet unknown words during reading tasks, and (23.75%) tend to use the bilingual dictionary to find the meaning easily and its interference in Arabic, also (22.5%) they prefer to use the monolingual dictionary to understand the meaning in its reading context in target language. (21%) of the students ask their teacher and their classmates to give them clarification and explanation about the unfamiliar words. Besides (6.25%) who write the new word on their notebook to check it later, no one of the students continue reading without understanding and no one stopped reading because of the difficult words; that improved their reading skill.

Question10): What do you almost do to memorize new words?**Table.16. Memorizing New Word**

Action (strategy)	Number	percentage
Use the new word in new situations	12	15%
Look for the synonyms and antonyms of the new word	20	25%
Say the new word aloud	13	16.25%
make word-network to gather more lexis that has relation with that new word	15	18.75%
5)Repeat the new word many time	03	3.75%
6)Write the new words on your notebook	09	11.25%
7)Make paraphrasing and summarizing to maintain the ideas in mind	04	05%
8) Highlight the new word in a personal way for instance: verbs with green, nouns with blue color...ect.	04	05%
Total	80	100%

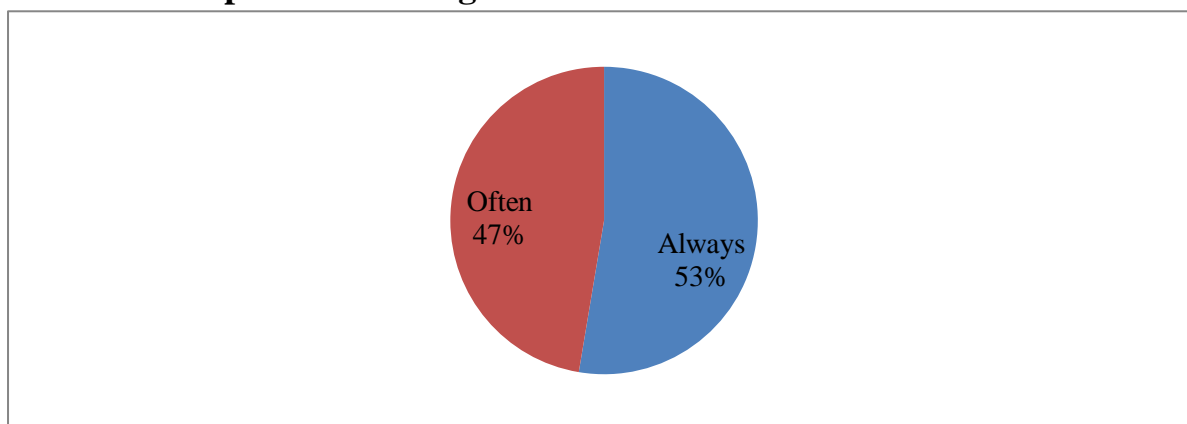
Chart.12. Memorizing New Word

As the results above show that (25%) of students usually look for synonyms and antonyms of the new words to memorize them and remember them easily, and (18.75%) make word network to gather more vocabularies related to that word to get more knowledge and stored in mind. Also (16.25 %) of students usually say the word aloud to avoid forgetting it. (15%) prefer to use the word in new situations or put it in phrases or statements to keep it in brain, (11.25%) like to write the word on their personal notebook, (5%) prefer to use paraphrasing or summarizing to maintain the idea which contains the unknown word or they highlight it in a specific ways. (3.75%) tend to repeat the word many times to keep it in their minds

Question12): why do you read generally? For pleasure / for the exam

Table.17. Purpose of Reading

	For pleasure	For exam	Total
Number	36	44	80
Percentage	45%	55%	100%

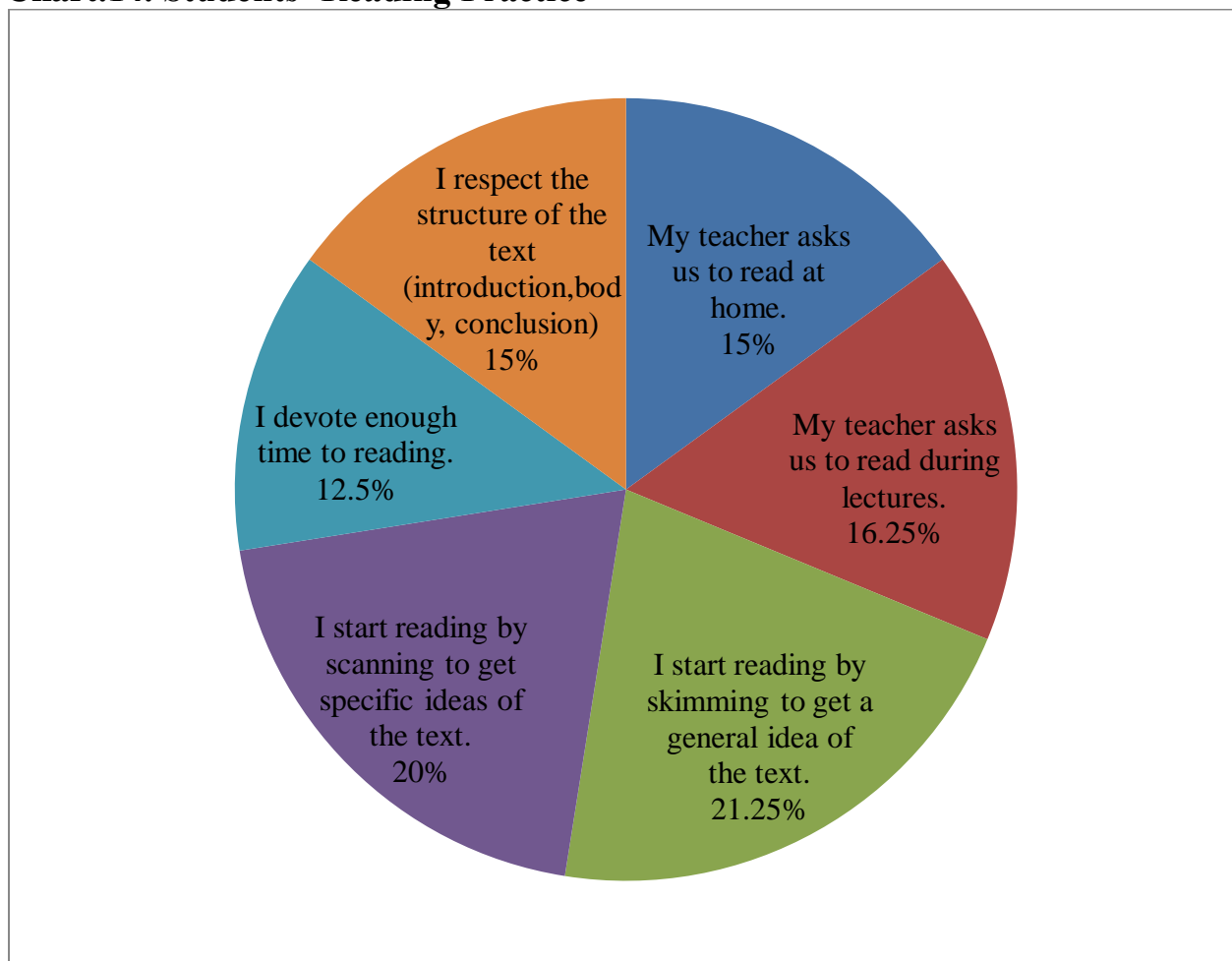
Chart.13. Purpose of Reading

The majority of students (55%) prefer to read for the exams and they tend to read only the materials that they are going to be examined and evaluated in because their aim is to get good marks and grades and to pass through different levels in their schooling, Generally, after the period of tests and examinations they forget what they read because they were reading just to prepare answers for the exam questions. However, those who read for pleasure represent (45%); they find reading interesting and enjoyable and their curiosity toward reading allows them to develop reading habit through providing enough time to stop thinking about something and focus on reading at their own pace to extend knowledge and always look for new information to store in their minds forever.

Question 13): choose the suitable statement according to your reading practice:

Table.18. Students' Reading Practice

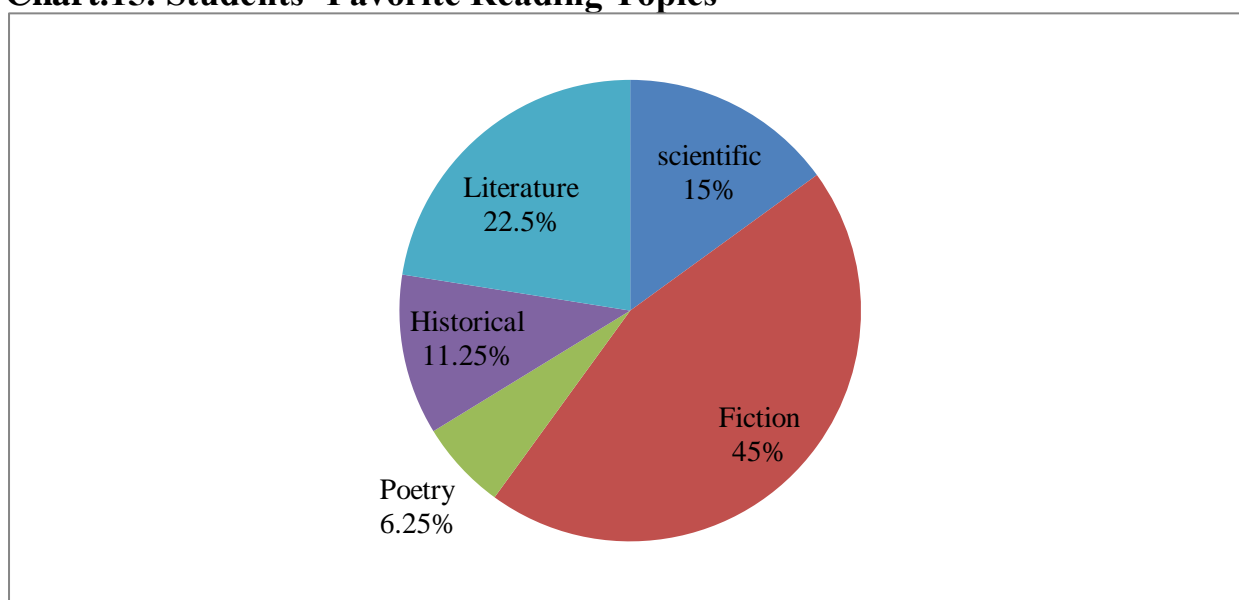
Statements	Number	Percentage
My teacher asks us to read at home.	12	15%
My teacher asks us to read during lectures.	13	16.25%
I start reading by skimming to get a general idea of the text.	17	21.25%
I start reading by scanning to get specific ideas of the text.	16	20%
I devote enough time to reading.	10	12.5%
I respect the structure of the text (introduction, body, conclusion)	12	15%

Chart.14. Students' Reading Practice

(21.25%) of students of the sample argued that they started reading by skimming the text to get a general idea of the content, whereas (20%) preferred starting with scanning the text by looking to specific details to understand and comprehend more. (16.25%) of the students argued that their teachers usually ask them to read during the lectures and encourage them with activities, whereas (15%) responded that their teachers ask them to read at home in order to develop their reading habit while reading. (15%) of the students asserted that they respect the structure of the text (introduction, body, and conclusion), and (12.5%) devoted enough time to read without getting bored or giving up.

Question 13): what kind of topics do you like to read?**Table.19. Students' Favorite Reading Topics**

topics	Scientific	Fiction	Poetry	Historial	Literature	Total
Number	12	36	05	09	18	80
Percentage	15%	45%	6.25%	11.25%	22.5%	100%

Chart.15. Students' Favorite Reading Topics

From the table above, the majority of students (36%) are interested and enjoying reading fiction material because it motivates their imagination about stories and events of drama that contain parts of suspense. Whereas, (22.5%) students prefer to read books of literature because they like the classic and old works. (15%) enjoy reading scientific materials because they discover more about the nature and new sciences. (22.25%) like to read historical books to flourish their knowledge about the previous people. Finally, (6.25%) are interested in about poetry and they even write poems.

Discussion

According to the obtained results from the analysis of students' questionnaire, we notice that the majority of the participants are females because they were more motivated to answer and more helpful than males and since they were beginners and first year EFL students, the majority of them are between the age of 18-25 years old, and their levels are still average. Concerning their reasons of studying English language, the majority of them claimed that it was their personal choice in order to be teachers, travelling abroad, or for commercial businesses.

In addition, all of EFL students of the sample are aware that learning vocabulary is important and interesting, because it is the basic of learning any foreign language and master its skills and the principles of communication. Concerning developing vocabulary knowledge most students argued that they are benefiting from lectures and courses in the classroom under the teacher' instructions, and also through practicing reading skill whether inside or outside the classroom, and they found that the integration of authentic materials is very useful and helpful because they provide opportunities to acquire language from its real contexts. Reading skill is considered as the most preferable skill for EFL students according to the results of the analysis, besides to the listening skill, and we can dedicate here that they tend to read and listen to gain more knowledge and information through those two receptive skills, then they tend to focus on the productive skills by writing and speaking and use what they already learnt (as a background) from reading and listening to produce and create.

Despite of the importance of reading skill, the majority of students read only for the sake of passing the exam and read the material that they are going to be evaluated in, and to

Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Reducing Reading Difficulties

prepare answers for the exam questions rather than reading for pleasure (extensive reading), this latter affects their intelligence, increases their motivation and autonomy, develops vocabulary growth, and progresses skill competency

As we notice from the students' responses and results in the second section; Whatever the objective behind reading is, the majority of first year EFL students always suffer from reading disorders, and always come across with some difficulties that make disabilities of reading comprehension. The most popular problems of reading are related to the comprehension of ambiguity words and the meaning of unknown terms, spelling, and pronunciation that refer to the lack of vocabulary and the shortage of linguistic baggage.

Moreover, EFL students tend to read different materials to develop their language and most of first year students prefer to read stories because they find them easy to understand and a helpful way to gain the basics of English language in simple styles, and then step by step they moved to read books and other materials according to their interests without forgetting the psychological state such as fear, lack of self confidence, shyness.....ect.

According to students' responses analysis, the use of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) affects EFL students' level positively as well as reading skill achievement . Firstly, EFL students often use the discovery strategies to access to the meaning of new words such as guessing from the context in which it occurs, by using hints and keywords. Besides, they use the dictionaries whether the bilingual dictionary in order to check the interference and translation meaning of the word from the foreign language(English) to the mother tongue (Arabic), or the monolingual dictionary in which they look for further information about the word in the target language (TL) as synonyms, antonyms. Secondly, they employ the social strategies through asking for more clarification and explanation about the new word from the

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teacher or their classmates or others. In terms of memorizing strategies, the majority of EFL students' goal is to memorize the maximum amount of vocabularies through looking for more synonyms and antonyms of the new word and make network word by making a chain of related words or list word to enrich their vocabulary knowledge; They also use the word in a new situation (phrase and expressions) to avoid forgetting it. There are other strategies such as saying the word aloud or repeating it many times, and also making notebook in which they write each word with its meaning and its use to check it later on. Students tend to highlight items in personal different ways such as using symbols, colors or even numbers to distinguish and categorize verbs, nouns, adjectives...

Moreover, students can also progress their lexical knowledge through the exposure to the authentic material and learn from the real contexts of language such as listening to English songs and watching movies, speaking with native friends and watching the English mass media, chatting with friends. All in all, reading is an important skill that aids EFL first year students to master English language, and at the same time vocabulary knowledge is essential to access to reading comprehension success.

1. Interpretation and Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire

1.1. Sampling and Population

The second questionnaire is directed to teachers of English at the University of Biskra at the department of English. Out of the whole population of sixty three teachers a sample of ten teachers were selected randomly seven of them are females and four are males.

1.2. Description of Teachers' Questionnaire

The questionnaire contains 13 questions and divided into two sections the first section is about background information (gender, and teaching experience), and the second about teaching vocabulary and reading skill and questions similar to: their opinions on the importance of teaching and learning vocabulary, and which type of material they use to teach vocabulary, and what kind of methods are useful for students to learn vocabulary, Which skill do you consider as the most appropriate to Memorizing big amount of vocabulary knowledge, besides, a question concerning reading sessions and if they devote time for it, and how do you encourage students to read and ask them to prepare reading at home. The questionnaire includes also questions on the difficulties that face students in reading and how do they select a text for reading activities, also how do they help them to understand unfamiliar words; concerning the use of dictionary what kind of dictionary they recommend students to use, Finally, they were free to add any suggestions. The used questions are both close-ended and open-ended questions; some questions require justifications in order to gather information concerning the importance of vocabulary learning strategies to increase EFL students' reading comprehension.

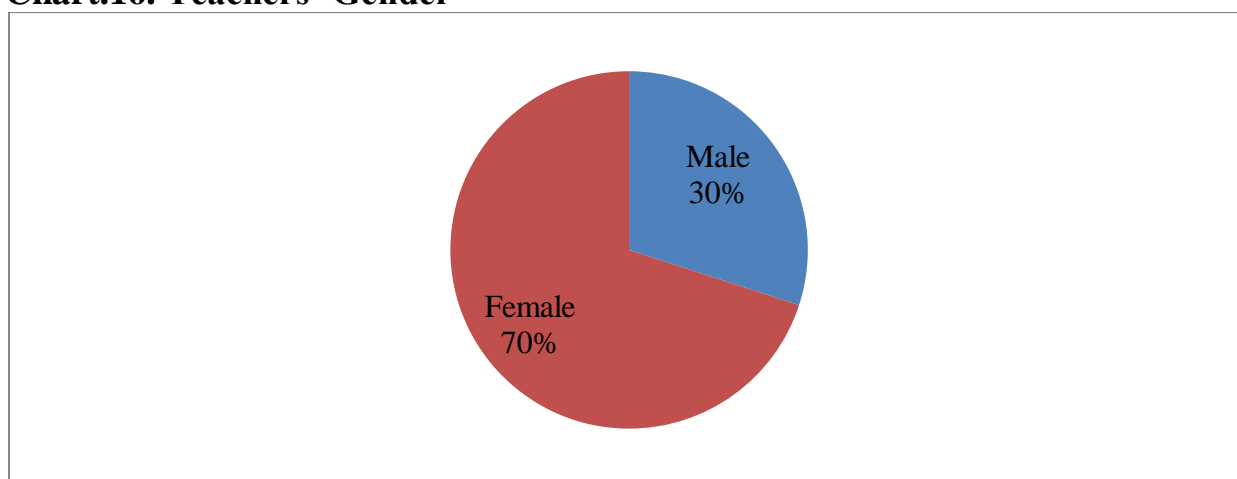
1.3. Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire

Section One: Background information

Table.20. Teachers' Gender

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	03	30%
Female	07	70%
Total	10	100%

Chart.16. Teachers' Gender



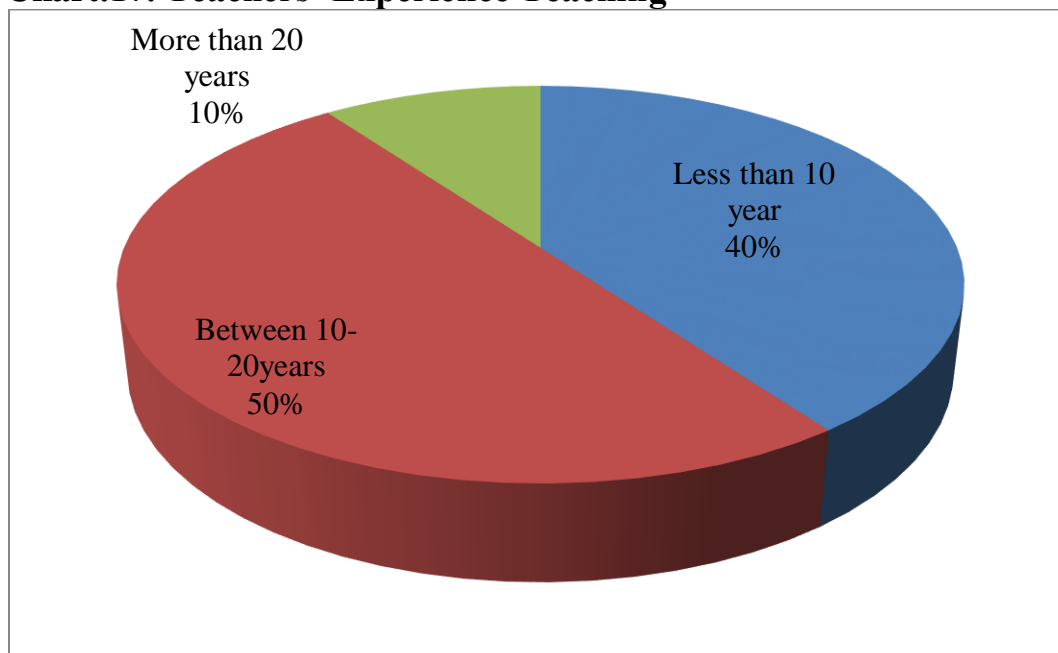
This sample consists of 03 males teachers (30%) and 07 female teachers (70%). In fact it is an unbalanced sample because in general there are more females teaching English than males.

We noticed that females tend to give answers to such research tool more than males.

Question 2): How long have you been teaching English at the university?

Table.21. Teachers' Experience Teaching

Year	Less than 10 years	Between 10-20years	More than 20 years	Total
Number	04	05	01	10
percentage	40%	50%	10%	100%

Chart.17. Teachers' Experience Teaching

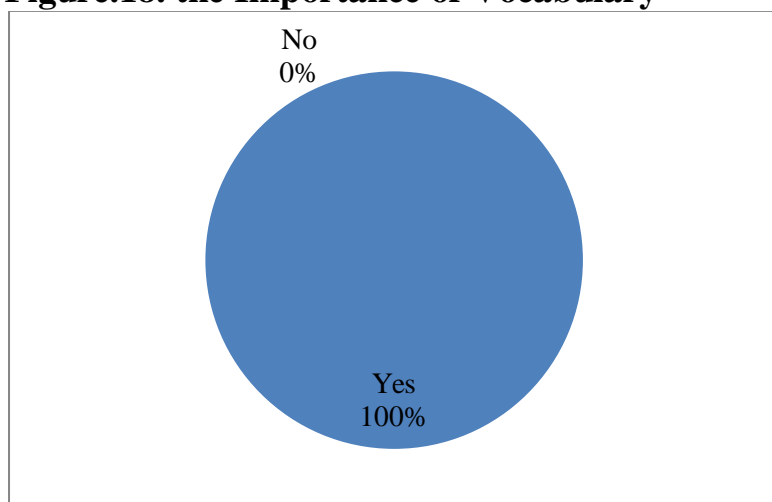
The aim of this question is to collect information about teaching reading skill and vocabulary from different teachers' experiences. Teachers with less than 10 year experience are 04 teachers (40%) and 05 teachers (50%) have an experience of teaching English at the University between 10- 20 years , and only one teacher (10%) of the sample has been teaching English at the University for more than 20 years.

Section two: Teaching Vocabulary and Reading Skill Question 3):

Do you consider teaching and learning Vocabulary is important for foreign language learners? Yes (+ justification) No (+ justification)

Table.22. the Importance of Vocabulary

	number	percentage
Yes	10	100%
No	00	00%
total	10	100%

Figure.18. the Importance of Vocabulary

According to the answers of teachers, all of them 10 teachers (100%) agreed that vocabulary is important for EFL learners and their justifications were nearly the same, that without vocabulary knowledge the process of learning a foreign language is meaningless. Also it is the vehicle through which the learner will master language skills and communication, and express their ideas clearly whether in writing or speaking and essentially for lexical units (words and expressions), because they notice daily in their classrooms that students with shortage of vocabulary suffer a lot to express themselves. Insufficient vocabulary leads to difficulties in language learning.

Question 3): Which kind of materials do you use to teach vocabulary?

10 teachers responded to this question about the materials they use to improve their students' vocabulary and their answers were as the following:

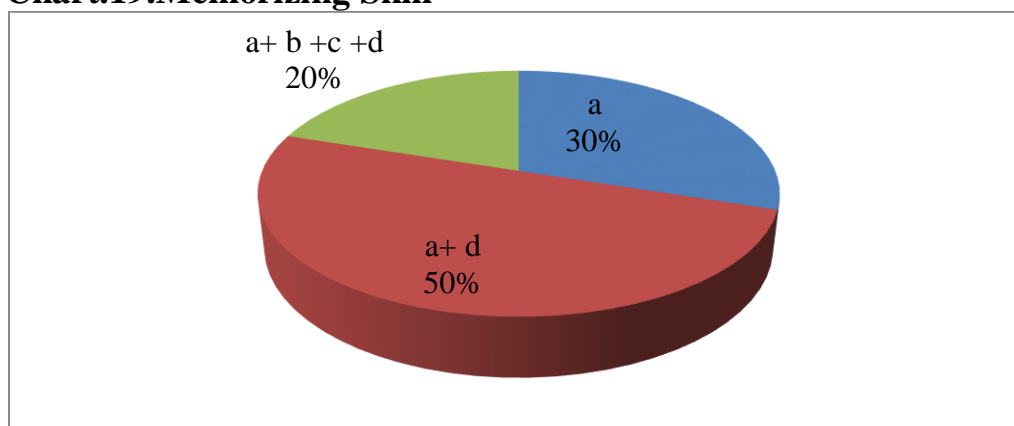
- Texts, stories, books, writing paragraphs and essays
- Authentic material
- Dictionaries, flashcards
- Tape recording, handouts, listening sessions, role plays
- Glossaries, dictionary entries, contextual texts
- Audio-visual aids, videos, documentary films
- Vocabulary Games

Question 4): Which skill of Memorizing big amount of words is easy through?

- a) Reading b)speaking c)listening d)writing

Table.23. Memorizing skill

skill	number	percentage
a	03	30%
a+ d	05	50%
a+ b +c +d	02	20%
Total	10	100%

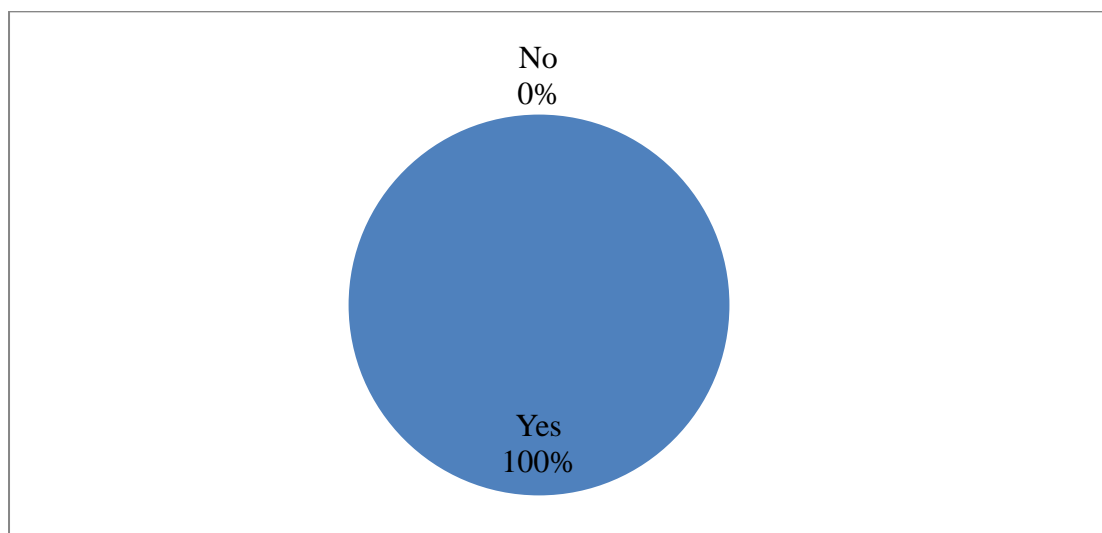
Chart.19.Memorizing Skill

According to the answers of teachers, the majority of them (50%) 05 teachers asserted that both reading and writing skills are useful and helpful for EFL learner to memorize words because when practicing writing skill and looking for the spelling forms of words and choosing them according to the context; they stored them in their minds. Then, they can understand them easily when they meet them in reading activities. Whereas, 03 students (30%) considered reading skill as the suitable one for memorizing vocabularies. Each time the learner reads, he recognizes words and stores them, and the more they read the more they learn. Finally, (20%) of teachers indicate that all of the skills a + b + c + d (reading + writing + speaking + listening) are necessary for memorizing words and learning language.

Question 19): Do you encourage students to prepare reading? How do you often encourage your students to read?

Table.24. Encouraging Students to Read

	Number	percentage
Yes	10	100%
No	00	00%
Total	10	100%

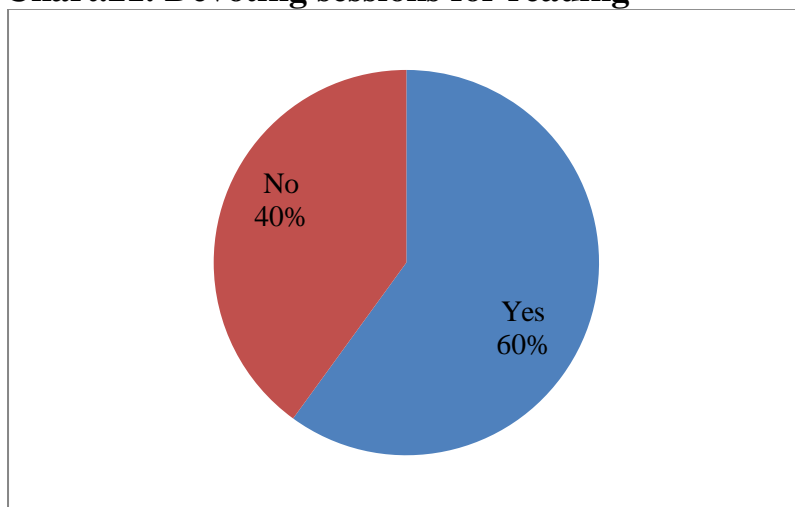
Chart.20. Encouraging Students to Read

All teachers (100%) encourage their EFL learners to read at home and they justify that: they generally advise them to read short stories, articles, and interesting texts. They are also making them aware about their benefits in developing their skills and their cultural prescriptive about native speakers, and give them passages to read accompanied with questions and activities to answer. They suggest for them some different topics that they have to know in order to discuss stress and demonstrate the importance of reading.

Question 20): Do you devote sessions for reading? (Yes/ No + justification)

Table.25. Devoting sessions for reading

	Number	percentage
Yes	06	60%
No	04	40%
Total	10	100%

Chart.21. Devoting sessions for reading

The majority of teachers (60%) or 06 teachers devote sessions for reading, most justified with “not a lot” and “rarely”, because time is not enough and depends on the objective of the lecture if it needs reading. They generally practice reading once a month, and (40%) or 04 teachers who answered “No” did not devote sessions for reading and they did not justify.

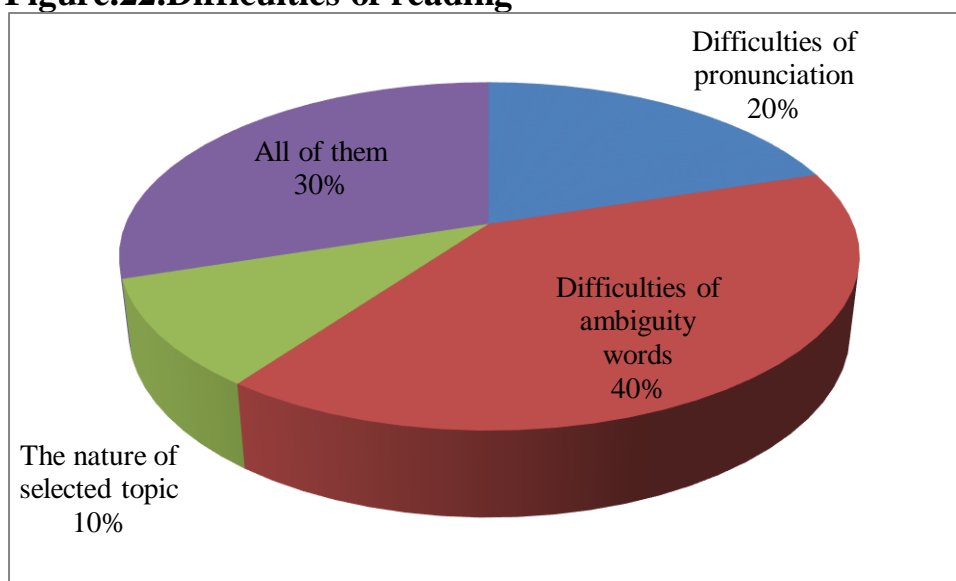
Question 21): How do you select a text for Reading tasks?

All teachers (100%) answered that question and claimed that they selected the reading material according to a set of criteria: it is up to the course, lectures, and syllabus objectives, the level of easiness and difficulty, and relevance to students’ levels, needs and interests.

Question 22): What kind of difficulties that your students generally face when reading?

Table.26. Difficulties of Reading

Difficulties	number	percentage
Difficulties of pronunciation	02	20%
Difficulties of ambiguity words	04	40%
The nature of selected topic	01	10%
All of them	03	20%
Total	10	100%

Figure.22. Difficulties of reading

Most of teachers (40%) noticed that their students encounter the difficulty of ambiguous words when they read and they cannot understand and comprehend the meaning. 30% of teachers noticed that students face all of the difficulties (ambiguous words, nature of selected topic, and difficulties of pronunciation), and (20%) or 02 teachers observed that their students encounter difficulties of pronunciation because they do not recognize words before. One

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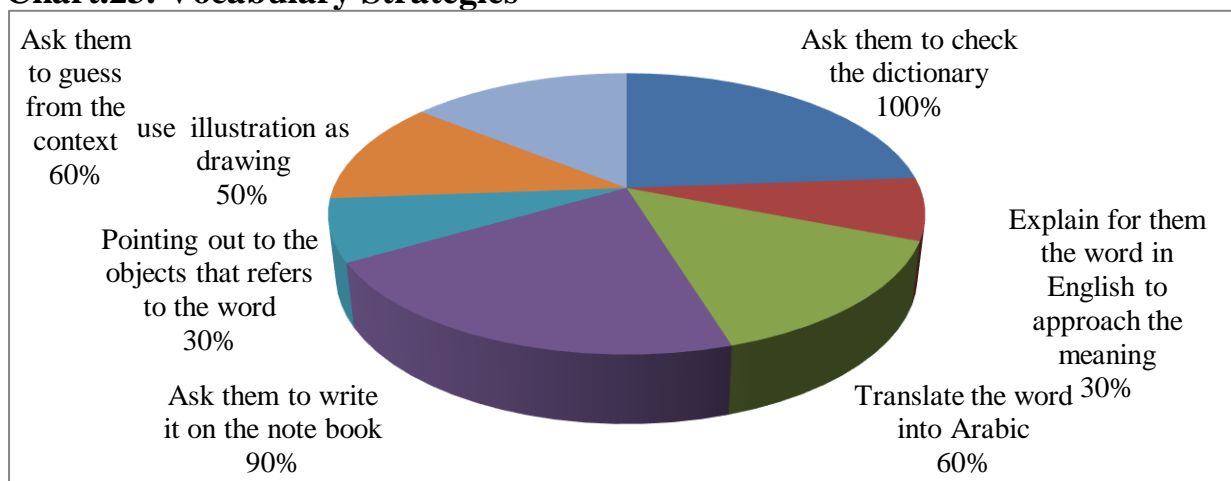
teacher representing (10%) observed that students usually encounter difficulties with the nature of topics.

Question 23): How can you help the students to understand the unknown words?

Table.27.Vocabulary Strategies

Strategy	Number	percentage
Ask them to check the dictionary	10	100%
Explain for them the word in English to approach the meaning	03	30%
Translate the word into Arabic	06	60%
Illustrate for them by using pictures and drawings	09	90%
Pointing out to the objects that refers to the word	03	30%
Ask them to write it on the notebook and check it at home	05	50%
Ask them to guess from the context	06	60%
Total	10	100%

Chart.23. Vocabulary Strategies



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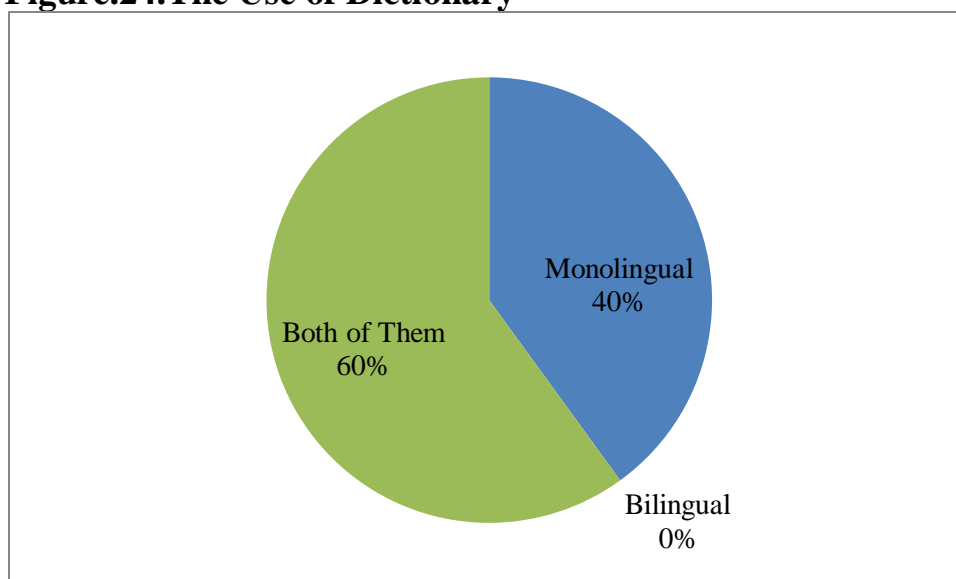
All teachers of the sample (100%) ask their students to check the dictionary when they encounter unknown words and they also translate for them the word into Arabic (60%) or English to facilitate for them the comprehension of the text by giving synonyms and antonyms. (30%) also almost use illustrations or pictures, (90%) point to the objects that refers to that word. (30%) ask them to guess from the context. (60%) ask them to write on the notebook and check the word at home. (50%) use illustration as drawing.

Question 24): What kind of dictionary do you recommend your students to use?

Table.28. the Use of dictionary

	Number	percentage
Bilingual	00	00%
Monolingual	04	40%
Both of Them	06	60%
total	10	100%

Figure.24.The Use of Dictionary



The majority of teachers (60%) generally recommend their students to use both dictionaries whenever they meet new words because, according to them, the monolingual dictionary helps them to acquire vocabularies of target language with their meanings. Whereas the bilingual dictionary helps to memorize the words in target language and the translation in native language and information about the unknown word and terms in both languages the target and the source. They answered also that the bilingual dictionary is useful for beginners and the monolingual is for advanced students. However, (40%) of teachers advised their students to use the monolingual dictionary in order to see the equivalent words in the target language and gain more vocabularies with meanings and the spelling form to make learners be familiar with the foreign language.

Discussion

Based on the analysis of the gathered data from teachers' questionnaire, we notice that the overwhelming numbers who answered and gave their answers were women more than males and they were helpful. Concerning teachers' experience, the majority of them have more than ten years of teaching English at the university (MKU). All the respondents agreed that vocabulary is considered as an important aspect of learning English or any foreign language because it is the vehicle through which the learners will master the language skills and communication, and express their ideas clearly, whether in writing or speaking to increase the lexical system.

Moreover, most teachers claimed that they generally focus on the use of texts, stories, books, writing paragraphs and essays, Authentic material , Audio-visual aids, videos, documentary films Dictionaries, flashcards-Tape recording, handouts, listening sessions, role

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plays, Glossaries, dictionary entries, contextual texts, and Vocabulary Games. They said that they always encourage their students to read outside the class, and demonstrate for them and stress the benefits and significance of reading, by working on deleting the idea that exists in their minds that reading is related only to passing exams. Although reading is very important for first year EFL students, more than half of the teachers rarely devote sessions for reading comprehension tasks at the classroom because time is not enough or as it does not correspond to the lectures' objectives or students' needs. Moreover, teachers tend to select the texts of reading comprehension according to the syllabus objectives, interesting topics, students' levels and needs, learning styles and the content of the material.

Furthermore, the majority of teachers admitted that their students benefit more from reading when practicing reading and writing skills rather than speaking and listening because they focus more on the form of language in terms of spelling and rules. When reading, they learn how words are written and they keep it in mind to apply them later when practicing writing tasks.

Teachers admitted that their students always face reading difficulties in terms of pronunciation of some words especially concerning irregular structure as silent letters. Sometimes that refers to fear of reading in public and lack of self confidence, and also the difficulty of ambiguous words because of the lack of vocabulary that leads to disability of understanding and comprehension of unfamiliar words. They cannot grasp the idea from the context, and the nature of the selected topic plays an important role that make reading easy or difficult because if it is not interesting or is not appropriate for their needs, they will find it boring and hard to undertake.

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Concerning vocabulary learning strategies that teacher often consider them appropriate and helpful for students to develop their reading skill and reduce its difficulties and learn vocabulary. They recommend them to use a variety of strategies according to the purpose of use and their needs, levels and learning styles because learners can be exposed to the same input (words) but they do not comprehend it in the same way but differently. Therefore, teachers often instruct them to utilize the discovery strategies: using dictionary and most of teachers prefer that their students use both bilingual and monolingual dictionaries. However, the monolingual dictionary rather than the bilingual one is better in order to practice the language and avoid the over dependence of their mother tongue. This helps them to see the equivalent of words in the target language because generally when referring to the mother tongue the process of learning will be too long, also they increase the chances to acquire more vocabularies with meanings and the spelling form and makes learners getting familiar with foreign language.

The monolingual dictionary also provides more comprehensive information about the target language and additional meanings and grammatical behavior of words. Moreover, Guessing from the context also helps in comprehending the idea and it increases the intelligence because it makes students more active and relies on themselves to discover the meaning through some clues and keywords to attack new words and infer the meaning for the sake of improving reading. Furthermore, the social strategies related to asking teachers or classmates about the meaning and more words identification improve the collaborative working and sharing knowledge. Also, the most memorizing strategies that teachers recommend the students is to use notebook as a technique to organize their learning process and improve their lexical repertoire by keeping notebook handy so they can write down ideas

or new words whenever they meet unfamiliar item or expression, and it provides opportunities for reflection and a written record of learners' literacy acquisition besides to other strategies that have an effective impact on reading comprehension success and developing vocabulary knowledge.

Conclusion

In the light of the data obtained from the two questionnaires administrated to first year EFL students and teachers at Mohamed Khieder University, we can deduce that the results are in direction of confirming our hypotheses about the enhancement of reading comprehension skill and reducing its difficulties through the use of a set of vocabulary learning strategies. The findings revealed that EFL students at MKU suffer from the disabilities of reading comprehension, and prevent them from practicing reading tasks and the main reason is the shortage of lexical competence. According to the analysis, EFL learners are responsible for their learning and teachers are involved to encourage their students and guide them to the right way. Thus students' attitudes and the teachers' beliefs towards developing vocabulary knowledge through the exploitation of different strategies and techniques tend to improve their reading achievement and language learning proficiency. Generally, the findings demonstrate that vocabulary knowledge is the core of learning foreign language, and reading is the most effective and preferable skill to master English language.

Recommendations

According to the analysis of the current study which was about the influence of VLS on reducing reading difficulties, and investigating the effects of those techniques on developing EFL learners' proficiency and competences. Several recommendations or suggestions can be provided for both teachers and students as a contribution for promoting language learning.

Recommendations for Teachers

- ✓ Teachers are required to encourage and motivate their students to read more to try new adventures with reading.
- ✓ Demonstrating the benefits and advantages of reading and convince students that reading is more beneficial when its objective is oriented for the whole life rather than the period of exams.
- ✓ Sharing knowledge and experience from his teaching career.
- ✓ Devoting sessions for reading at the classroom and varying activities.
- ✓ Making reading comprehension tasks in group work and motivating students to read in public without anxiety and fear, and promoting their self-confidence and self-esteem.
- ✓ Avoiding criticism, negative feedback, sarcasm and punishment when students make errors or mistakes.
- ✓ Starting with positive feedback and avoiding interruption to correct when reading.
- ✓ Emphasizing success rather than failure and reward them.
- ✓ Developing their lexical competence and provide them with set of methods and equipments to increase vocabulary size such as using new technology tools as audio

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visual means, songs, films, videos, flashcards, glossaries, documents, vocabulary games, and suggesting for them titles and topics of books.

- ✓ Selecting the content of materials and syllabus should fit EFL learners' levels and interests.
- ✓ Facilitating students' reading difficulties through providing different vocabulary strategies according to their interest, needs, and goals using dictionaries, guessing from context, advising them to use a notebook, word list, word network.....and many other strategies.
- ✓ Making learners aware that learning vocabulary is valuable and leads to learn other aspects as grammar and pronunciation.

Recommendations for learners

- ✓ Students should be interested to learn English as a personal desire not compensatory decision.
- ✓ Students need to be aware of the important of reading skill in mastering English language.
- ✓ Students have to be responsible for their own learning and not rely only on what their teachers taught them at the class, and they need to practice reading and English language in general outside of classroom.
- ✓ Students should have a goal and objectives to learn English, which involves the to work hard to achieve it appropriately.
- ✓ They need to overcome fear and shyness while reading to perform better, and do not frustrate from mistakes and errors but learn from them.
- ✓ Exploit the unknown words to expand vocabulary size not to hate reading skill.

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- ✓ Students should adopt strategies for learning vocabulary whenever they meet unfamiliar items, and profit from songs and films to gain new words.
- ✓ Students should have respectful and helpful relationship with their teachers and classmates.
- ✓ Students should be patient and wise when they take decisions, and building self confidence, and a good time organizer.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

General Conclusion

The present dissertation dealt with the significant role of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) as vital techniques to reduce reading difficulties and improve comprehension. Two main scopes were discussed in the theoretical part of the dissertation concerning vocabulary knowledge and VLS and the other is reading comprehension skill.

Language learning and teaching rely on vocabulary knowledge as a sub-skill of language and has a relevant mission of raising students' level and achieving communication competence. This research has a fundamental aim of investigating the reading disabilities that encounter EFL learners as understanding and recognizing ambiguity words and inability to pronounce items or identify spelling forms in a passage. The common reason behind those disorders is the shortage of vocabulary size and lack of linguistic background. Those difficulties and others prevent the success of English learning process and learners will give up rapidly since they cannot understand what they read, and they will lose their self confidence and motivation.

Therefore, researchers' studies have shown that in order to solve those problems, EFL learners are required to integrate a set of strategies and steps in their learning, The second part was related to the field of work of the main study that we have made at Biskra University, through the analysis of EFL teachers and first year EFL students' questionnaires we can say that the use of those techniques differ from one learner to another and refers to the different learning styles and the purposes, because sometimes they need to discover the meaning of new word through dictionaries or guessing from contexts. Sometimes they need social interaction with others as teachers and classmates to recognize unknown word meaning, or they need to memorize terms and knowledge. So they use notebooks or rote repeating many

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times or recording, without forgetting that they profit from authentic materials and English media to expand their lexical competence contacting with native speakers if possible.

According to the findings, we can confirm our hypothesis that says if VLS are adopted by EFL learners and encouraged by teachers, reading comprehension will be enhanced and difficulties will be decreased in order to promote their levels and organize the learning process.

Finally, vocabulary learning strategies emphasize more to determine and identify how learners acquire language effectively and systematically, and facilitate skill activities and communication.

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APPENDICES

Questionnaire for Students

The influence of vocabulary learning strategies on reducing reading difficulties

Dear Student,

You are kindly requested to fill the following questionnaire that aims to gathering information about the employment of vocabulary learning strategies by EFL learners at Biskra University on reducing the popular reading difficulties. In few minutes we would be grateful if you honestly answer the following questions by crossing(X) in the appropriate box or answering the given questions. Your participation sincerely appreciated and the collected data serves this particular research and remain confidential. Thank you for your help.

Section I. Background Information

1-Gender: male female Age:

2-Why do you choose to study English language?

.....

.....

Section II. Beliefs about Vocabulary Learning strategies and reading skill

1- Do you find learning vocabulary interesting? Yes No

Why?.....

2-Please put a tick (X) on the option that best suits your opinion: (You may tick many answers)

1-Do you consider your English level as:

Good Average poor

2-How do you expand your vocabulary knowledge?

-Lectures and lessons at the classroom -When listening to an authentic material.

-When practicing reading tasks at the classroom. -When interacting with classmates.

-While reading outside of the school for pleasure. While writing a piece of writing.

-When you speak with native speakers.

Others:.....

3-What is your favorite skill(s)?

Listening Speaking

Reading Writing

Why.....

4- What is the difficult aspect for you?

a) Meaning comprehension

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

b) Pronunciation

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

c) Spelling:

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

5- What kind of material do you prefer to read?

a) Journals **c) Stories** **b) Books** **d) Novels**

❖ Others.....

6-You face difficulties in reading:

a) Always **b) Often** **c) Sometimes** **d) Rarely** **e) Never**

7- What do you do first when you meet new “unknown” words?

- 1) Ask for clarification from your teacher or you classmates.
- 2) Use bilingual dictionary (English/Arabic).
- 3) Writ the word on your note book.
- 4) Using monolingual dictionary(English/English).
- 5) Guess from the context.
- 6) Continue reading without understanding.
- 7) Stop reading

8-What do you do to memorize the new word?

- 1) Use the new word in new situations.
- 2) Look for the synonyms and antonyms of the new word.

- 3) Say the new word aloud.
- 4) Make word-network to gather more lexis that has relation with that new word.
- 5) Repeat the new word many time
- 6) Write the new words on your notebook.
- 7) Make paraphrasing and summarizing to maintain the ideas in mind.
- 8) Highlight the new word in a personal way for instance: verbs with green, nouns with blue colour...ect.

9-Please choose a statement is related to your practice of reading skill:

- 1) My teacher asks us to read at home.
- 2) My teacher asks us to read during lectures
- 3) I start reading by skimming to get a general idea of the text.
- 4) I start reading by scanning to get specific ideas of the text.
- 5) I devote enough time to reading.
- 6) I respect the structure of the text (introduction, body, and conclusion)

10- What kind of topics do you prefer to read?

Science Poetry Literature

Fiction Historical

Why?

Please feel free to write your suggestions.....

.....

.....

Thank you for collaboration.

Questionnaire for Teachers

The Influence of Vocabulary Learning Strategies on Reducing Reading Difficulties

Dear Teachers,

You are kindly requested to fill the following questionnaire which aims to gather data about the vocabulary learning strategies that used to reduce the popular reading difficulties by EFL learners at Biskra University. Your answer will be helpful for our research we are undertaking and we would be grateful if you answer according to your perception concerning vocabulary learning strategies and reading skill. Thank you.

Section-1-: Background information

-Gender: Male Female

-How long have you been teaching English at the university?

.....

Section-2-: Teaching vocabulary and reading skill

1) In your opinion, why learning vocabulary is important for second language learner?

.....
.....
.....

2) Which kind of materials you use to teach vocabulary?

.....
.....

3) According to your teaching experience, what are the methods that help the students to learn vocabulary?

.....
.....
.....

4) Which skill do you consider as the most appropriate to Memorizing big amount of vocabulary knowledge?:

Reading speaking writing listening

5) How do you encourage your student to read?

.....
.....

6) Do you devote sessions for reading?

Yes No

How many?.....

7) Do you ask your students to prepare reading at home in advance?

Yes No

8) What are the main difficulties that your students encounter when reading?

a) Difficulties of pronunciation

b) Ambiguity of words

c) The nature of selected topic

Others.....

.....

9) How do you select a text for reading tasks?

.....

.....

.....

10) How can you help the students to understand the unknown word?

a) Ask them to check the dictionary

b) Explain for them the word in English to approach the meaning

c) Translate the word into Arabic

d) Illustrate for them by using pictures, and drawings

e) Pointing out to the objects that refers to the word

f) Ask them to write it on notebook and check it at home

g) Ask them to guess from the context

*Others.....
.....

11) What kind of dictionary do you recommend your students to use?

Bilingual

monolingual

Why?.....

*Please add any suggestions about developing reading through vocabulary learning strategies:

.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your help

Appendix C

الملخص

يعتبر تعلم مفردات أي لغة سواء أجنبية أو لغة ثانية عنصر مهم جدا و لا يمكن أن تقوم اللغة دون ركيزة أساسية ودعامة قوية من الرصيد اللغوي وحوصلة واسعة من المفردات. فكلما زادت المفردات زادت فرص التقدم و النجاح في إتقان واستعمال اللغة استعمالا صحيحا ودقيقا من خلال مهارات اللغة الأربع: الكتابة؛ الكلام؛ السمع؛ و القراءة بهدف التواصل. لذا يسعى طلاب اللغات إلى توسيع وتثبيت اللغة ومبادئها في أذهانهم بمختلف الوسائل ومختلف الطرق بغاية تحقيق هدفهم في اكتساب اللغة. يواجه أغلبية طلاب اللغات عدة صعوبات خلال عملية التعلم وخاصة التي تتعلق بالفهم واستيعاب المفردات أثناء القراءة أو السمع ويعود السبب إلى نقص حجم المفردات التي يملكها المتعلم كمعرفة سابقة يتمثل حل هذا المشكل في اللجوء إلى استعمال مجموعة من استراتيجيات وتقنيات تعلم المفردات التي تهدف إلى تطوير اللغة وكسب نسبة كبيرة من المفردات والكلمات الجديدة؛ كما يعد التعرف على هذه الأساليب مطلبا أساسيا في خصائص التعلم لارتباطها بشخصية واهتمام وحاجة المتعلم فمنها: التخمين واستخدام القرائن اللغوية؛ الترجمة والتحويل إلى اللغة الأم؛ استعمال القاموس؛ الاستنتاج؛ التلخيص؛ الإعادة والتكرير؛ استخدام دفتر الملاحظات. هذه الدراسة تهدف إلى طرح مختلف المشاكل التي تقف كحاجز مانع لتقدم مستوى الطلبة خاصة عند قراءة نص باللغة الأجنبية و عجزهم عن فهم معاني الكلمات الجديدة و دور استراتيجيات اكتساب المفردات في التقليل والحد من هذه الصعوبات. الفرضية الرئيسية لهذه الدراسة إذا تم دمج الاستراتيجيات في عملية التعلم فان صعوبات القراءة سوف تزول ومستوى الطلبة يتطور أكثر. كذلك تهدف الإجابة على الأسئلة المطروحة التالية: ما هي الاستراتيجيات الأكثر استعمالا لدى طلبة السنة الأولى في جامعة محمد خيضر ببسكرة؟ ما هي الصعوبات التي تواجههم أثناء القراءة ولماذا؟ كيف تساعد استراتيجيات التعلم في اكتساب المفردات و تطوير اللغة؟. هذه الدراسة تعتمد على وسيلة جمع المعطيات و المتمثلة في الاستبيان؛ الأول وزع على ثمانين طالب من السنة الأولى فرع الانجليزية والأخر لعشرة من أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية. ساعدت النتائج على تأكيد الفرضية وان استراتيجيات التعلم ذات أهمية كبيرة في توسيع الرصيد اللغوي واكتساب المفردات الجديدة والتحفيز على مواصلة القراءة وحب المطالعة لارتباطها بالمهارات العقلية؛ الوظيفية؛ المعرفية؛ تسهيل عملية التواصل وتعلم اللغة الأجنبية بنجاح.