

An Analysis of Vocabulary Learning Strategies of Adult English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Learners

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Abstract

Vocabulary learning is one of the major challenges foreign language learners face during the process of learning a language (Ghazal, 2007). One way to alley the problem is to assist students in becoming independent learners during L2 vocabulary learning. Furthermore, Ghazal (2007) explains that this could be achieved by instructing learners to apply vocabulary learning strategies as efficiently as possible.

This study has reviewed significant literature and the importance of reviewing the literature in the field was to realize the implications of our understanding of this relevant literature for the study referred to in this paper. The definitions, taxonomies and factors which pertain to language learning strategies and which are present in the literature have clarified the concepts and helped in the data analysis, i.e. in the identification and coding of the strategies reported by the respondents and later in the interpretation of the findings (Cusen & Buja, 2009).

Furthermore, this research brings to light the common strategies that learners use in vocabulary learning. It also discusses the different strategies at length and suggests valuable recommendations and concludes with further research implications.

Keywords: Language Learning Strategies, Second Language Acquisition, Vocabulary Learning Beliefs, Vocabulary Learning Strategies, English as a foreign language (EFL).

1.1 Introduction

English as a foreign language (EFL) is an enormous field that is made up of various areas for example lexical components, phonetics, morphology, writing, speaking, and listening. Also, all the fields have been well-researched to focus on different strategies which can suit the learners. Folse (2004), an assistant professor and expert in the TESOL field provides further insights on which component is most important and notes; learning a language entails learning numerous aspects about that language, including its pronunciation, writing system, syntax, pragmatics, rhetorical modes for reading and composition, culture, and spelling, but the most important aspect is vocabulary. However, even though there has been a lot of research in the past, as early as the 1970s on vocabulary learning strategies, it has been challenging to conclude which strategy is the best to use. As Wilkins (1972) puts it “without grammar, very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed”, this simply shows the importance of having adequate vocabulary nevertheless acquiring it can be very challenging; therefore learners need to be equipped with strategies in order to confront this major component.

The vocabulary learning strategy is considered a tool that learners use to acquire vocabulary which is one of the most important elements of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. Learners may employ different learning strategies that they assume to be effective ways of vocabulary acquisition. As Ellis (1997) states that successful learners use more strategies than unsuccessful learners. Ellis (1997) also maintains that the right and dynamic strategies the learners employ influence their satisfactory academic performance. Huckin and Bloch (1993) have pointed out that “research has shown that second-language readers rely heavily on vocabulary knowledge and that a lack of vocabulary knowledge is the largest obstacle for second-language readers to overcome” (p. 154). Haynes and Baker (1993) found the main obstacle for L2 readers not to be a lack of reading strategies but rather insufficient vocabulary knowledge in English.

Acquiring a second language involves different areas such as motivation, learners’ needs, learning environment, learning strategies and language awareness (Asgari and Mustapha, 2011). In any event, learning strategies are, defined by Chamot and Kupper (1989) as “techniques which students use to comprehend, store, and remember information and skills” (p.9). However, learning strategies have been used for thousands of years Oxford (1990) mentioned that mnemonic or memory tools were used in ancient times to facilitate narrators remember their lines. However, Oxford (2003) defined language learning strategies 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”(p.8).

Vocabulary learning strategies are one part of language learning strategies which in turn are part of general learning strategies (Nation, 2001). According to Nation, a strategy must:

1. Involve choice, that is, there are several strategies to choose from
2. Be complex, that is, there are several steps to learn

3. Require knowledge and benefit from training
4. Increase the efficiency of vocabulary learning and vocabulary use (2001:217).

Language learning strategies encourage greater overall self-direction for learners. Oxford (1990), elaborates on this point better and states; self-directed learners are independent learners who are capable of assuming responsibility for their own learning and gradually gaining confidence, involvement and proficiency. Research has shown that many learners do use more strategies to learn vocabulary, especially when compared to integrated tasks such as listening and speaking. But they are mostly inclined to use basic vocabulary learning strategies (Schmitt, 1997). This in turn makes strategy instruction an essential part of any foreign or second language program (Ghazal, 2007).

While particular strategies used by second language learners for the acquisition of new words in the second language are called 'vocabulary learning strategies' (Gu, 1994). Whereas Language Learning Strategies (LLSs) are a sub-category of general learning strategies and Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLSs) are considered as a part of language learning strategies (Nation, 2001). The recognition of the role of vocabulary in language learning has continued to grow in recent years. This area of learning was previously neglected due to certain dominant teaching approaches from the 1940s until the 1960's (Noor and Amir, 2009). The theories underlying these approaches such as structural linguistics (Fries, 1945) and generative transformational linguistics (Chomsky, 1957) focused on teaching grammatical and phonological structures as well as emphasized grammatical rules respectively. Learners were assumed that once they have learned the structural frames and the grammatical rules, they will then be able to fill in the lexical items as needed (Noor and Amir, 2009).

In addition, previous studies (Nation, 1990; Levine et al, 1992; Anderson, 1999) have reported students meticulously referring to a bilingual dictionary for every word that they do not understand. In other contexts, students might give up trying to understand the meaning of the text if sentences or an entire paragraph contain a small number of unknown words (Huckinet al, 1993). These encounters suggest that some learners might not have the knowledge to handle words they do not understand (Noor and Amir, 2009). This brings to light the seriousness of the lack of vocabulary-learning skills or strategies and how important it is for learners to be equipped with Vocabulary Learning Strategies. According to Nation (1990), from the late 1980s, vocabulary was an area that had drawn researchers' interest within the mainstream of second language (L2) acquisition. Researchers realized that many learners' difficulties, both receptive and productive, result from an inadequate vocabulary, and even when they are at higher levels of language competence and performance, they still feel in need of learning vocabulary (Riankamol, 2008).

Gu and Johnson (1996), point out that most research on vocabulary learning strategies has focused on various methods of vocabulary presentation, and their effects on retention. Hatch & Brown (1995), however, discover that vocabulary is central to language and is of great significance to language learners. Words are the building blocks of a language since they label objects, actions, ideas without which people cannot convey the intended meaning (Riankamol, 2008). A simple example of this point on the importance of vocabulary is, when someone is thirsty in a foreign country and needs to

drink water, one just has to ask someone or gesture to someone the way to drink water and just say 'water'. The receiver would immediately understand and interpret that one is thirsty. Thus, there is not an essential need for a complete sentence to be said but just one vocabulary which in this example is 'water'.

Accordingly, numerous types of approaches, techniques, exercises and practice have been introduced into the field to teach vocabulary. Furthermore, research has shown that many learners do use more strategies to learn vocabulary, especially when compared to such integrated tasks such as listening and speaking. Yet Schmitt (1997) claims that they are mostly inclined to use basic vocabulary learning strategies. This in turn makes strategy instruction an essential part of any foreign or second language program. However, a greater knowledge of vocabulary learning strategies could be very useful in supporting teachers to plan their lessons more effectively and give guidance to students in adopting successful strategies (Riankamol, 2008).

The research available shows that there is no absolute advantage in using a strategy, that not all strategies have the same effect on all learners, and that choice of strategies is related to factors like attitude (Naiman et al, 1986). Thus, there is a need for research which seeks answers to questions of such nature that relate to what strategies can prove to be helpful to learn vocabulary of English as a foreign language.

1.2 Background and Context of the study

Teaching English as a foreign/second language (TEFL/TESL) has been a field which has existed for decades. However, this field has been new to Fiji and it was not known until a language institute in Nadi began operations in 2006, which teaches students from Asian countries as well as another UK based organization, Projects Abroad Fiji which teaches students from Europe. The opening of these two English language institutes has seen more English teachers becoming interested in this field. The TEFL field has various components which need to be understood not only by learners of English as a foreign language but also the teachers in order to provide comprehensive learning. Nielsen (2002) states; second language vocabulary acquisition is a field of investigation that has seen an explosion of experimental research in the past 25 years. This statement made by Nielsen is vital to gather how much interest has been shown to this field of study. On the contrary, XHAFERI B. and XHAFERI G. (2010) argue that learning vocabulary is a neglected area in literature and there is a need for more research in this field, learning vocabulary is a very complex issue.

In fact, it is true that learning vocabulary is one of the most challenging tasks of any language which is why there is a need to equip learners with the strategies which can tackle this issue. Nation (2001:9) emphasizes that "second language learners need to know very large numbers of words. While this may be useful in the long-term, it is not an essential short-term goal". A similar point of view has been expressed by Li (2010) who states; traditionally, vocabulary is viewed as a complex of form and meaning. Thus, vocabulary learning is intended to memorize the form-meaning association (Gu, 2005). The limitations of such a construct of vocabulary have become apparent in the past few decades (Carter, 1998; Richards, 1976). It has been proposed that vocabulary is a dynamic complex of both

knowledge of a word and the skill of using it and vocabulary cannot be separated from discourse (McCarthy, 1984; Nation, 2001; Robinson, 1989).

"No matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wider range of meanings, communication in an L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way" (McCarthy 1990:viii). This comment by McCarthy raises consciousness of the need to acquire vocabulary in order to communicate in everyday situations either through speaking or writing in all aspects it is paramount.

Thus, it is advantageous to explore deeper the difficulties encountered by learners and offer some innovative ideas in order to facilitate learning and teaching of vocabulary. It is through the learners' perspective that the problem and process of acquiring vocabulary can be interpreted better. XHAFERI B. and XHAFERI G. (2010) suggest that the first goal is to look at the strategies that the students use to learn new English words and make them aware that there are many vocabulary learning strategies that they could use in learning new words. Through research, it has been found that Language Learning Strategies (VLSs) are defined differently by various scholars. Strategies have been defined as ways and techniques that learners use to learn new information in English.

It has been suggested by XHAFERI B. and XHAFERI G. (2010) that language teachers use the information they find more useful and use appropriate approaches in teaching vocabulary and preferably start a strategy training program which could be in-cooperated in their classes in order to enhance vocabulary acquisition. These strategies are lacking in most EFL/ESL classes in Fiji who are virtually unaware of the existing strategies and also the need of using these strategies to improve the vocabulary acquiring skills of learners.

Though vocabulary is the center of a language (Richards, 2000), the efficacy of vocabulary learning is often far from satisfactory (Meara, 1984). Therefore, in order to facilitate L2 vocabulary learning, vocabulary learning strategy (VLS), which is a task-specific strategy, has drawn researchers' on-going attention over the last two decades Li (2010). Recurrent themes in research in English L2 vocabulary learning include the efficacy of particular strategies (Boers, Demecheleer & Eckmans, 2004), VLS patterns among learners (Sanaoui, 1995), VLS' relationship with learning context (Kojic-Sabo & Lightbown, 1999) and with other learner's variables such as gender (Nemati, 2008), age (Shmitt, 1997), and L2 proficiency (Moir & Nation, 2002). This indeed is true as in various studies; it has been observed that factors such as, age, gender, purpose, motivation, nationality, cultural background, intellectuality contributes towards vocabulary learning.

Further, Li (2010) highlights that vocabulary learning beliefs (VLBs), another learner variable that influences vocabulary learning (Moir & Nation, 2002; Gu, 2005), is an under-researched area.

In addition, the studies highlighted above about Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) were conducted mainly in English as a second language (ESL) context. As LLB can be shaped by culture and context (Horwitz, 1999), and LLS choice is influenced by factors such as beliefs, cultural background and types of task (Oxford, 1994), the VLS and VLB may also differ among learners in different learning cultures and contexts. This in turn, generates a greater need for further research in

this field to address this phenomenon. The research aims at providing new strategies of learning vocabulary which can be used by learners and it will be a great asset to teachers in designing appropriate materials for EFL/ESL classrooms in Fiji. Furthermore, since it is a study of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLSs) for English as a foreign/second language, the findings of this research can be easily adopted in international classrooms or by foreign learners and it is not limited to Fiji specifically.

1.3 Aim of the Study

The principal aims and objectives of the present study are to:

1. Investigate the usage of different vocabulary learning strategies among adult English as a foreign language learners.
2. Explore the various vocabulary learning strategies and find the benefits and drawbacks associated with each strategy
3. Find the most frequently and least frequently used vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) by learners who have completed the language program and those who are continuing the course
4. Effective strategies that could be used in teaching vocabulary to students
5. Improve the difficulties encountered in learning vocabulary

Vocabulary learning is considered by many teachers and students as an important and challenging factor in learning a foreign language. Therefore, it is crucial to find effective ways of teaching vocabulary to students in order to reduce the challenges that they face. Research of this nature will help students' to choose the strategies that suit their learning styles and personalities and also offer a wide range of strategies to enhance vocabulary acquisition. In addition, it will help teachers to focus their instruction on the lexis more and also design more effective vocabulary learning activities (XHAFERI B. and XHAFERI G., 2010).

Further, the study will elicit some data for teachers in order to design appropriate vocabulary learning activities for successful teaching. It also aims to highlight to the students that there are many other vocabulary learning strategies which are unknown to many students. Kafipour (2010), in his PhD thesis pointed to this factor as one of the main reasons why the respondents in his study did not report some strategies in interview and journal writing. He stated that some of the respondents of his study felt shy to report some strategies as they thought those methods are incorrect ways to practice vocabularies (Kafipour, Yazdi, Soori, and Shokrpour, 2011). Therefore, although learners use strategies consciously or unconsciously, all of these need to be properly analyzed and brought forward so that improvements can be made in learning vocabulary.

1.4 Research Questions

This study sets out to seek answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the various Vocabulary Learning Strategies which are being used by adult EFL learners?

2. What are the strategies that are used the most by English as a Foreign Language learners (EFL)?
3. What are the strategies that are used the least by English as a Foreign Language learners (EFL)?
4. What are the vocabulary learning strategies employed by the successful and less successful learners of English as a Foreign Language students (EFL)?
5. How important are Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLSs) in language learning?

1.5 Key Abbreviations:

ESL/EFL-Learners of English as a Second/Foreign language

L1 - Native Language

L2- Second Language

LLS- Language Learning Strategies

SLA-Second Language Acquisition

VLB- Vocabulary Learning Beliefs

VLS-Vocabulary Learning Strategies

1.6 Significance of the Study

The purpose of this research is to provide a platform of benefit to a number of people, findings of which will not only assist learners but also teachers alike of English as a foreign language. The significance of this study is as follows but is not limited to only these:

1. The study will expose the most and least frequently used vocabulary learning strategies employed by English as a foreign language (EFL) students.
2. It will highlight the various vocabulary learning strategies used by learners today, which have yet to be written about or analyzed in depth.
3. It will provide strategies which learners can use in vocabulary learning which in turn will ease the difficulties that learners face in language learning.
4. The teachers can implement the findings of this study to support high proficient students and encourage weak students.
5. The findings of the study will be beneficial to teachers, in designing appropriate materials for classroom purposes and getting positive feedback in their teaching, as it will directly benefit their students.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

This research is on *Vocabulary Learning Strategies of Adult EFL Learners* and here are some of the limitations that were encountered in the study:

- This study included a small number of participants of English as a Foreign Language. A larger sample from different institutions would definitely produce more generalizable findings;
- The data was collected by using only two instruments which might not reflect a reality because students could have not read the questionnaire but only marked “x” on whichever statement they felt comfortable with. On the one hand, items prescribed in the questionnaire by the researcher may have been misunderstood by the participants (Barcelos, 2003);
- This study is not the only one in this field which would affect usage of the research findings;
- Time limitations; the combination of field work and the write-up were time consuming. Also, some questionnaires were not handed in on time therefore, meeting deadlines was an issue. Thus, analyzing the data was also affected.

1.8 Delimitations of the study

Apart from all the challenges highlighted in 1.8, here are some delimitations:

- An Improved research design would be able to address the issue of data collection to keep it more credible;
- Highlighting the difference in this study from the previous ones will make it clearer for the audience to understand the points elaborated;
- Encourage participation from the subjects by emphasizing on the need for this study;
- Ensure time management so that all the questionnaire, interviews are completed on time. Thus, enough time would be allocated for the write up of the research.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This section examines the literature and research relevant to Vocabulary Learning Strategies, current research done in the area of vocabulary learning strategies for English as a Foreign Language.

2.2 Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Language learning strategies are methods that students employ to enhance their own learning. Strategies are important for language learning because they are a device for active, self-responsible learning. Learners who use appropriate language learning strategies yielded greater proficiency and self-confidence (Oxford, 1990). Most of the literature which has been studied provides a similar point of view and highlights the importance of having vocabulary learning strategies. Having knowledge about the different types of choices in vocabulary learning strategies will help teachers, researchers and curriculum developers to design appropriate materials for classroom purposes.

2.3 Summary of Major Studies on Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Some major researches have been carried out since 1995 which include: Sanaoui (1995), Stoffer (1995), Moir (1996), Gu and Johnson (1996), Lawson and Hogben (1996), Schmitt (1997), Porte (1988), Kudo (1999), Kojic-Sabo and Lightbown (1999), Lin (2001), Catalan (2003), Fan (2003). These studies have provided insights into the process of vocabulary learning and the strategies which have been used by individuals. These are as follows:

Sanaoui (1995) identified two distinctive approaches to vocabulary learning of adult learners: those who structured their vocabulary learning and those who did not. Structured learners engaged in independent study, did self-initiated learning activities and recorded the lexical items they were learning, reviewed such records, and practiced using vocabulary items outside the classroom (Bastanfar & Hashemi, 2010). Sanaoui's research showed that structured learners engaged in independent study, did self-initiated learning activities and recorded the lexical items they were learning, reviewed such records, and practiced using vocabulary items outside the classroom (Bastanfar & Hashemi, 2010). Furthermore, Gu and Johnson (1996) identified six types of strategy - guessing, dictionary, note-taking, rehearsal, encoding, and activation - together with two other factors: beliefs about vocabulary learning and metacognitive regulation. Metacognitive regulation consists of strategies for selective attention and self-initiation. The latter make the meaning of vocabulary items clear through the use of a variety of means. Guessing strategies, skillful use of dictionaries and note-taking strategies are labeled as cognitive strategies. Rehearsal and encoding categories are classified under memory strategies. Word lists and repetition are instances of rehearsal strategies. Encoding strategies include strategies such as association, imagery, visual, auditory, semantic, and contextual encoding as well as word-structure. Activation strategies include those strategies through which learners actually use new words in different contexts (Bastanfar & Hashemi, 2010).

In addition, Lawson and Hogben (1996), in a classification which is more a reflection of the strategies, categorized the four strategies as: repetition, word feature analysis, simple elaboration and complex elaboration. The strategy "repetition" includes reading of related words, simple rehearsal, writing of word and meaning, cumulative rehearsal and testing. The "word feature analysis" contains spelling, word classification and suffix. Simple elaboration consists of sentence translation, simple use of context, appearance similarity, sound link and complex elaboration includes complex use of context, paraphrase and mnemonic. Hence the researchers concluded that there is a need to present strategies more directly during language teaching since students are not aware of the advantages of these procedures (Bastanfar & Hashemi, 2010).

Schmitt (1997) devised his taxonomy, self-reportedly, in response to the lack of a comprehensive list of vocabulary learning strategies. He organized 58 strategies under five types: determination, social, memory, cognitive and metacognitive. His categories were inspired by Oxford's (1990) inventory of general language learning strategies but included some modifications. Thus, social, memory, cognitive and metacognitive strategies have been adopted from Oxford (1990). The

modification was that he made a distinction between discovery and consolidation strategies. Determination strategies are used when "learners are faced with discovering a new word's meaning without recourse to another person's experience" (Schmitt, 1997). For example, learners try to discover the meaning of a new word by guessing it with the help of context, structural knowledge of language, and reference materials. It is also possible to discover the meaning of a word through asking someone for help (Bastanfar & Hashemi, 2010).

Finally, Nation's (2001) theoretically-oriented taxonomy makes a basic distinction between the aspects of vocabulary knowledge from the sources of vocabulary knowledge and from learning processes; hence, three general classes: planning, sources, and processes, each covering a subset of key strategies. 'Planning' involves choosing where and how to focus attention on a particular vocabulary item and contains strategies for choosing words, choosing aspects of word knowledge and choosing strategies as well as planning repetition. Process means establishing word knowledge through noticing, retrieving and generating strategies (Bastanfar & Hashemi, 2010).

2.4 Categorization of the Strategies

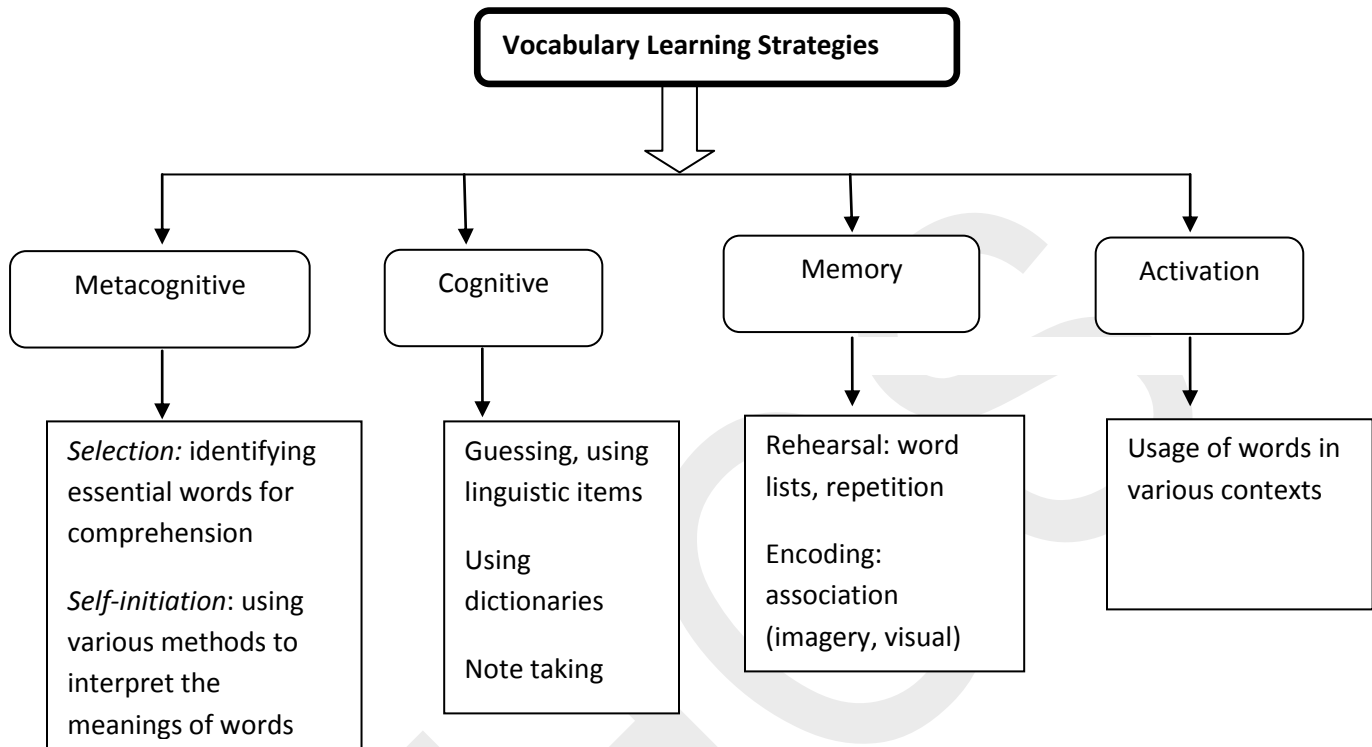
In all research conducted on vocabulary learning strategies, four important categories are highlighted which are metacognitive strategies, cognitive, memory and activation strategies. It is very important to understand these concepts as it forms the basis of the any study being conducted in this field.

Gu and Johnson (1996) list second language (L2) vocabulary learning strategies as metacognitive, cognitive, memory and activation strategies. The metacognitive strategies comprises of selective attention and self-initiation strategies. First language learners and Second language learners who employ selective attention strategies know which words are important for them to learn and are essential for adequate comprehension of a passage.

Cognitive strategies in Gu and Johnson's taxonomy consists of guessing strategies, skillful use of dictionaries and note-taking strategies. It was found that learners using guessing strategies draw upon their background knowledge and use linguistic clues like grammatical structures of a sentence to guess the meaning of a word. Memory strategies are classified into two distinct categories; rehearsal and encoding categories. Word lists and repetition are instances of rehearsal strategies. Encoding strategies encompass such strategies as association, imagery, visual, auditory, semantic, and contextual encoding as well as word structure which includes; analyzing a word in terms of prefixes, stems, and suffixes.

Finally, the activation strategies include those strategies through which the learners actually use new words in different contexts. For instance, learners may set sentences using the words they have just learned (Ghazal, 2007).

The definitions of the above concepts are simplified in the following illustration:



Apart from discovering new words, Ghazal (2007) states that learners need to employ a variety of strategies to practice and retain vocabulary. In order to accommodate this, learners thus, use a variety of social, memory, cognitive and metacognitive strategies to consolidate their vocabulary knowledge.

2.5 Concept of Good and Poor Learners

Each learner employs different strategies to assist in learning new vocabulary. A learning strategy is a series of actions a learner takes to facilitate the completion of a learning task. The most widely reported learner factors include age, sex, language aptitude, intelligence, prior knowledge, motivation, self-concept/image, personality, and cognitive and learning style (Peter, 2003). This brings forth the concept of good learners and poor learners; those learners who are highly motivated feel a genuine need to practice the vocabulary and use this strategy to maintain the vocabulary. Good learners not only use more strategies, but they also rely more heavily on different strategies than the ones poor learners use (Scafaru and Tofan, 2006). In a study carried out by Ahmed (1989) it was found that good learners were more aware of what they could learn about words, they paid more attention to collation and spelling and at the same time they were more conscious of contextual learning. Learners are able to comprehend more new vocabulary once they use a number of strategies and do not simply stick to one which is the case for poor learners who concentrate on one method simply. On the contrary, the article

by Scafaru and Tofan (2006) is very contradictory of this statement as it further mentions that statements like “the good learners practice” are not really helpful. What we need are more specific findings which tell us what the learner actually does when he practices”. In fact, it is through practice that learners commit words to memory and thus use it as confirmed by Peter (2003).

2.6 Common Strategies Learners Apply

In the research conducted by Scafaru and Tofan (2006), there was use of over seven different strategies which included micro-strategies, macro-strategies, dictionary use, memorization, practice, preferred source of information and note taking. Note taking is a strategy which a lot of learners use and it has been proved to be effective as some learners prefer to work on visual memory, which means since they have written a new vocabulary they are able to create an image in their mind about the word. Both the papers (Scafaru and Tofan (2006) and Peter (2003)) confirm that there is a similar pattern in note taking. Learners took notes in the margin, used vocabulary books, organized words by meaning, spelling formation, word derivation, grammatical information, or vocabulary cards.

Research from the studies has also proven that dictionaries have a great impact in learning and one of the most common things that learners buy first is a dictionary. Like it or not, a dictionary is amongst the first things a foreign language student purchases (Baxter, 1980; Luppescu & Day, 1993), and learners carry their dictionaries around, not grammar books (Krashen, 1989). It has been argued whether a monolingual dictionary is better than a bilingual one. Further, research has shown how the dictionaries have been used by learners. Laufer and Hadar (1997), for example, compared monolingual, bilingual, and bilingualised dictionaries among 123 EFL learners in Israel. Through their study, it was found that, regardless of the learners’ proficiency level, the bilingualised version was rather significantly better than, or as good as, the other two types in both comprehension and production tasks.

An important finding which was revealed in the paper by Peter (2003) was the use of repeating aloud strategy. Empirical results on this issue are also relatively unanimous, that repeating words aloud helps retention far better than silent repetition Peter (2003). A similar study was carried out by Seibert (1927) who found that if learners studied aloud, studied aloud with written and studied silently, the result showed that the first condition always produced better when compared with the other two. He then followed up further, if the relearning was effective even after 42 days and found that again learning aloud was significantly efficient than the other two conditions

Furthermore, the guessing strategy principally applies to reading text as confirmed in the study completed by Day, Komura and Hamamatsu (1991). The study was conducted in Japan with 181 high school and 397 university students whereby they had to read a short story for approximately 30 minutes and soon after reading the text they had to do a multiple choice test and it was found that both the high school and university groups performed well.

2.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, this section has presented the main findings of various areas of vocabulary learning strategy research. These findings reveal the importance of exposing learners to various methods. The concept on good learners is very clear that those learners who are able to employ various strategies are more successful in acquiring vocabulary than those who choose to use fewer strategies. Language teachers need to make learners conscious of the need to develop an independent and structured approach to language learning, which has been shown to be mostly associated with vocabulary learning success.

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

A number of studies were resorted to before choosing the appropriate method for this research. Different methods are appropriate for different situations (Patton, 1990, p. 39). Therefore, the methodological design should be based on the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the resources and time available (Li, 2010). Moreover, “social phenomena are so complex and social problems are so intractable, all of our methodological tools are needed for understanding and for action” (Greene, 2001, p. 252). Thus, raises the issue: to what extent the research design can freely combine elements of different approaches (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). Mixed-method design arguably functions to overcome the deficiencies of a single method, while capitalizing on the strengths of each (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Therefore, due to the complexity of Second Language learning and the strengths and limitations of each method, a mixed method design is adopted to strengthen the quality of this study.

Qualitative research is based on interpretivist epistemology assuming “that social reality is constructed by participants in it” and “is continuously constructed in local situations” (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2005, p. 15). By comparison, quantitative research is based on positivist epistemology assuming an objective social reality that is “relatively constant across time and setting” (Gall et al., 2005, p. 15). Thus, qualitative research in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) functions to discover phenomena that have not been described and to understand these phenomena from the participants’ perspective (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989), while quantitative research is strong in description of the SLA behaviors of a population as “quantification represents a reality for that group” (p. 115). Research has shown that, studies on Vocabulary Learning Beliefs (VLB) and Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) have been dominated by questionnaires (a quantitative method), and have generated somewhat diversified profiles of VLB and VLS as well as mixed results on the correlations between VLB/ VLS and learning outcomes. However, as discussed in the review of these studies, the reliability and validity of these surveys may have been improved if they had been triangulated with qualitative methods such as interviews, given that questionnaire items may be misunderstood by the participants (Barcelos, 2003). Furthermore, Seliger and Shohamy (1989) state that checking the consistency in the participants’ responses, triangulation of questionnaire survey with qualitative methods could help our understanding

of VLB and VLS of the participants, and discover new patterns not described previously, for qualitative research examines the phenomena and presents data from the perspective of the participants.

According to Greene (2001), mixed methodologies can serve for triangulation, complementarities, development, expansion, and initiation. In the present study, mixed methodology is adopted for the purposes of triangulation. Triangulation refers to the adoption of mixed methods to seek convergence, corroboration and correspondence of results across different methods (Greene, 2001). It can be achieved from three aspects: source of data, data collection and analysis method (Freeman, 1998). In this study, all three kinds of triangulation are adopted. The data collection method in the present study is achieved by the adoption of both quantitative methods (the questionnaire survey) and the qualitative method (interview) which will be discussed at length in the research instrument section.

In spite of its advantages, mixed-method research has been criticized for violating the different and incommensurate paradigmatic assumptions of both quantitative and qualitative approaches (Sale & Brazil, 2006). Moreover, bias of the approaches occurs in the reports of mixed-method research as qualitative evidence is often omitted from the synthesis in mixed-method research (Dixon-Woods, Agarwal, Jones, Young & Sutton, 2006). Li (2010) explains this better and states that, to avoid possible problems relating to the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches in the research design, a coordinated mixed-method design is applied in the present study. That is, different methods are designed and implemented discretely, and the interactions between the methods and findings come at the stage where the overall inferences are drawn instead of at earlier stages such as data processing or data analysis (Greene, 2001). As a result, the coordinated mixed-method design should avoid the possible danger of exclusive reliance on a single method (Bryman, 1992) and potential problems in the integration of different methods (Sale & Brazil, 2006), thus improving the quality of the present study.

The process of integrating methodologies and methods is conducted with reference to the following two factors.

- One is the function and importance of each approach in the present study. The quantitative approach (the questionnaire survey) is triangulated by the qualitative approach (interviews), and the results of the survey inform the implementation of the interviews (Li, 2010).

- This raises the other factor— time order, i.e., the extent to which the methods can be carried out simultaneously (Brannen, 1992). Among the two data collection methods, the vocabulary questionnaire survey is conducted first, while interviews will be conducted later.

Considering the time restriction in the data collection process, the mixed method design is considered as the most appropriate for the present study, because it:

- Allows the researcher to approach and analyze the phenomena from different perspectives, and

- Fills the gaps in the research on VLB and VLS (i.e., lack of observation and investigation from the participants' perspective), which were identified in previous studies (Gu & Johnson, 1996; Lou14, 2006; Yang2, 2006).

This is the overview of the mixed methodological design which has been adopted for this study on Vocabulary Learning Strategies.

3.2 Research Design Justification

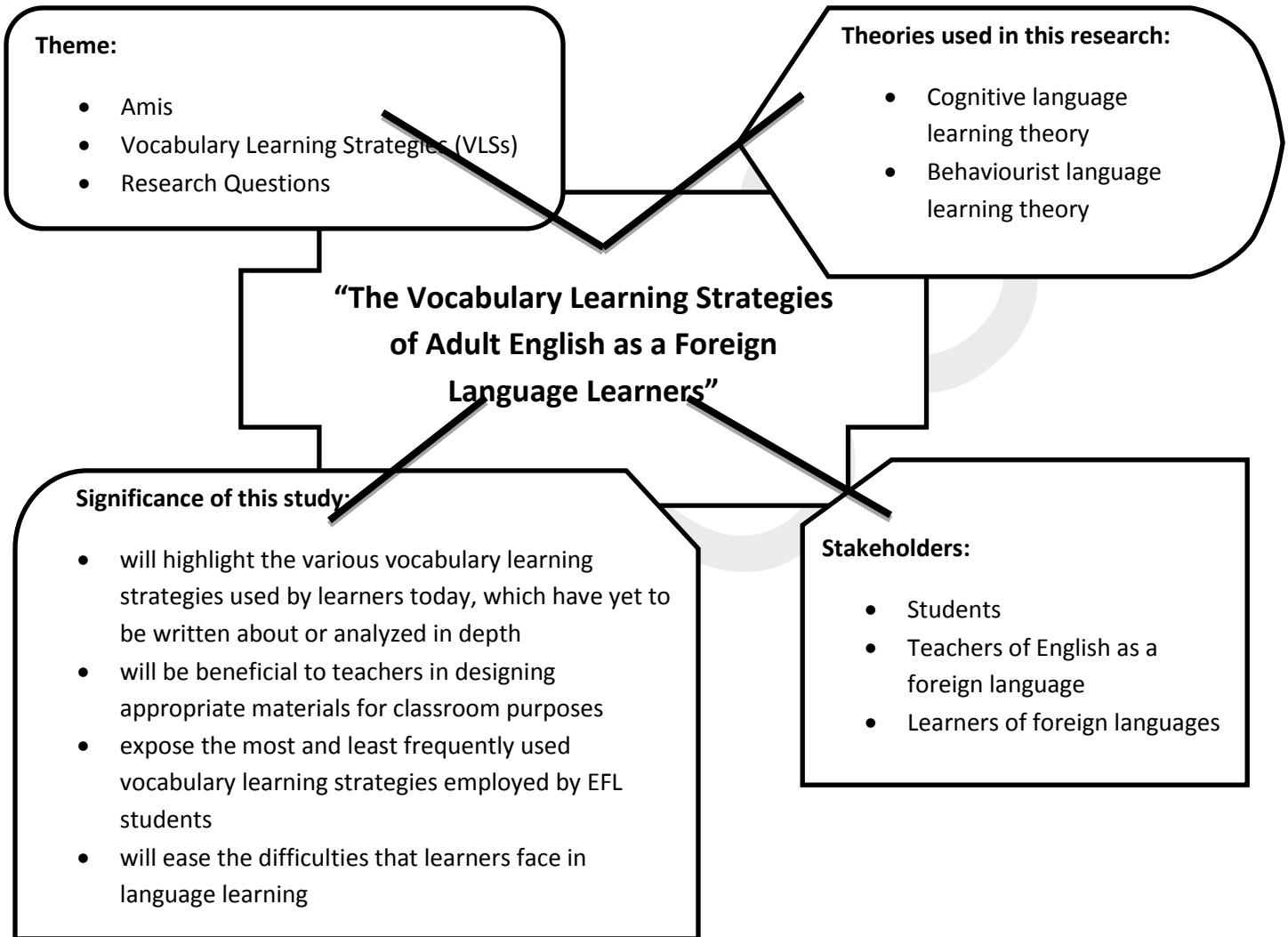
The research design of the present study is that of a mixed method approach. By using both qualitative and quantitative methods researchers are often able to better address the research questions (Creswell and Clark, 2007). Further, Creswell and Clark (2007) have defined the mixed method in a simple way and state; the basic premise of the definition is that the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone...mixed methods research provides strengths that offset the weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative research.

Two main concepts/methods used from the approaches are the questionnaire survey taken from the quantitative approach and individual participants interviews taken from the qualitative approach. The interviews were unstructured so that it could be a direct interaction between the researcher and the respondent. The questionnaire was based on the Likert scale which involves, marking of words (ranking) for statements whereby respondents denote which they agree the most with and those that they disagree with. This will be discussed in later sections; method justification and instrument justification in detail.

Research has shown that, studies on Vocabulary Learning Beliefs (VLB) and Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) have been dominated by questionnaires (a quantitative method), and have generated somewhat diversified profiles of VLB and VLS as well as mixed results on the correlations between VLB/ VLS and learning outcomes. Therefore, it is only appropriate to keep a quantitative method approach as well as a qualitative approach.

The conceptual framework on the following page outlines the research design used in this study of Vocabulary Learning Strategies.

The Conceptual Framework



3.3 Research Instruments/tools Justification

The data collection instruments’ in this study is comprised of a vocabulary learning questionnaire, classroom observations and a semi structured interview.

Merriam (1988) explained that interview utilization is one of the major sources to obtain qualitative data from subjects. The system of conducting an interview is one of the most common

means to investigate, research and to inquire data from the one phenomenon. Interviews are adequate to investigate phenomena which are not directly observable. Further, interviews are interactive, thus the researcher can elicit additional data when the initial answer is off-topic or not clear enough. Both the researcher and the interviewees can make clarifications. This removes the concern of misunderstanding. Moreover, the semi-structured interviews were individual interviews, for they ensure a high level of confidentiality, thus is more likely to generate truth from the interviewees (Brown, 2001).

As highlighted in 3.3, fifteen students were interviewed; these fifteen have been broken into:

	Total Number of Interviewees
Students from Projects Abroad (Nadi) Fiji	10
Students Who Completed the English from the above Institute	5

Each interview lasted 15 to 20 minutes approximately.

Questionnaires are adequate for quantifying data (Victori, 1999b). Hence, the questionnaire is appropriate for data collection as the present study focuses on the Vocabulary Learning Strategies of 53 EFL students. Moreover, the questionnaire is a predominant instrument in previous Vocabulary Learning Strategies research. The questionnaire has been written in English which comprises of one major component; it consists of 48 statements grouped under 9 different categories, these are:

1. Beliefs about vocabulary learning
2. Metacognitive regulation
3. Guessing Strategies
4. Dictionary Strategies
5. Note-taking Strategies
6. Memory Strategies
7. Activation strategies
8. Sources
9. Anxiety and Motivation

The subjects responded using a 3-point Likert scale to indicate the frequency of the usage of each strategy, ranging from Agree (1) to disagree (3).

3.4 Research Population and Sample for the Study

The sample of this study has been divided into various areas but following a simple random sampling method in order to have equal participation from the subjects. The first 25 questionnaires were given to students doing the EFL course at Projects Abroad (Nadi) Fiji; here classes range from beginner level to business class. The questionnaires were given to the head of school, of the institute who distributed it according to every fifth person on the attendance list in each class. Finally, 28 questionnaires were distributed to those students who have completed the English course at the

institute. Furthermore, the 28 learners received this questionnaire without any preferences to level of English ability to keep into account all levels regardless of their individual intellectual ability.

The table below shows the concept of distributing questionnaire:

Distribution of Questionnaire	
Participants	Total Number of Questionnaire
Students from Projects Abroad (Nadi) Fiji	25
Students Who Completed the English from the above Institute	28

The interview was of a semi-structured method conducted with 15 students. Five students were from Projects Abroad (Nadi) Fiji. The remaining 10 students were from the institute who had already completed the EFL course.

The table below shows the concept of interviews conducted:

	Total Number of Interviewees
Students from Projects Abroad (Nadi) Fiji	5
Students Who Completed the English from the above Institutes	10

As the study is on Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLSs), the focus of attention is the learners from Projects Abroad (Nadi), Fiji. The reason being is that the institute has a mixture of students from Europe and Asia which are countries where Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) is high. Many researchers have conducted their research specifically in these regions for example Li (2010) conducted her research on Chinese EFL learners. Learners from these regions face difficulty in acquiring English and one of the larger components of that is vocabulary. Therefore, having these learners in the sample of this study gives credibility to this study. Furthermore, it would give better insights to this research, as various nationalities of sample have been chosen along with the different level of the learners.

3.5 Recording and Data Analysis

The data of this study will be analyzed using descriptive statistics where frequency counts would be tabulated and converted to percentages.

- *Qualitative:* the interview method which has been employed in this study is that of a semi-structured style. In the semi-structured interviews, a list of questions prepared in advance guides the interviewees to address the issues in the questionnaire (Asgari & Mustapha,

2011). Each interview lasted about 15 to 20 minutes and simultaneously, the researcher took notes during the interviews.

- *Quantitative:* The second method of carrying out the study, was adopted from quantitative approach, is the questionnaire. Questionnaires are considered to be relatively easy to construct and administer to a large number of participants (Dornyei, 2003). Questionnaires thus are commonly used for investigating the current use of Vocabulary Learning Strategies. Given the limitations of questionnaires, many researchers (e.g. Dornyei, 2007; Gu, 2003a; Takeuchi, 2003a) advocate for the mixed use of quantitative and qualitative research methods (Li, 2010). Therefore, this study will use an adapted version of the vocabulary strategy questionnaire proposed by Gu & Johnson (1996) and similar to the study conducted by Noor & Amir(2009).

The data is recorded accordingly in descriptive statistics format which forms the basis of the thesis and is highlighted in the conclusion of the research.

3.6 Permission to Proceed

Prior to the commencement of this research project, permission was received from individual participants and the institute highlighted in section 3.4 of this paper.

The permission to proceed was achieved through the letter of consent and sample letter of approval for interviews which have been placed in the Appendix section of this project.

3.7 Ethical Consideration

Resnik (2007) define ethics as a method, procedure, or perspective for deciding how to act and for analyzing complex problems and issues. Several reasons have been given by Resnik why ethics are important:

1. Promotes the aims of the research
2. Researchers can be held accountable to the public
3. ethical standards promote the values that are essential in collaborative work these include; trust, mutual respect, and fairness
4. it helps to build public support for research
5. It also promotes a variety of other important moral values, such as social responsibility, human rights.

In this study of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLSs), the following ethics have been followed during this write up:

1. Consent letter was given to the institute in order to receive permission before conducting the research.
2. Participants were informed about the purpose of this study.
3. Participants will also be kept anonymous.

4. Honesty and openness is the relationship between the researcher and participants
5. The researcher has avoided fabrication, falsification, or misrepresentation of evidence, data, findings or conclusions.

Finally, during this research topic write up a Plagiarism Checker was used to ensure that no part of the work was in any form copied/plagiarized. The website is; <http://www.dustball.com/cs/plagiarism.checker/>

3.8 Theoretical Perspective

This research is based on two influential theories of language learning:

1. *Cognitive language learning theory*
2. *Behaviourist language learning theory*

The cognitive orientation describes second language learning as a complex cognitive skill which, similar to other such skills, engages cognitive systems (such as perception, and information processing) to overcome limitations in human mental capacity which may inhibit performance (Ellis, 2000). One of the important concepts of cognitive theory which has a lot of influence on the vocabulary learning strategies is learning strategies. This study is conducted to examine the vocabulary learning strategies which provide understandings of what vocabulary learning strategies are all about (Asgari and Mustapha, 2011).

Furthermore, the cognitive learning theory focuses on people's thinking abilities, their ability to reason in the learning process (Stern, 1983).

- It emphasizes the meaning of the language being learned
- It recognizes that thinking and learning require problem solving and that problem solving takes in both the first language (L1) and second language (L2)
- It also empathizes that language learning requires mastering the rules of the language

The next theory is the behaviourist theory which is concerned with how children learn in their early language development. Traditional behaviourism hypothesized that when children imitated the language produced by those around them, their attempts to reproduce what they heard received "positive reinforcement" (Lightbown and Spada, 2006:11). Children would continue to imitate and practice these sounds and patterns until they formed a habit of correct language use. According to this view, the quality and quantity of the language the child hears, as well as the consistency of the reinforcement offered by others in the environment, would shape the child's language behaviour (Lightbown & Spada, 2006:11).

This theory had a powerful influence on second and foreign language teaching between the 1940s and the 1970s (Lightbown and Spada, 2006:34). Researchers can get inspiration from this in second language acquisition. The behaviourists viewed imitation and practice as the primary processes in language development. The behaviourist theory explained learning in terms of imitation, practice,

reinforcement, and habit formation (Bei, 2011). This theory highlights that the four aspects play an important role in second language learning. The process of imitation and practice is that when a learner hears a new word, he should imitate the pronunciation of the word and says it repeatedly; thus forming a habit of learning.

Thus, the cognitive language learning theory and the behaviourist language learning theory have been employed in this study of vocabulary learning strategies for English as a foreign language (EFL) learners.

3.9 Conclusion

The purpose of the present study is to examine the use of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) by adult English as a Foreign Language students to better interpret the methods that learners apply to learn new words in English. Thus, it was decided that the best method for this study is a mixed method approach, whereby both qualitative research design as well as quantitative research design be chosen. Furthermore, a qualitative research design is the best method for this investigation as it is better to understand the use of vocabulary learning strategies by the adult EFL students. Creswell (2008) identified qualitative research as an investigative method for understanding a phenomenon based on separate methodological traditions of inquiry that elicit human conditions or social problem. In addition, the researcher is the main instrument of analyzing the data (Asgari & Mustapha, 2011).

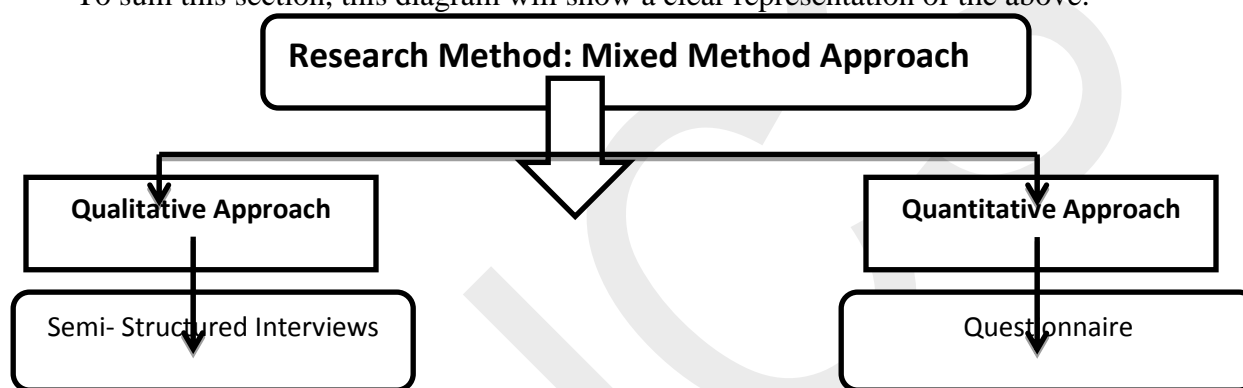
As Merriam (1988) has explained, interview utilization is one of the major sources to obtain qualitative data from subjects. Hence, the method of conducting an interview is one of the most popular means to investigate, research and to inquire data from the one phenomenon (Asgari & Mustapha, 2011). The interviews were conducted individually with fifteen students who were randomly selected between August 5th and September 6th, 2013. The students were from Projects Abroad (Nadi) Fiji, in order to gain a deep understanding of the subjects' varied backgrounds in vocabulary learning, the strategies that they used to learn new words in English.

In addition, the interview method which was employed in this study is that of a semi-structured style. In the semi-structured interviews, a list of questions prepared in advance guides the interviewees to address the issues in the questionnaire (Asgari & Mustapha, 2011). The main objective of this is that it allows the researcher to compare the students' responses in different settings. Due to this, the consistency in the students' responses can be checked. On the other hand, the researcher still has "the freedom to digress and probe for more information" (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 173) for clarification and understanding of the VLB/VLS held by a particular student. Moreover, the semi-structured interviews are individual interviews, for they ensure a high level of confidentiality, thus is more likely to generate truth from the interviewees (Brown, 2001). Each interview lasted about 15 to 20 minutes and simultaneously, the researcher took notes during the interviews.

The second method of carrying out the study, adopted from quantitative approach, is the questionnaire. Questionnaires are considered to be relatively easy to construct and administer to a large

number of participants (Dornyei, 2003). Questionnaires thus are commonly used for investigating the current use of Vocabulary Learning Strategies. Given the limitations of questionnaires, many researchers (e.g. Dornyei, 2007; Gu, 2003a; Takeuchi, 2003a) advocate for the mixed use of quantitative and qualitative research methods (Li, 2010). Therefore, this study used an adapted version of the vocabulary strategy questionnaire proposed by Gu & Johnson (1996) and similar to the study conducted by Noor & Amir (2009). The questionnaire was distributed to 53 students randomly selected between August 1th and August 16th, 2013 and collected until August 23rd. The students were from Projects Abroad (Nadi) Fiji, and those who had completed the English language studies from the institution.

To sum this section, this diagram will show a clear representation of the above:



4.1 Research Finding and Analysis

This study used an adapted version of the Vocabulary Strategy questionnaire proposed by Gu & Johnson (1996) and similar to the study conducted by Noor & Amir (2009). The data is recorded accordingly in descriptive statistics format where frequency counts were tabulated and converted to percentages.

Beliefs about Vocabulary Learning

Table 1 A: Words should be memorized

Statement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
The best way to remember words is to memorize word lists	11 (21%)	23 (43%)	9 (36%)
Repetition is the best way to remember words	47 (89%)	5 (9%)	1 (2%)
It is only necessary to remember one dictionary definition	3 (6%)	14 (26%)	3 (68%)
I can acquire a large vocabulary by memory of individual words	9 (17%)	24 (45%)	2 (38%)

The data revealed that 89% of learners believed that repetition was the best way to remember words. On the other hand, only 21% of learners agreed that memorization of words lists were the best way to remember words. Furthermore, it was highlighted that 68% of the respondents did not agree that it was only necessary to remember one dictionary definition.

Table 1B: Words should be acquired in context (bottom-up)

Statement	A gree	U nsure	D isagree
I can identify the meaning of most words through reading	2 3 (43%)	20 (38%)	1 0 (19%)
I can expand my vocabulary through reading a lot	4 8 (91%)	5 (9%)	0 (0%)
Guessing words in context is one of the best ways to learn vocabulary	3 8 (72%)	11 (20%)	4 (8%)

The research revealed that 91% of the learners stated that through reading they were able to expand their vocabulary. Moreover, 72% of the participants highlighted that “guessing words in context” was one of the best strategies to use in learning vocabulary. Also, 43% showed that they could identify most words through reading.

Table 1C: Words should be studied and put to use (top down)

Statement	Ag ree	Un sure	Dis agree
I revise the new words I have learned	36 (68%)	13 (24%)	4 (8%)
I use the words that I have learned	47 (89%)	6 (11%)	0 (0%)
When I learned the word I pay close attention to its new usage and new meaning	35 (66%)	14 (26%)	4 (8%)
When I have learned the word, I will recall the meaning to help me understand the context	43 (81%)	7 (13%)	3 (6%)

In the study, 89% of the subjects stated that they used the words they learnt. In addition, 81% stated that once they had learnt the words, they recall the meaning in order to help in understanding the context. Also, it was revealed that 66% of the respondents paid close attention to the usage and meaning of the new words.

Metacognition Regulation

Table 2A: Self initiation strategies

Statement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
I think about my progress in vocabulary learning	34 (64%)	13 (25%)	6 (11%)
I try to find out all I can about the new words I learn	21 (40%)	21 (40%)	1 1 (20%)
I only focus on things that are related to examinations	9 (17%)	8 (15%)	3 6 (68%)

It was discovered that learners do self-reflective practices, thus it was revealed that 64% of the learners think about the progress in vocabulary learning. Furthermore, 40% of the respondents try to find out all that they can about the new word which includes; its meaning, usage, other definitions and pronunciation. The belief that learners only focus on the things that relate to examination was proved invalid as 68% of the subjects were against this concept.

Table 2B: Selective attention

Statement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
I know which words are important for me to learn	27 (51%)	21 (40%)	5 (9%)
I look up words that I'm interested in	44 (83%)	4 (8%)	5 (9%)
I make a note of words that seem important to me	35 (66%)	6 (11%)	1 2 (23%)
I know what cues I should use in guessing the meaning of a particular word	17 (32%)	28 (53%)	8 (15%)

The data revealed that 83% learners took own initiative to look up words that they were interested in. Also, 51% of the respondents know the words that are important for them to learn. To assist in achieving the latter, they make notes of words which seem important and a total of 66% learners attested to this. On the contrary, 53% of the learners stated that they were unsure about what cues to use in guessing the meaning of a particular word.

Guessing Strategies

Table 3A: Use background knowledge

Statement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
I skip words I don't understand	19 (36%)	21 (40%)	13 (24%)
I use my experience and common sense to guess	51 (96%)	2 (4%)	0 (0%)
I guess the meaning and then look at the dictionary (when I meet new words in reading)	45 (85%)	8 (15%)	0 (0%)

It was revealed in the study that majority of the respondents used their background knowledge (96%) such as experience and common sense in guessing the meaning of the words. One of the strategies that 85% of the respondents use after guessing the meaning is to look at the dictionary for its meaning and compare the answers.

Table 3B: Using linguistic clues

Statement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
I make use of my knowledge of the topic to guess the meaning of word	46 (87%)	6 (11%)	1 (2%)
Guess word's meaning from word classes, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, to discover the meaning of new vocabulary items	35 (66%)	13 (25%)	5 (9%)
I analyze the word structure (prefix, root and suffix) when guessing the meaning of the word)	25 (47%)	17 (32%)	1 (21%)

In terms of linguistic cues, 66% of the learners use the word classes, such as parts of speech to guess and discover the meaning of new vocabulary items. Furthermore, 87% of the respondents highlighted that they used knowledge of the topic to guess the meaning of a word. It was also revealed that 47% of the learners analyze the word structure (prefix, root and suffix) in order to guess the meaning of the word.

Table 4: Dictionary Strategies

Statement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
I use an English dictionary	35 (66%)	10 (19%)	8 (15%)
I use a bilingual dictionary	41 (77%)	4 (8%)	8 (15%)
I use the dictionary to find out the pronunciation of the word	43 (81%)	3 (6%)	7 (13%)
I use the dictionary to find only the meaning of the word	17 (32%)	10 (19%)	6 (49%)
I look in the dictionary for the grammatical patterns of the word	32 (60%)	12 (23%)	9 (17%)
I look in the dictionary for collocation patterns	33 (62%)	13 (25%)	7 (13%)
I use the dictionary to find the appropriate usage (example sentence) of the word.	48 (90%)	4 (8%)	1 (2%)

One of the methods to learn new vocabulary is through dictionaries. It was revealed that 66% respondents use an English dictionary. In addition, a higher data revealed that 77% learners used bilingual dictionaries. Also, it was found that a common use of the dictionary by the 81% EFL learners is to check the pronunciation of the vocabulary. On the contrary, only 32% use the dictionary to find the meaning of words.

It was interesting to note that 60% of the respondents recourse to the dictionary for the grammatical patterns of the word. Furthermore, 90% of the learners make use of the dictionary in order to find the appropriate usage of the word which includes example sentences.

Table 5: Note Taking Strategies

Statement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
I have a vocabulary note book to list down new word	25 (47%)	6 (11%)	2 (42%)
I write down the English word and translation of the word in my language	33 (62%)	10 (19%)	1 (19%)
I only take note the meaning of the word	4 (8%)	12 (23%)	3 (69%)
I take note of the usages of the word (example sentences, part of speech, etc.)	31 (58%)	10 (19%)	1 (23%)
I take note of the synonym or antonym of the word	17 (32%)	16 (30%)	2 (38%)

A common practice in EFL classroom where learners use vocabulary was also highlighted in the research. The data showed that 47% of learners list down new words in a vocabulary note book. It was impressive to see the role played by translation as 66% of the respondents stated that they write down words and then translate the words into their own language.

Furthermore, 69% of the learners disagreed that they only took note of the meaning of the word. As 58% of the learners stated they took note of the usage of the word, part of speech and example sentences as well.

Interesting to note through the data, 32% take note of the synonym or antonym of the words whereas; 38% do not take note of the synonym or antonym of the word.

Table 6: Activation Strategies

Statement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
I make use of the words I learned in speaking and writing	46 (86%)	4 (8%)	3 (6%)
I make use of the words I learned in everyday situations	24 (45%)	20 (38%)	9 (17%)

The data revealed that 86% of the learners make use of the words learned in speaking and writing. In addition, 45% of the respondents stated that they make use of words learned in everyday situations. This means that learners are confident in using words in everyday situation in either spoken or written English.

Table 7: Memory/ Repetition Strategies

Statement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
To remember a word, I repeat it aloud to myself	41 (77%)	5 (9%)	7 (14%)
To remember a word, I write it repeatedly	28 (53%)	9 (17%)	1 6 (30%)
I create a mental image of the new word to help me remember the word	33 (62%)	12 (23%)	8 (15%)
To remember a word, I analyze the word by breaking it into different parts (prefix, root, suffix)	15 (28%)	16 (30%)	2 2 (42%)

In terms of memory strategies, it was highlighted that 77% learners repeat words aloud to themselves in order to remember a word whereas, 53% of the respondents also choose to write words repeatedly, in order to remember a word. Furthermore, it was interesting to note that 62% of the

respondents create a mental image of a new word in order to remember a new word. However, only 28% of the participants analyze the words by breaking it into different parts in order to remember words.

Table 8: Sources

Statement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
I learn new words only in my class from my teacher	2 (4%)	6 (12%)	4 5 (84%)
I learn new words from reading English materials (e.g. newspaper, novels, etc.)	45 (84%)	4 (8%)	4 (8%)

The data revealed that only 4% of the respondents learned new words from their teacher. In addition, it was highlighted that the major source of new vocabulary for the 84% respondents from reading English materials is such as newspaper, novels, magazines to name a few.

Table 9: Anxiety

Statement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
I feel anxious about reading in English	28 (53%)	10 (19%)	1 5 (28%)
I skip words I don't understand when I read in English	20 (38%)	21 (40%)	1 2 (22%)
I do not know how to learn vocabulary	4 (8%)	10 (19%)	3 9 (73%)

In terms of anxiety of learning English, it was found that 53% of the learners felt anxious about reading in English. It was interesting to note that only 8% of the respondents do not know how to learn vocabulary.

Discussion

5.1 Introduction

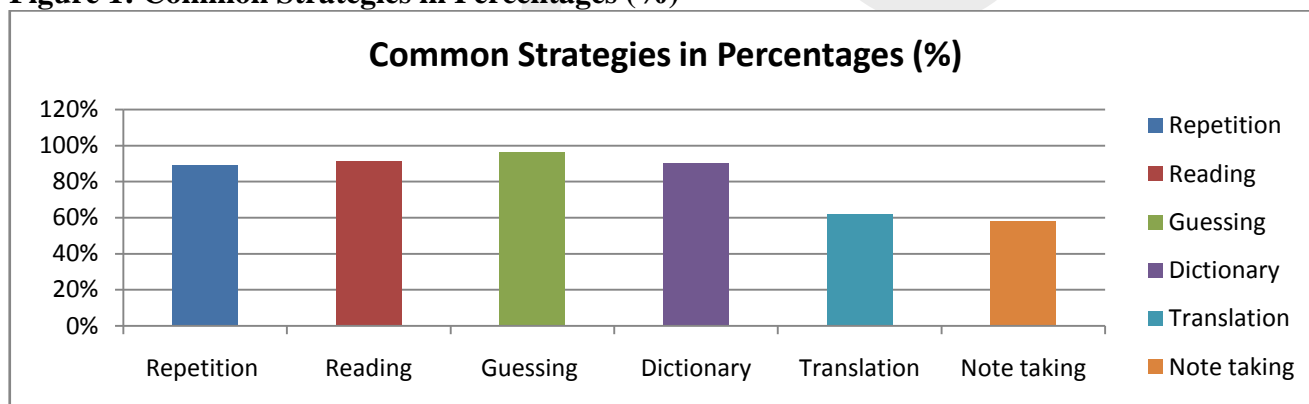
In section four of this research, the findings and analysis are shown using the questionnaire which is the adapted version of the vocabulary strategy questionnaire proposed by Gu & Johnson (1996) and similar to the study conducted by Noor & Amir (2009). The data was recorded accordingly in descriptive statistics format where frequency counts were tabulated and converted to percentages. The findings of the data illustrated that the strategies most frequently used by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in this research were repetition, memorization, dictionary strategies, use of translation and using background knowledge and experience in order to guess.

5.2 Common Strategies

Table 1: Most common strategies used by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners

Strategy	Statistics in Percentages (%)
Repetition	89%
Reading	91%
Guessing (through experience and common sense)	96%
Dictionary	90%
Translation	62%
Note taking	58%

Figure 1: Common Strategies in Percentages (%)



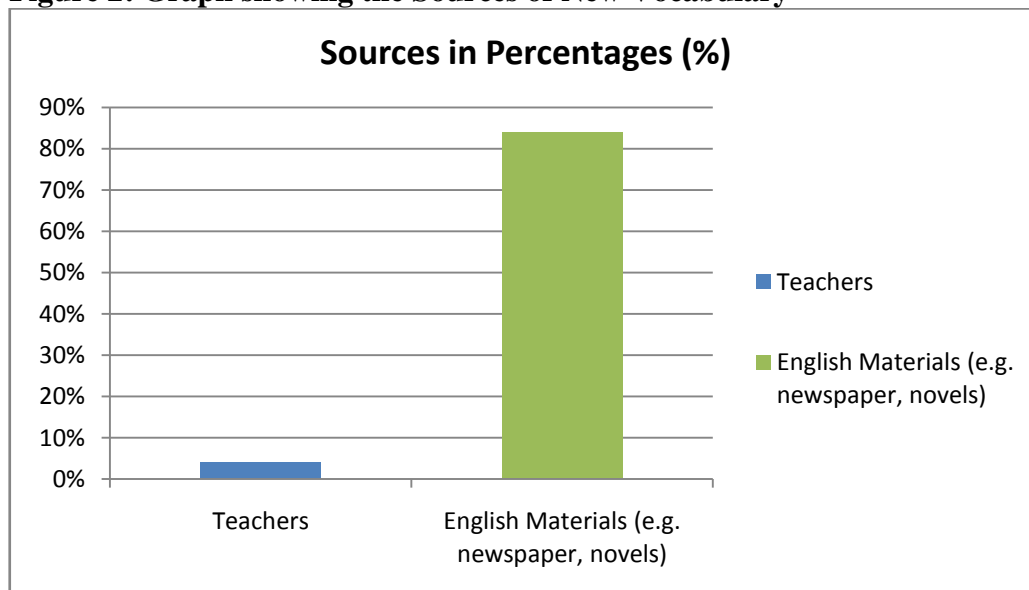
Teachers of English as a foreign/second language have always encountered that learners find it very difficult to acquire vocabulary. When learners sometimes question teachers how vocabulary can be acquired then teachers are not equipped with a variety of strategies to explain to the learners but simply two or three. The learners need proper guidance when acquiring vocabulary as it is the basis of the whole language which they want to learn. Therefore, Figure 1 will give a clear indication on the most popular strategies that learners are using. These can be applied to EFL classrooms in order assist learners in acquiring vocabulary.

5.3 Sources

Table 2: Sources of New Vocabulary

Sources	Statistics in Percentages (%)
Teachers	4%
English Materials (e.g. newspaper, novels)	84%

Figure 2: Graph showing the Sources of New Vocabulary



In the research, it was revealed that only 4% of the learners relied on the teachers to provide new vocabulary. On the contrary, 84% of the respondents' revealed that the major source of new vocabulary was through reading materials such as newspapers, novels and magazines. This implies the kind of materials which should be exposed in EFL classrooms. It also provides value insight that students rely more on reading materials than the teachers as source of new words. Therefore, EFL teachers need to review the kind of materials used in classrooms and provide a variety of reading materials so that learners can increase and enhance their vocabulary.

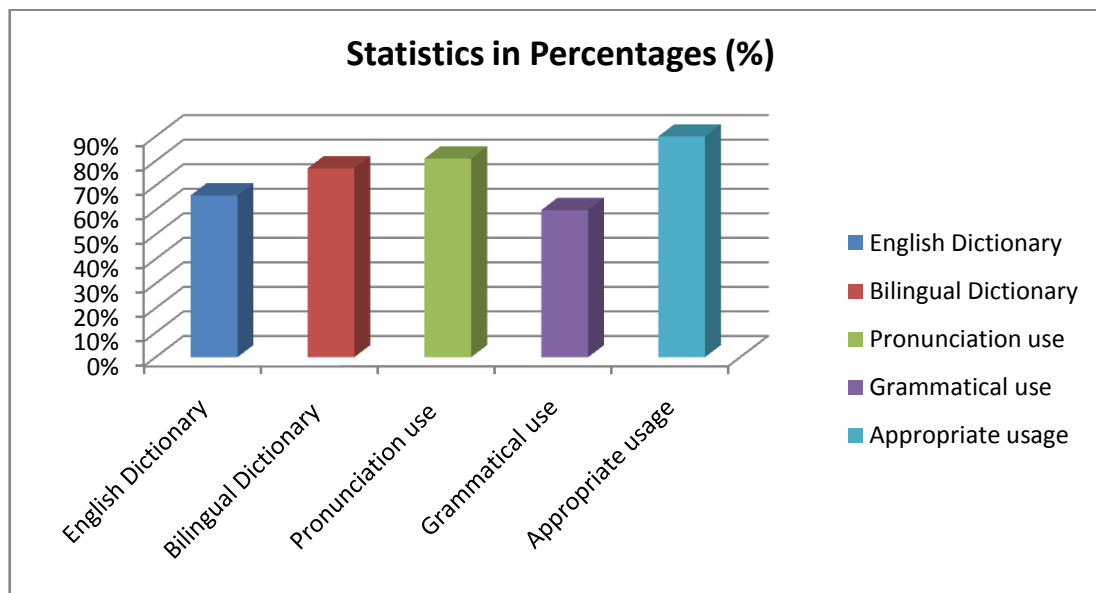
5.4 Use of Dictionaries

The various uses of dictionaries have been revealed in this study. Different learners make use of the dictionary in their own way. The statistics show the common type of dictionaries used as well as the purposes the learners use the dictionary for.

Table 3: Types and Usage of Dictionaries

Dictionary Types and Usage	Statistics in Percentages (%)
English Dictionary	66%
Bilingual Dictionary	77%
Pronunciation use	81%
Grammatical use	60%
Appropriate usage (example sentences)	90%

Figure 3: Dictionary Type and Usage



The data on dictionaries is interesting to note as shown in Figure 3. More EFL learners prefer to use bilingual dictionaries (77%) than English dictionaries (66%). Furthermore, learners have indicated the different uses of the dictionary. Some of the most common uses of dictionaries highlighted in the research show that 81% of learners use dictionaries to check the pronunciation of a word. In addition, 60% of the learners' use the dictionary for grammatical purposes and 90% of the learners use it to find the appropriate usage of a word which includes the example sentences.

This implies the importance a dictionary has as a strategy to an EFL learner in acquiring vocabulary. Therefore, learners must be encouraged to make essential use of the dictionary in order to facilitate vocabulary learning.

6.1 Introduction

This research on Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLSs) is a platform for solving learner frustration as this is one area which makes the whole component of language learning. As mentioned by Wilkins (1972), *"without grammar, very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary, nothing can be convey"*. In a foreign land example Uganda, if someone is feeling very thirsty, then knowing the correct grammar is not that important. What is most important in that situation is the correct vocabulary, if the person who is thirsty is able to say "water" in the Ugandan language then the needs is met and communication is actually what was required.

The learners of EFL/ESL need to acquire the strategies of learning vocabulary, not just for classroom purposes but for communication outside the class and in daily context. It has been often observed that due to time constraints, teachers are unable to educate learners on VLSs. However, this research will allow learners to employ VLSs on their own and encourage independent learning.

Furthermore, when teachers are aware of the various vocabulary learning strategies available then it will significantly contribute to the kind of materials they prepare for classes. This is an important topic which will benefit a wider audience and not limited to or specifically for English as a foreign language.

6.2 Recommendations

Vocabulary learning is an integral process of English as a foreign Language; Ediger (1999) embraces the idea that developing students' vocabulary knowledge should be a major goal in each academic discipline. Vocabulary development emphasizes that students seek purpose in learning (Noor & Amir 2009). Thus, purposeful learning in vocabulary development means that students perceive reasons for achieving good vocabulary knowledge.

It is also important to the teachers; there is a need to understand that learners develop their vocabulary over a period of time.

Furthermore, it has been suggested by Anderson (1999) that there should be a steady study of vocabulary within a reading improvement program. As highlighted in section 5, the data revealed that 91% of the learners acquired their vocabulary through reading a variety of English materials. It is therefore recommended that educators introduce a variety of English reading materials in the class.

Furthermore, the dictionary is a power tool to use and as indicated in section 5, the learners prefer English and bilingual dictionaries for a variety of purposes. These include checking of pronunciation, learning the grammatical usage of a word as well as checking the appropriate usage of a word such as the example sentences. In addition, Folse (2004) states, research shows that learners who use a dictionary learn more vocabulary than those who rely on guessing from context and that learners who use a bilingual dictionary actually remember vocabulary better than those using a monolingual dictionary.

Knowing and understanding why certain factors become the reason of vocabulary learning strategies choice will benefit the teachers and researchers so that they can design appropriate materials for the students. This is attested by Ghazal (2007), stating learning new vocabulary is a challenge to foreign language students but they can overcome by having access to a variety of vocabulary learning strategies.

6.3 Conclusion

This study investigated the most frequently used vocabulary learning strategies by adult English as foreign language learners. The various aspects of the study and the methods that were employed in order to achieve the objectives will be significant to a larger audience of language learning. Folse (2004) states, perhaps the recent interest in second language vocabulary research will also mean a rethinking of the way we approach the teaching of vocabulary including the necessity to teach vocabulary extensively to our students. Further, Folse (2004) adds; for too long, second language

teaching has been dominated by an emphasis on communication, but accurate communication depends largely on an extensive knowledge of vocabulary.

Despite the fact that there has been much research in finding the best strategies learners can use in order to acquire new vocabulary, the papers reviewed show that there is still great potential in this area. In fact, it is very difficult to conclude which strategy is best to be employed by learners; the research shows that if learners use a variety of strategies then only they will be able to learn more vocabulary. Gu (2003) explains that Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLSs) are an indispensable tool in describing and explaining the vocabulary development of a foreign language. VLS are also tools in empowering learners to make wise decisions in terms of what to learn and how to learn.

The focus of attention should be on how actually vocabulary acquisition takes place in order to understand the strategies that can be applied to make significant benefits to English as Foreign Language learners. Vocabulary acquisition research in the linguistics tradition has largely concentrated on vocabulary (target: what is to be learned; or product: what is learned) rather than acquisition (how is vocabulary learned, the learning/acquisition process) (Crow, 1986; Meara, 1980).

It was demonstrated in a research by XHAFERI, B., & XHAFERI, G. (2010) that learning new words is a complex process and the students need to use many strategies in order to remember the meaning of the words. However, the teachers' greatest concern is helping students to learn new words and Gu (1992) points out that "It is only the number of strategies and the frequencies of strategy use that deprive the poor of improvement, providing them with more alternatives obtained from the strategically rich and telling them to use their strategies more often would easily solve the problem". Little effort has been made to teach students strategies to improve their vocabulary learning. However, merely giving students lists of words to learn does not result in effective learning, despite the growing awareness on the part of learners of the importance of enhancing their communicative competence of the target language and the recognition that a much larger vocabulary is needed to this end (XHAFERI, B., & XHAFERI, G. 2010).

One of the first question's that is asked a large number of times in EFL/ESL classes is how to learn new vocabulary of the English language, and from the research note taking and making effective use of a dictionary proves to be a good strategy. The change in the status of vocabulary in language learning has affected teaching and learning practices, as well as materials writing which has become more selective about what vocabulary to include (O'Dell, 1997).

Therefore, the analysis of various strategies highlighted in this research is a worth employing and introducing to EFL learners. There is also potential for future research in this field and researchers can use the data from this study as future framework.

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Appendix

A). Semi-structured Interview/Guide for students

Dear (Name of participant)

Thank you once again for your kind participation. In this interview, I would like you to share your opinions on vocabulary learning and use of strategies in your regular practice. You will be given a list of interview questions in advance and 5 minutes for your preparation. Thank you for your kind help.

Regards,
Prashneel R. Goundar

Interview questions

1. How important do you think vocabulary learning is? Why?
2. Do you consider yourself an efficient vocabulary learner? Can you give me any illustration?
3. Do you think as long as you work hard enough, you can learn English vocabulary well?
4. Have you ever set a goal in vocabulary learning? If so, what is it? Have you fulfilled it?
5. What is the most common feeling in your vocabulary learning? What are the occasions it usually emerges?
6. Which way do you consider the most efficient in learning vocabulary? For example: rote memorization, unintentional learning in the context.
7. What does it mean to you when you say you have learnt a word?
8. Do you do extra work in vocabulary learning other than the teachers' requirements? How?
9. What are vocabulary learning strategies?
10. Can you give some examples of vocabulary learning strategies?
11. Which sources have helped you to learn vocabulary learning strategies? Examples, teachers, colleagues etc.

B). Questionnaire on Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Table 1: Beliefs about vocabulary learning

(Please put an 'X' in the appropriate box)

Statement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
The best way to remember words is to memorize word lists			
Repetition is the best way to remember words			
It is only necessary to remember one dictionary definition			
I can acquire a large vocabulary by memory of individual words			

Table 1b:

(Please put an 'X' in the appropriate box)

Statement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
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I can identify the meaning of most words through reading			
I can expand my vocabulary through reading a lot			
Guessing words in context is one of the best ways to learn vocabulary			

Table 1c:

(Please put an 'X' in the appropriate box)

Statement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
I revise the new words I have learned			
I use the words that I have learned			
When I learned the word I pay close attention to its new usage and new meaning			
When I have learned the word, I will recall the meaning to help me understand the context			

Table 2: Metacognition Regulation

(Please put an 'X' in the appropriate box)

Statement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
I think about my progress in vocabulary learning			
I try to find out all I can about the new words I learn			
I only focus on things that are related to examinations			

Table 2b: Selective attention

(Please put an 'X' in the appropriate box)

Statement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
I know which words are important for me to learn			
I look up words that I'm interested in			
I make a note of words that seem important to me			
I know what cues I should use in guessing the meaning of a particular word			

Table 3: Guessing Strategies

(Please put an 'X' in the appropriate box)

Statement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
I skip words I don't understand			
I use my experience and common sense to guess			
I guess the meaning and then look at the dictionary (when I meet new words in reading)			

Table 3b: Using linguistic clues

(Please put an 'X' in the appropriate box)

Statement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
I make use of my knowledge of the topic to guess the meaning of word			
Guess word's meaning from word classes, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, to discover the meaning of new vocabulary items			
I analyze the word structure (prefix, root and suffix) when guessing the meaning of the word)			

Table 4: Dictionary Strategies

(Please put an 'X' in the appropriate box)

Statement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
I use an English dictionary			
I use a bilingual dictionary			
I use the dictionary to find out the pronunciation of the word			
I use the dictionary to find only the meaning of the word			
I look in the dictionary for the grammatical patterns of the word			
I look in the dictionary for collocation patterns			
I use the dictionary to find the appropriate usage (example sentence) of the word.			

Table 5: Note Taking Strategies

(Please put an 'X' in the appropriate box)

Statement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
I have a vocabulary note book to list down new word			
I write down the English word and translation of the word in my language			
I only take note the meaning of the word			
I take note of the usages of the word (example sentences, part of speech, etc.)			
I take note of the synonym or antonym of the word			

Table 6: Activation Strategies

(Please put an 'X' in the appropriate box)

Statement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
I make use of the words I learned in speaking and writing			
I make use of the words I learned in everyday situations			

Table 7: Memory/ Repetition Strategies

(Please put an 'X' in the appropriate box)

Statement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
To remember a word, I repeat it aloud to myself			
To remember a word, I write it repeatedly			
I create a mental image of the new word to help me remember the word			
To remember a word, I analyze the word by breaking it into different parts (prefix, root, suffix)			

Table 8: Sources

(Please put an 'X' in the appropriate box)

Statement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
I learn new words only in my class from my teacher			
I learn new words from reading English materials (e.g. newspaper, novels, etc.)			

Table 9: Anxiety

(Please put an 'X' in the appropriate box)

Statement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
I feel anxious about reading in English			
I skip words I don't understand when I read in English			
I do not know how to learn vocabulary			

C). Sample Consent Letter

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing this letter to seek your permission to carry out a research in teaching English as foreign language field. I am currently employed by Projects Abroad Nadi as the English teacher and have been teaching English as a Foreign Language for the last 4 years. As part of my Mater of Arts research project at the University of Fiji, I need to request the consent in order to complete my research.

My research topic is "Vocabulary Learning Strategies of adult English as a foreign language learners". The aim of this study is to find out which strategies a learner uses when they learn vocabulary as it is one of the most challenging components of language learning.

This study will not only be significant to students of English as a foreign/second language but to students learning any language. Learners get frustrated when they are unable to express themselves and the main reason for this is when they lack enough vocabulary or the suitable vocabulary. I have

chosen your institute because it has students from various countries, therefore, the findings of this study will be useful to a wider audience.

Enclosed in this letter is of the plan which outlines the research methodology and how the questionnaires will be disturbed and how the interviews will be conducted. I would be very grateful if you could respond to me with your permission to carry out the research at the institute from August 2013 until September 2013.

I would appreciate your feedback and suggestions also, please feel free to let me know if you have any queries.

Yours faithfully

Prashneel. R. Goundar

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