# A Study of Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Vocabulary Size of Iraqi EFL Learners 

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#### Abstract

The present study is set to investigate the vocabulary learning strategies used by Iraqi EFL learners and how these strategies are related to their vocabulary size. Two instruments have been manipulated; Schmitt's (1997) vocabulary learning strategies scale and Nation's (1990) vocabulary level test. The results reveal that the Iraqi EFL learners are unaware of the mechanisms they are supposed to adopt in learning vocabulary. Consequently, the participants' vocabulary size is rather limited and has no relation with the strategies they reported using.

\section*{Introduction}

Vocabulary is central to language learning as it is seen as the heart of both language pedagogy and communication( Laufer, 1986:70). However, attention has always been diverted to teaching and learning grammar, leaving foreign language students especially at the university level to learn vocabulary on their own without much guidance. Consequently, they would face difficulties in communication due to limited vocabulary. This makes it so significant to explore the techniques or actions adopted by foreign language students to learn vocabulary, and this is the core of vocabulary learning strategies research.


The present study aims at answering the following questions :

1. What type of vocabulary learning strategies Iraqi EFL learners mainly manipulate in learning and retaining vocabulary in English?
2. Are Iraqi EFL learners high, medium or low vocabulary learning strategies users?
3. What is the vocabulary size of the Iraqi EFL learners ?
4. Is there any ( possible ) relation between Iraqi EFL learners' vocabulary size and the vocabulary learning strategies they use?

## A Taxonomy of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

The definition of vocabulary learning strategies could be based on the definition of language learning strategies since they form part of them ( Nation, 2001:217 ). Schmitt (1997:203 ) views vocabulary learning strategies to be" the processes by which a learner obtains, stores vocabulary items when encountering a word for the first time and retrieves, remembers and uses vocabulary items when communicating. "A more comprehensive definition is provided by Catalan ( 2003 :

56 ) when saying that vocabulary learning strategies are simply the
knowledge about the mechanisms ( processes, strategies ) used in order to learn vocabulary as well as steps or actions taken by students(a) to find out the meaning of unknown words, (b) to retain them in long - term memory, (c) to recall them at will, and (d) to use them in oral or written mode.
In classifying vocabulary learning strategies, different ways have been followed by different researchers. However, the most acceptable and dependent one is that of Schmitt's ( 1997 ) since it stems from the extensive language learning strategies taxonomy developed by Oxford ( 1990 )which includes the Memory, Cognitive, Compensation, Metacognitive, Affective, and Social categories.

Schmitt ( 1997 : 210 - 212) divides vocabulary learning strategies into two major classes :

- Discovery strategies which are useful for the initial discovery of a word meaning.
- Consolidation strategies which are exploited in retaining a word once it has been encountered.
Each one of these two classes is further divided into sub-strategies. Discovery strategies include :
- Determination strategies which involve analyzing the unknown word, its constituent elements, its surrounding context, checking its L1 cognate, or consulting the dictionary to determine meaning.
- Social strategies maintain working with others( mainly teachers and classmates ) to arrive at word definition.
Consolidation strategies, on the other hand, involve four sub-strategies :
- Social : which indicate working with others ( such as L2 native speakers, teachers, and classmates ) in studying and developing one's vocabulary.
- Memory : they are the ones learners manipulate to aid recall of vocabulary like using images of the word meaning or form, connecting the word to its synonym or antonym, paying attention to the word spelling or pronunciation, memorizing affixes and roots, and learning the word part of speech.
- Cognitive : they are seen to be similar to the memory strategies, but they tend to focus more on the mechanical aspects of vocabulary learning like keeping a vocabulary notebook, repeating the word either orally or in written form, taking notes and highlighting words, and labeling physical objects.
- Metacognitive : they are related to how the learners can evaluate their own learning in order to be able to improve it most efficiently. These strategies include studying the word repeatedly, paying attention to the words used in L2 media, and testing oneself with vocabulary tests regularly.
The use of these strategies differ between learners according to certain factors
like gender ( Catalan, 2003 ); academic major ( Akbari, 2017 ); language proficiency, learning styles, personality and age ( $\mathrm{Gu}, 2013$ ).


## Vocabulary Size of Language Learners

Elman ( 2004; cited in Hashemaian and Mostaghasi, 2015:6) believes that human beings have what is called mental lexicon in which they store and retrieve words for later use. The amount of L2 words that foreign language learners have, regardless of how well they know them, in their mental lexicon is known as vocabulary size( Nakatake, 2011: 135).

The question that should be raised here is how many words that EFL learners should know. There is no consensus among researchers on the exact number of words that EFL learners are supposed to have. Nation ( $1990: 47 ; 2005: 593$ ) thinks that 2.000- level is the least requirement. But if one wants to learn English better, 5.000word level is needed (Schmitt, 2000 : 40 ). Laufer ( 1997 : 23 ) states that as a start, the vocabulary size required for reading comprehension is 3.000 -word level due to the fact that this level covers between $90-95 \%$ of any text. Yet, Hirsh and Nation ( 1992: 695) find that 5.000-word level is sufficient to read and understand any text, whether advanced, academic or authentic. To sum up, it can be said that the $2.000-$ word is the least level required from the EFL learners, and the 5.000 - word is demanded for effective language use and reading comprehension.

## Methodology

## Participants

A total of 100 undergraduates Iraqi EFL students take part in this study. They are fourth year students of Dept. of English, College of Education ( for Human Sciences ), University of Basra. The participants are native speakers of Arabic, learning English as a foreign language to become teachers of English in Iraqi secondary schools. They all have been learning English for at least twelve years.

## Instruments

Two major instruments have been used to arrive at the study objectives. First, Vocabulary Learning Strategies ( VLS ) designed by Schmitt ( 1997 ) is utilized to investigate the type of vocabulary learning strategies adopted by the participants. They are asked to respond to a written 39 - item scale through rating their frequency of usage of the vocabulary learning strategies according to a scale of five choices as the likert scale whose items are given scores : ( 0 point $)=$ Never; ( 1 point $)=$ Seldom; ( 2 points $)=$ Sometimes; ( 3 points $)=$ Usually; and ( 4 points $)=$ Always.

The 39 items represent the sub - classes of the five categories of vocabulary learning strategies which are : Determination, Social, Memory, Cognitive, and Metacognitive ( Table 1). It is important to mention that there has been a pilot test to 30 participants who have not been included in the final application of the scale in order to verify the scale reliability coefficient. Cronbach - Alpha formula through the

SPSS software is used, and the reliability value is found to be ( 0.955 ).
Table ( 1 ) : Distribution of Vocabulary Learning Strategies in Schmitt's Scale (1997)

| No. | VLS | Items No. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1 | Determination | $1,2,3,4,5,6,7$ |
| 2 | Social | $8,9,10,11,12$ |
| 3 | Memory | $13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22$, |
|  |  | $23,24,25,26,27,28,29,35$ |
| 4 | Cognitive | $30,31,32,33,34,36$ |
| 5 | Metacognitive | $37,38,39$ |

The second instrument is the Vocabulary Level Test ( VLT ) developed by Nation ( 1990 ). It is widely used as a standardized test to measure EFL learners' receptive vocabulary. The test is divided into five levels : the 2.000 -word level (high frequency words ), the 3.000 -word level ( low frequency ), the 5.000 -word level ( low frequency) , the 10.000-word level ( low frequency ), and the academic word level ( high frequency for learners with academic purposes ). Each level contains ten blocks of items like the one illustrated below, and thus tests 30 words. It tests receptive knowledge and does not demand the learners to know each word used in the test since the distracters are not related in meaning. It tests whether there is some knowledge of the word to build on( Nation, 2005:593).

| 1. business |  |
| :---: | :--- |
| 2. clock | $\ldots \ldots \ldots \quad$ part of a house |
| 3. horse | $\ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \quad$ animal with four legs |
| 4. pencil | $\ldots \ldots \ldots . \quad$ something used for writing |
| 5. shoe |  |
| 6. wall |  |

## Data Analysis and Discussion

The completed vocabulary learning strategies scale and the vocabulary level test of each participant have been checked for identification prior to entering the data onto SPSS ) Statistical Package for the Social Sciences ) software version 19. To answer the first research question, descriptive statistics( minimum, maximum, mean,, and standard deviation ) have been determined for the performance of the participants. To answer the second research question, the frequency of use of each strategy is identified according to its mean. According to Oxford's( 1990 : 277 ) scoring system, 2.4 and below show low strategy use, between 2.4 and 3.5 shows medium strategy use, and 3.5 and above show high strategy use. Again descriptive statistics are used to determine the vocabulary size of the study sample ( the third research question ). As for the fourth research question, the One - Way Anova test was used to find out if there is any relation between the data of the VLS scale and the VLT results.

Table ( 2 ) exposes the means and standard deviation of the discovery vocabulary learning strategies : Determination, that Iraqi EFL learners report to manipulate when attempting to find out new words meaning. The first two strategies that got the highest means are guessing from context and checking L1 cognate ( mean $=2.5$ ). Guessing from context is considered the most important strategy that learners are supposed to use when meeting new words for the first time. Some researchers prefer to use the term "inferring" instead of "guessing" since the learner has to depend on what is familiar ( available clues ) in the text in order to find out the meaning of the unknown word (Nation, 2005:589).

Cognates are " words in different languages which have descended from a common parent word " (Schmitt, 1997:209 ). Checking if the word is Arabic can be seen as a positive point since the similarity that may exist between the target language vocabulary item and the native language one may facilitate and quicken learning the new L2 word according to the L1 positive transfer concept ( Otwinowska-Kasztelanic, 2011:3).

Dictionary is an indispensible instrument in vocabulary learning. But which type of dictionaries the EFL learners are supposed to use : Bilingual or Monolingual ? It has not been surprising to notice that the participants in the present study reported that they use the bilingual (English - Arabic ) dictionary ( mean $=2.40$, medium ) much more frequently than the monolingual (English - English ) one ( mean $=2.22$, medium ). This is ascribed to the fact that the bilingual dictionary gives them " security of a concrete answer ", while the monolingual dictionary " often forces them to guess the meaning, adding more doubts to the already existing ones " (Yorio, 1971 : 113; cited in Hayati and Fattahzadeh, 2006 : 126 ). In fact, EFL learners' preference for bilingual dictionaries was reported in a number of studies of vocabulary learning strategies like Lee( 2007 ); Kaya and Charkova ( 2014 ); Goundar( 2015 ); and Rabadi (2016).

The morphological analysis of the unknown word is another significant strategy the participants reported that they adopt in decoding meaning ( mean $=2.24$, medium). This indicates that Iraqi EFL students do have some sort of morphological awareness, which entails the learners' sensitivity to the word morphological features that can aid them in inferring meaning. Studies confirm that among all the linguistic features of the word in English, morphological analysis is considered to contribute most strongly to the semantic aspect of vocabulary knowledge since it allows them to infer meaning through extracting and utilizing morphological information from the written form of the word ( Ramirez, et al., $2009: 1$ and Ichikawa, $2014: 27$ ). Furthermore, Nation (2001:264 ) contends that:
knowledge of affixes and roots has two values for a learner of English: it can be used to help the learning of unfamiliar words by relating these words to known
words or to known prefixes and suffixes, and it can be used as a way of checking whether an unfamiliar word has been successfully guessed from context.
As for the word part of speech, it seems that checking this feature in the unknown word does not help the students so much in getting its meaning. Similarly, guessing meaning from textual clues like pictures is not found to be beneficial.

Table ( 2 ) : Descriptive Statistics of Discovery Strategies : Determination

| No. | Item | Participants | Min. | Max. | Mean | Std. | Rank | Use |
| :---: | :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 5 | Guessing from <br> context | 100 | 0 | 4 | 2.50 | 1.227 | 1 | Medium |
| 3 | Checking the word <br> L1 cognate | 100 | 0 | 4 | 2.50 | 1.176 | 2 | Medium |
| 6 | Using English- <br> Arabic dictionary | 100 | 0 | 4 | 2.40 | .964 | 3 | Medium |
| 2 | Checking familiar <br> parts in the word ( <br> affixes ) | 100 | 0 | 4 | 2.24 | 1.074 | 5 | Medium |
| 7 | Using English- <br> English dictionary | 100 | 0 | 4 | 2.22 | 1.011 | 6 | Medium |
| 1 | Checking the word <br> part of speech | 100 | 0 | 4 | 1.74 | 1.330 | 7 | Low |
| 4 | Using any clue ( <br> pictures or gestures <br> to guess meaning | 100 | 0 | 4 | 1.50 | 1.142 | 9 | Low |

Table ( 3 ) presents the means and standard deviation of the two social strategies that the Iraqi EFL participants depend on in discovering meaning of unknown words. What is interesting to note here is that the students here prefer working with each other ( mean $=2.34$, medium $)$ than seeking their teachers' help ( mean $=1.66$, low ). This result comes to be consistent with the findings of other studies like Bennett ( 2006:37) and Elzubier ( $2016: 518$ ). This reflects that the participants show some sort of independence. When they encounter an unknown word, those students attempt first using some strategies before resorting to their teachers.

Table (3 ) : Descriptive Statistics of Discovery Strategies : Social

| No. | Item | Participants | Min. | Max. | Mean | Std. | Rank | Use |
| :---: | :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 9 | Asking classmates <br> for help | 100 | 0 | 4 | 2.34 | .913 | 1 | Medium |
| 8 | Asking for the <br> teacher help | 100 | 0 | 4 | 1.66 | 1.017 | 2 | Low |

Retaining words in long - term memory for later use is represented in the consolidation strategies. The first type of those strategies is the social one. Table ( 4 ) supports the finding explained earlier that the participants in this study do not
favourremembering and practicing using the vocabulary they know with their teachers, but rather with native speakers of English and with each other. This can be ascribed again to showing independence or to the fact that they may have developed some negative feelings about their teachers. Nation and Dansereau ( 1988; cited in Schmitt, 1997:211), on the other hand, maintain that students working with each other in finding new word meaning or retrieving vocabulary is a good sign of cooperative learning that stimulates active processing of information and encourages them to reinforce their learning by collaborating outside the classroom.

Table (4) : Descriptive Statistics of Consolidation Strategies : Social

| No. | Item | Participants | Min. | Max. | Mean | Std. | Rank | Use |
| :---: | :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 12 | Talking with <br> native speakers | 100 | 0 | 4 | 1.62 | 1.301 | 1 | Low |
| 10 | Studying the word <br> with classmates | 100 | 0 | 4 | 1.60 | 1.206 | 2 | Low |
| 11 | Ask the teacher to <br> check definition | 100 | 0 | 4 | 1.38 | 1.023 | 3 | Low |

Table ( 5 ) reveals the descriptive statistics of the second type of the consolidation strategies, namely, memory ( also known as mnemonics ), which in their turn can be found in four sub - categories. They are the (a) rote learning strategies; (b) creating mental images strategies; (c) applying images and sounds strategies; and (d) structural reviewing ones(Sinhaneti and kyaw, 2012: 988).

Making use of context in consolidating vocabulary in memory is an example of creating mental images sub-category. The strategy that gets the highest mean of frequency of use is related to using new words in sentences. Writing sentences with new vocabulary after understanding the word seems fruitful. Researchers, and especially the ones working in reading comprehension domain, do recommend the Sentence Writing Method (also known as the Sentence Generate one ) to foreign language learners since it aids them to increase their vocabulary and facilitates the task of retaining new words to be retrieved later when needed ( Dale, O' Rourke and Bamman, 1971; cited in Kashani and Shafiee, 2016:2). Three other strategies make use of the same idea have, in fact, scored an acceptable level of frequency of use. They are :connecting the word to a personal experience ( mean $=2.28$, medium ), remembering the words that precede and follow the new vocabulary item( mean $=$ 2.10, medium ), and making their own definition of the word ( mean $=2.12$, medium ).Oxford and Scarcella( 1994:233) observe that memorizing words out of context ( the de - contextualizedapproach ) might be useful for tests only although students are likely to rapidly forget them. Analysing the word morphologically is another technique of creating a mental image of the vocabulary. The participants have already reported that they use this strategy in deciphering meaning, and it seems also useful
for them in remembering the vocabulary ( mean $=2.42$, medium ). The participants reported that they find the word part of speech useful in memorizing words( mean $=$ 2.18, medium ) although they do not depend on this feature in decoding new word meaning as illustrated above.

Rote learning strategies are also found useful in memorizing words.They are mainly related to repetition mechanism with the strategy of saying the word aloud many times ( mean $=2.38$, medium ) and semantic mapping ( mean $=2.18$, medium ). Placing the meaning or form of the vocabulary items in visual image either in the mind or in actual drawing is called using imagery. The respondents make a mental image of the word meaning ( mean $=2.20$, medium ), but the image of the form does not receive the same frequency of use ( mean $=1.86$, low ).

Making a structural review includes memorizing the word through studying its spelling and pronunciation. What is really surprising here is that the means of those strategies frequency of use show that they are not so much favoured by the participants in the present study although studying spelling gets higher mean ( 2.08 ) than studying the word pronunciation ( 1.98 ).

Table (5) : Descriptive Statistics of Consolidation Strategies: Memory

| No. | Item | Participants | Min. | Max. | Mean | Std. | Rank | Use |
| :---: | :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 20 | Using new words <br> in sentences | 100 | 0 | 4 | 2.62 | .940 | 1 | Medium |
| 26 | Remembering the <br> word from its parts | 100 | 0 | 4 | 2.42 | 1.084 | 2 | Medium |
| 24 | Saying the words <br> aloud when <br> meeting them for <br> the first time | 100 | 0 | 4 | 2.38 | 1.117 | 3 | Medium |
| 15 | Connecting the <br> word to a personal <br> experience | 100 | 0 | 4 | 2.28 | 1.138 | 4 | Medium |
| 14 | Making a mental <br> image of the word <br> meaning | 100 | 0 | 4 | 2.20 | 1.189 | 5 | Medium |
| 27 | Remembering the <br> word from its part <br> of speech | 100 | 0 | 4 | 2.18 | 1.282 | 6 | Medium |
| 19 | Grouping words <br> together to study <br> them | 100 | 0 | 4 | 2.18 | 1.019 | 7 | Medium |
| 28 | Making my own <br> definition | 100 | 0 | 4 | 2.12 | 1.281 | 8 | Medium |
| 16 | Remembering the | 100 | 0 | 4 | 2.10 | 1.193 | 9 | Medium |


|  | words that precede <br> and follow it |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 22 | Studying the <br> spelling | 100 | 0 | 4 | 2.08 | 1.285 | 10 | Low |
| 17 | Connecting the <br> word to its <br> synonym or <br> antonym | 100 | 0 | 4 | 2.08 | 1.152 | 11 | Low |
| 23 | Studying the sound <br> of the word | 100 | 0 | 4 | 1.98 | 1.326 | 12 | Low |
| 13 | Drawing pictures to <br> help remember | 100 | 0 | 4 | 1.96 | 1.333 | 13 | Low |
| 29 | Using physical <br> actions | 100 | 0 | 4 | 1.96 | 1.255 | 14 | Low |
| 25 | Making a mental <br> image of the word <br> form | 100 | 0 | 4 | 1.86 | 1.083 | 15 | Low |
| 21 | Writing paragraphs <br> using the new <br> words | 100 | 0 | 4 | 1.74 | 1.268 | 16 | Low |
| 18 | Remembering <br> words in scales | 100 | 0 | 4 | 1.42 | 1.156 | 17 | Low |

The descriptive statistics of the cognitive type of the consolidation strategies are shown in Table ( 6 ). It is interesting to see that the strategies of repeating the word whether orally or writing and making lists of words to memorize get the highest means of frequency of use ( $2.44,2.24$, and 2.10 , respectively ). Although these strategies may be described to be traditional ones and do not belong to the communicative approach, the participants may still find them effective in retaining vocabulary. Meanwhile, keeping a vocabulary notebook and taking notes or highlighting new words appear to be not so much favoured by the participants in this study since they registered low strategy use probably because they are unaware of the effectiveness of those strategies in enhancing their vocabulary. Schmitt ( $1997: 215$ ) asserts that when students keep a vocabulary notebook or take notes of the new and useful words together with any additional information related to them, this would make them autonomous learners and build their confidence to act independently of the teacher.

Using flash cards to memorize vocabulary has been reported to be the least frequently used cognitive strategy by Iraqi EFL students due to fact that manipulating such a technique to teach vocabulary in the EFL classroom in Iraq, and especially at the university level, is not quite popular. However, this mechanism has proved to be helpful in consolidating vocabulary in memory for both auditory and visual learners (

Kashani and Shafiee, 2016:2 ).
Table ( 6 ) : Descriptive Statistics of Consolidation Strategies : Cognitive

| No. | Item | Participants | Min. | Max. | Mean | Std. | Rank | Use |
| :---: | :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 30 | Repeating the word <br> aloud many times | 100 | 0 | 4 | 2.44 | 1.209 | 1 | Medium |
| 31 | Writing the word <br> many times | 100 | 0 | 4 | 2.24 | 1.280 | 2 | Medium |
| 32 | Making lists of new <br> words | 100 | 0 | 4 | 2.10 | 1.193 | 3 | Medium |
| 36 | Keeping a <br> vocabulary <br> notebook | 100 | 0 | 4 | 1.88 | 1.113 | 4 | Low |
| 34 | Taking notes or <br> highlighting the <br> new words | 100 | 0 | 4 | 1.80 | 1.172 | 5 | Low |
| 35 | Putting English <br> labels on physical <br> objects | 100 | 0 | 4 | 1.74 | 1.236 | 6 | Low |
| 33 | Using flash cards | 100 | 0 | 4 | 1.20 | 1.303 | 7 | Low |

Table ( 7 ) shows the means of frequency of use of the metacognitive strategies. These strategies deal with the ability of the learners to be aware and consequently to evaluate their own learning process. There are only three metacognitive strategies, and as it is clearly shown in the table that two of them are moderately used by the participants in this study. This ostensibly reflects that the Iraqi EFL students are actually aware of their need to expand their own vocabulary storage, so they keep looking for new words and checking the ones they already know through either studying new words over time ( mean $=2.30$, medium ) or checking the media and internet ( medium $=2.18$, medium ), which are considered authentic sources of new words outside the classroom. Meanwhile, they seem not to like testing their own vocabulary ( medium $=1.88$, low ).

Table (7) : Descriptive Statistics of Consolidation Strategies : Metacognitive

| No. | Item | Participants | Min. | Max. | Mean | Std. | Rank | Use |
| :---: | :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 39 | Studying new <br> words over time | 100 | 0 | 4 | 2.30 | 1.049 | 1 | Medium |
| 37 | Using English <br> language media | 100 | 0 | 4 | 2.18 | 1.250 | 2 | Medium |
| 38 | Testing myself <br> with word tests | 100 | 0 | 4 | 1.88 | 1.018 | 3 | Low |

Table (8) and Figure ( 1 ) present the answer to the second research question,
which is about whether the Iraqi EFL learners are high, medium, or low users of vocabulary learning strategies. The statistics clearly show that the participants are unfortunately low strategy users since the means of their frequency of use come to be less ( 2.4 ). This reflects that the participants in the present study are either unaware of these strategies or they do not use some of them at all. According to the table below, it is found that the social strategies with mean score of ( 1.720 ) are the least frequently used strategies, while the determination strategies with the mean score ( 2.157 ) are the most frequently used ones. Regarding consolidating vocabulary in memory, the metacognitive and memory strategies scored higher means of frequency of use than the cognitive type.

| Table (8) : Descriptive Statistics of the VLS used by the Participants |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| No. | Strategy <br> Category | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation |
| 1 | Social | 5 | 1.4 | 2.3 | 1.720 | .3633 |
| 2 | Cognitive | 6 | 1.2 | 2.4 | 1.943 | .4327 |
| 3 | Memory | 18 | 1.4 | 2.6 | 2.072 | .2793 |
| 4 | Metacognitive | 3 | 1.9 | 2.3 | 2.120 | .2163 |
| 5 | Determination | 7 | 1.5 | 2.5 | 2.157 | .3896 |
|  | Valid N <br> (listwise) | 3 |  |  |  |  |



Figure ( 1 ) : Means of frequency of use of VLS

As for the vocabulary size of the study sample ( research question No. 3 ), Table ( 9 ) and Figure (2) make it evident that it gets less and less as the vocabulary level goes up. In the 2.000 -word level, the participants seem to have a high level of proficiency and a relatively lower one for the 3.000 -word level. When it comes to the 5,000-word level, it appears that they have an average vocabulary size and a seriously poor one for the 10,000-word level. Finally, at the academic level, Iraqi EFL learners
have an average vocabulary size. The vocabulary size of the participants is unacceptable as they perform well in the least level required from the EFL learners, i.e., the 2.000 -word level, but their performance was not satisfactory in neither the 5.000 -word level that is demanded for effective language use and reading comprehension nor the academic vocabulary level.

| Table (9) : Descriptive Statistics of the sample scores in the VLT |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. <br> Deviation |
| The 2.000-Word Level | 100 | 5 | 30 | 18.90 | 9.282 |
| The 3.000-Word Level | 100 | 0 | 30 | 9.82 | 7.824 |
| The 5.000-Word Level | 100 | 0 | 30 | 5.10 | 6.029 |
| The 10.000-Word Level | 100 | 0 | 10 | .65 | 1.861 |
| Academic Vocabulary <br> Level | 100 | 0 | 30 | 9.40 | 7.530 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 100 |  |  |  |  |



Figure ( 2 ) : The distribution of the scores from each frequency band in the VLT
To answer the fourth research question, the One - Way Anovatest was used to determine any possible relation between Iraqi EFL learners' vocabulary learning strategies and their vocabulary size. The results reveal that there is no relation between the two since the calculated $\boldsymbol{F}$ value appears to be less than the tabulated one at the level of significance ( 0.05 ).It is a logical consequence of being low vocabulary learning strategies users with unsatisfactory vocabulary size in English.

| Table ( 10 ) : The One - Way ANOVA Results |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Model |  | Sum of <br> Squares | df | Mean <br> Square | F | Sig. |  |
| 1 | Regression | .013 | 1 | .013 | .359 | .591 |  |
|  | Residual | .112 | 3 | .037 |  |  |  |
|  | Total | .126 | 4 |  |  |  |  |

## Conclusions

With regards to the results of the current study, it can be concluded that the Iraqi EFL learners actually adopt a varying range of vocabulary learning strategies. Social strategies are the least frequently used strategies by the respondents, while the determination strategies are the most frequently used ones. The results also indicate that the participants demonstrate a low level of vocabulary learning strategy use. As for the participants' vocabulary size, it is found to be somewhat an average one, which is considered not sufficient to cope with their advanced level since they are fourth year students. Finally, the study finds no relation between Iraqi EFL learners' vocabulary size and the strategies they adopt in learning vocabulary.

The findings of the study shed light on some essential facts related to the Iraqi EFL learners performance in English. First, they do have a limited vocabulary size in English which can never help them function or communicate effectively in English. Second, they are unaware of the existence of certain strategies, namely, the vocabulary learning strategies, which once adopted, their vocabulary would be variable, efficient and precise.

What the present study has come up with is important for the EFL teachers and administratorssince the limited vocabulary size of the learners emphasizes the significance of teaching vocabulary, just like grammar, systematically. EFL students also need training on vocabulary learning strategies for, as Oxford ( $1990: 1$ ) and Nation (2001:358) note, strategy training has been proved to be very useful to facilitate the learning process and help the learners become independent and more conscious of their own learning. In addition to raising the students' awareness of the importance of vocabulary in communication, they should be taught how to discover the effective techniques through which they can expand their vocabulary and retain them in their long - term memory to be recalled later when necessary.

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## الخلاصة

يهذف البحث الى دراسة الاستر اتيجيات التي يستخدمها الطلبة العر اقيون المتعلمون للغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية في تعلم و اكتساب المفردات باللغة الانجليزية و علاقتها بحجم المفردات التي اكتسبو ها خلا سنوات در استهم. تم استخدام مقياس شميت ( $199 V$ ) لأستراتيجيات تعلم المفردات و اختبار نيشن ( . 199 ) لقياس حجم المفردات لدى الطلبة. اشارت النتائج الى ان الطلبة العر اقيين غبر مدركين لنوعية الاستر اتيجيات التي يستخدمونها في تعلم مفردات اللغة الانجليزية دما اثر سلبا على حجم المفردات المكتسبة لديهم.

