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***An Evaluation to Vocabulary in an EFL Setting :***  
***The Case of Middle School Pupils at Bouanani Bouziane***  
***Middle School in Benikhallad Honaine. Wilaya of Tlemcen.***

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fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Didactics and  
Assessment in English Language Education*

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*To my beloved family, and friends*

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# Abstract

The purpose of the present research work was to examine the importance of learning and teaching of vocabulary in a foreign language, more precisely the English vocabulary. The objective of the research was to investigate how vocabulary is being learned and taught, and to what extent young learners maintain the proper amount of vocabulary in the English language. For this purpose an exploratory case study was undertaken in Bouanani Bouziane middle school in Benikhallad (Honaine) Wilaya of Tlemcen. The study relied on two research instrument. A proficiency test administered to pupils, and classroom observation. The data gathered was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The final results indicated that English middle school teachers are aware of the vocabulary aspect of the foreign language and how to teach it using different strategies. However, pupils' results showed that the majority of them encounter difficulties in learning and maintaining the English vocabulary. At the end of this work a number of recommendations are suggested for helping both teachers and learners to cope with a language aspect such as vocabulary.

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## **List of Acronyms/ Abbreviations**

**L1** First Language

**L2** Second Language

**EFL** English as a Foreign Language

**MS1** Middle School year one

**MS3** Middle School year three

**VLS** Vocabulary Learning Strategies

**DET** Determination

**SOC** Social

**MEM** Memory

**COG** Cognitive

**MET** Metacognitive

# ***General Introduction***

Throughout history, learning foreign languages has been always challenging for both teachers and learners in the field. Teachers, and applied linguists were persistently seeking to discover the possible ways to help learners learn the target language as quickly and efficiently as possible with introducing different methods and techniques that were thought to be of great help to learners for the mastery of the target language.

Language is said to be a set of aspects such as grammar, morphology, phonology...etc. In order to learn a language properly one has to be versed in every aspect of the language he or she wants to master. Therefore, the objectives of the current work are: first, to evaluate the teaching and learning of vocabulary in the English language in Algerian middle school classrooms, and how this particular aspect is being learnt and taught. Second, is to highlight on the crucial role that vocabulary plays in the acquisition of a foreign language. Finally, to discover the reasons behind the lack of lexis among the pupils, and how can teachers help their learners acquire as much vocabulary as they can.

Consequently, the researcher strives to answer the following questions

- Why do the Algerian middle school learners tend to forget a vast number of vocabulary that they learn in the English language?
- What are the best methods and techniques for teaching vocabulary that will help foreign language learners maintain new words as much as possible?

The above mentioned questions led to the formulation of the following hypotheses:

- The lack of the necessary vocabulary to communicate in English is due to the lack of effective techniques for teaching vocabulary as well as the lack of the exposure of the English language outside the classroom.
- The best methods and techniques for teaching vocabulary are those which involve integrating context and meaning when learning individual words as opposed to teaching vocabulary separately and individually.

In order to reach the above mentioned hypotheses, the researcher designs an explanatory case study of fourth year middle school pupils in Bouanani Bouziane Middle school in Benikhallad. The data in this study is collected both qualitatively and quantitatively relying on a set of research instruments: a test designed for learners, and classroom observation. The results will be also analysed qualitatively and quantitatively.

The current research paper is divided into three chapters. The first chapter is concerned with the theoretical part of the teaching and learning of vocabulary. The second chapter deals with the research design, and data analysis and interpretation, while the third one is devoted to suggestions and recommendations for the teaching of the vocabulary aspect of the English language.

# Chapter One

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## **Chapter One: Theoretical Background of the Study**

### **1.1 Introduction**

To the question from what does a language begin, the answer is more likely to be words. People unconsciously use hundreds and thousands of words everyday to communicate. That's why lexis is considered the building blocks of a language and learning the lexis of a certain language equals learning the basis of that language. The acquisition of the vocabulary of a second language may seem quite difficult especially if the target language has the tendency to contain a vast number of vocabulary. However, even native speakers of a language still sometimes feel frustrated when they cannot think of a word they need.

Accordingly, this chapter is concerned with the theoretical framework of the teaching and learning of vocabulary in an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) setting and how vocabulary is as important as the remaining language aspects such as phonology, syntax, and morphology.

### **1.2 Definition of Evaluation**

Merriam Webster dictionary defines the term to 'evaluate' as to make an approximate or tentative judgment, an opinion on the nature, character, or quality of something. While Oxford dictionary defines 'evaluation' as the making of judgment about the amount, number, or value of something assessed.

### **1.3 Definition of Vocabulary**

McCarthy (1990:13) refers to words as "freestanding items of language that have meanings". On the other hand, Schmitt briefly defines words as a combination of sounds or its representation in writing that symbolises and communicates a meaning. He argued by adding that in order to master a word, it is not sufficient to learn only its meaning, but also to learn its register, association, collocation, grammatical behaviour, written form, spoken form, and frequency. All these properties are known as word knowledge. (2000:5).

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### **1.3.1 The importance of Vocabulary**

Research that was done on the teaching and learning a foreign language throughout the years dedicated a small part on researching vocabulary, the major aspect that took the lion's share was grammar, until recently, in the past few decades, the vocabulary aspect of the language started to catch the attention of language teachers as well as researchers in the field of applied linguistics and several works started to emerge that called for the great importance of the lexical aspect of a language.

The importance of vocabulary relies within the importance of the language itself the key to master a foreign language relies on the acquisition of its lexis the more vocabulary a foreign language learner have the better he will be at speaking it, and lack of vocabulary often prevents students from becoming proficient L2 readers and writers and from communicating in L2 effectively which is why it is the most frequently reported problem for second language learners and students in academic programs often express a desire for more vocabulary instruction Laufer (2004).

In brief words, a rich vocabulary puts students in advantageous positions in school: they will better understand what a textbook and the teacher is saying and they will learn better.

### **1.3.2 What is involved in Knowing a Word?**

Read (2000:01) made a distinction between vocabulary knowledge and its growth on native speakers as opposed to foreign learners. He started by stating that for native speakers, vocabulary knowledge grows rapidly in the first years of childhood, and continues to develop naturally in adult life. Whereas for foreign learners, the acquisition of vocabulary is more conscious and demanding process, and even advanced learners of a foreign language are aware of limitations of their knowledge for example they sometimes find themselves unable to understand or express some words or concepts.

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Accordingly, the distinction made on the acquisition of a language between a native speaker and a foreigner can clearly be made in the learning of vocabulary in schools.

To conclude we can say that the teaching and learning of vocabulary to foreign language learners is totally different from that of native speakers and to start with we need first to know exactly what is involved in knowing a word.

The first step to understand vocabulary learning and its mechanics is to specify what it means to know a word; the first thoughts of an average layperson will probably be that if the learners know the meaning of a word and its spelling and pronunciation, it is enough for them. However, such knowledge would prevent them from using the same word to a larger extent. Schmitt (2007:03).

Foreign language teachers are well aware of the difficulty facing their students when learning new words especially at the early years or months of their studies, and the traditional way of checking the meaning of a word in a dictionary will not always provide full understanding of that word. Thus, several criteria have been made by researchers to identify what it means to know a word.

In 1990 Paul Nation had described what is meant by truly knowing a word. He noted that in order to know a word one's must know:

- Spoken form
- Written form
- Grammatical patterns
- Collocations
- Frequency
- Appropriateness
- Meaning
- Association

However, in 2001 Nation has made a more updated model of the criteria of knowing a word.

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<b>Form</b>	Spoken	Receptive	What does the word sound like?	
		Productive	How is the word pronounced?	
	Written	Receptive	What does the word look like?	
		Productive	How is the word written and spelled?	
	Word part	Receptive	What parts are recognizable in this word?	
		Productive	What word parts are needed to express this meaning?	
<b>Meaning</b>	Form & meaning	Receptive	What meaning does this word form signal?	
		Productive	What word form can be used to express this meaning?	
	Concept & referents	Receptive	What is included in the concept?	
		Productive	What items can the concept refer to?	
	Associations	Receptive	What other words does this make us think of?	
		Productive	What other words can we use instead of this one?	
	<b>Use</b>	Grammatical functions	Receptive	In what patterns does this word occur?
			Productive	In what patterns must we use this word?
Collocations		Receptive	What words or type of words occur with this one?	
		Productive	What words or type of words must we use with this one?	
Constraints on use (register, frequency...)		Receptive	Where, when and how often would we expect to meet this one?	
		Productive	Where, when and how often can we use this word?	

**Table 1.1 The Description of Truly Knowing a Word**

In this table, Nation describes what he believes to be the criteria of truly knowing a word. The table is divided into three parts: the form, the meaning, and the use. Each part is also divided into three elements and each one has a productive and receptive knowledge or how Nation called it productive and receptive vocabulary use.

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*Receptive Vocabulary use involves perceiving the form of a word while listening or reading and retrieving its meaning. Productive vocabulary use involves writing to express a meaning through speaking or writing and retrieving and producing the appropriate spoken or written form. Nation (2001:37)*

The table above provides a detailed description of knowing a word. Ibid associates each aspect with the productive and receptive vocabulary use, for example: the form and knowing one word form according to him includes knowing the spoken form, written form, and word parts.

Knowing the spoken form of a word means being able to understand it when hearing it (receptive knowledge), as well as, being able to pronounce the word correctly and clearly and to be understood by others (productive knowledge).

Knowing the written form means being able to recognize the written form when reading (receptive knowledge). However, the productive knowledge of the written form means being able to spell correctly the written form in writing.

From the table above Nation made it clear that learners need to know a lot more of a word rather than just a superficial understanding of its meaning. Teachers also need to be well aware of the complexity of knowing a word for better assist their student understanding and memorizing it for the long term.

### 1.3.3 How much Vocabulary does L2 Learner Need?

Schmitt (2000:12) argues that the ambitious goal of a foreign language learner is to know all the words of that particular language. However, even native speakers themselves do not know the vocabulary such as the vocabulary of nuclear physics or computational linguistics which is known only by small groups of people who specialize in these areas.

People use language to communicate, and so naturally one key issue in how much vocabulary is necessary to enable this communication. Schmitt (2010).

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Research in this field has unfortunately been poorly done. There is very little information on how many words an EFL learner needs to know.

The English language for example has a very large vocabulary and learning all of it might be slightly challenging as Schmitt (2010:08) states that learners must learn a vast number of vocabulary to be able to communicate in English. Schmitt has illustrated that in order to master the English language learning a large vocabulary is required from the learners. In other words, it is not sufficient for an EFL learner to know the basic words of the English language to fully speak it, they will always face troubles expressing themselves when needed and trying to look for the proper words that express their ideas, and this cannot be achieved without a considerable size of lexical items in the English language. However, the challenge is that acquiring a large number of vocabulary has never been easy.

Ibid noted that if one wishes to achieve native like proficiency that is to be fully able to understand and communicate in the target language then presumably it is necessary to have a vocabulary size similar to an English or American citizen. However, Nation noted that knowing a very large number of words is useful for a long term goal, but it is not the case if the goal is a short term one. (2000: 12)

Schmitt has also raised a very significant point concerning the size of vocabulary between native speakers themselves, he said that educated people are highly expected to have a large vocabulary than less educated ones. In contrary, it is not always the case, for example a crossword enthusiast may well have a wider vocabulary than a holder of a PhD.

When it comes to an exact number of words needed for an EFL learner to have a native like size of vocabulary, N Schmitt (2010:06) proposed that a range of 16000 to 20000 word families seems a fair estimate of the vocabulary size for educated native speakers which means that according to him language learners need to achieve such number to reach a native like vocabulary size.

The enormous number of vocabulary that learners have to learn in a foreign language is quite challenging, as a result, learners become totally dependent on

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the teacher to guide them in pronouncing a new word, explaining its grammatical position, its usage, and so on. On the other hand, there are two major challenges most English teachers face. The first one is finding ways to present new vocabulary in a memorable way for students. The second challenge is trying to fulfill the needs and expectations of all students in a large class. (Corrales 2010:5).

Schmitt (2000:142) noted that learners can take individual responsibility for their own learning, he added by saying that research has shown that learning thirty words per hour is possible and how much vocabulary one learns seems to be limited only by personal ambition.

Taking into account the above numbers of approximately how an EFL learner needs to know in English, the numbers vary from a low number to fulfill a simple function, to a large size of not only individual words but complete word families. However, these numbers are just paving the way to show that a learner can learn more than he or she thinks they can and it can only be achieved by having a strong will and efficient strategies and techniques.

### **1.3.4 Why do we forget words?**

“Even with the best will in the world, students forget words”. Thornbury (2002:04) .With the above sentence, Thornbury started his questioning on why people in general forget words. He supported his idea by stating that research has estimated that up to 80% of material is lost within 24 hours and this might be caused by two factors:

First: those words that were easy to learn were better retained.

Second: those words that were learned over spaced learning sessions were retained better than words that were learned in concentrated bursts (2002:04)

On the other hand, Schmitt (2010:23) shares the same view in which he states that that “we should view partial vocabulary knowledge as being in a state of flux, with both learning and forgetting until the word is mastered and fixed in the memory”.

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Schmitt also believes that in general, lexical knowledge seems to be more prone to attrition than other aspects such as phonology and grammar simply because vocabulary is made up of individual units rather than rules (2010:23).

Thornbury's idea on forgetting words that were learned is clearly explained by the first cause which is how the word was learned in the first place. Words which tend to be forgotten are those that were poorly learned as opposed to the ones that were learned properly which will lead to their retainment.

Thornbury also added a significant cause to the poorly instructed words that lead to forgetting them eventually which is the lack of recycling them. i.e. once a word has been learned, it is crucial to recall it from time to time in different contexts and with different shapes as Thornbury stated that "if learners see or use a word in a way different from the way they first met it, then better learning is achieved".

### **1.4 Vocabulary Assessment**

After getting to know the importance of vocabulary in foreign language learning and teaching, teachers and applied linguists find it more important to test this knowledge in the sense that words are the building blocks of language from which larger structures like sentences and paragraphs are formed. Read (2000)

Ibid clarified the importance of testing vocabulary simply because words are the basis of language and testing vocabulary simply means testing the language itself. Read added by saying that testing vocabulary is a priority to monitor learner's progress in learning vocabulary and how adequate this knowledge can meet their communicative needs.

#### **1.4.1 How is Vocabulary Knowledge Measured?**

Read (2000) suggests the following table on how vocabulary knowledge should be measured.



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### **Discrete**



### **Embedded**

A measure of vocabulary knowledge or use as an independent construct.

A measure of vocabulary which forms parts of the assessment of some other, larger construct.

### **Selective**



### **Comprehensive**

A measure in which specific vocabulary items are the focus of the assessment.

A measure which takes account of the whole vocabulary content of the input material (reading/ listening tasks) or the test taker's response (writing/ speaking tasks).

### **Context-independent**



### **Context-dependent**

A vocabulary measure in which the test-taker can produce the expected response without referring to any context.

A vocabulary measure which assesses the test taker's ability to take account of Contextual information in order to produce the expected response.

**Table1.2 Dimensions of Vocabulary Assessment**

#### **1.4.1.1 Discrete- embedded tests**

Ibid referred to discrete tests as the most existing vocabulary tests which are most designed on the assumption that vocabulary

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knowledge is an independent construct when it comes to assessment, and separated from other components of language competence. On the other hand, embedded vocabulary measure is one that contributes to the assessment of large construct.

A remark was put by Read on the discrete-embedded distinction which does not refer primarily to the way vocabulary is presented. Rather it is the fact that the test is focusing purely on the construct of vocabulary knowledge for example, a test can present words in large amount of context and still be discrete measure in his sense. (2000)

### **3.4.1.2 Selective- Comprehensive Tests**

The target words can be either selected separately as individual words, and included into separate test items, or the test-writer chooses a text then uses certain words as the basis for the vocabulary assessment. Whereas, a comprehensive measure takes account of all the vocabulary content of spoken or written text. Read (2000)

### **3.4.1.3 Context-dependent, Context-Independent Tests**

“Contextualization has meant that a word is presented to test-takers in a sentence rather than as an isolated element.” Read (2000:10)

Context dependent tasks measures vocabulary which is embedded in writing and speaking

Generally speaking, vocabulary measures embedded in writing and speaking tasks are context dependent.

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### **1.5 Vocabulary acquisition**

How do we acquire words? This significant question has been raised by applied linguists throughout the years in an attempt for them to understand the mechanisms that is happening in the brain when acquiring both first language and second language.

Laufer (2004) suggested that acquiring second language is more complex than first language that's why it needs more attention, and most vocabulary in L2 is acquired from input, mainly the reading input, then the learners should read a lot and vocabulary learning will take care of itself. He also argued that a necessary condition for picking up words is a massive exposure to the foreign language, which can hardly be expected to occur in classroom learning context.

### **1.6 Vocabulary learning strategies**

Vocabulary learning strategies or VLS for short is an approach to vocabulary learning which contains particular strategies that learners of a foreign language use in the learning of the vocabulary of that language, whether they are realizing the use of a particular strategy or not.

Schmitt (2000:132) made a clear distinction that at first, VLS seems to be simple memorization, repetition, and taking notes on vocabulary. However, there are more complex strategies that require significant active manipulation of information; he also noted that learners often favor what he called 'shallow' strategies over than 'deeper' ones even if the former may be less effective than the latter.

In 1997, Schmitt had proposed the following list which contains several strategies for the discovery of a new word.

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<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Strategy</i>
<b>Group</b>	
<b><u>Strategies for the discovery of a new word's meaning</u></b>	
<b>DET</b>	Analyze part of speech
<b>DET</b>	Analyze affixes and roots
<b>DET</b>	Check for L1 cognate
<b>DET</b>	Analyze any available pictures or gestures
<b>DET</b>	Guess meaning from textual context
<b>DET</b>	Use a dictionary (bilingual or monolingual)
<b>SOC</b>	Ask teacher for a synonym, paraphrase, or L1 translation of new word
<b>SOC</b>	Ask classmates for meaning
<b><u>Strategies for consolidating a word once it has been encountered</u></b>	
<b>SOC</b>	Study and practice meaning in a group
<b>SOC</b>	Interact with native speakers
<b>MEM</b>	Connect word to a previous personal experience
<b>MEM</b>	Associate the word with its coordinates
<b>MEM</b>	Connect the word to its synonyms and antonyms
<b>MEM</b>	Use semantic maps
<b>MEM</b>	Image word form
<b>MEM</b>	Image word's meaning
<b>MEM</b>	Use Keyword Method
<b>MEM</b>	Group words together to study them
<b>MEM</b>	Study the spelling of a word
<b>MEM</b>	Say new word aloud when studying
<b>MEM</b>	Use physical action when learning a word
<b>COG</b>	Verbal repetition
<b>COG</b>	Written repetition
<b>COG</b>	Word lists
<b>COG</b>	Put English labels on physical objects
<b>COG</b>	Keep a vocabulary notebook
<b>MET</b>	Use English-language media (songs, movies, newscasts, etc.)
<b>MET</b>	Use spaced word practice (expanding rehearsal)
<b>MET</b>	Test oneself with word tests
<b>MET</b>	Skip or pass new word
<b>MET</b>	Continue to study word over time

**Table 1.3 Strategies for the discovery of a new word's meaning**

## Chapter One: Theoretical Background of The Study

The list above was introduced by the applied linguist and vocabulary researcher Norbert Schmitt in 1997 is divided into two major classes

- Strategies that are useful for the initial discovery of a word's meaning
- Strategies useful for remembering that word once it has been introduced.

The above strategies are further classified into five groupings:

DET which stands for Determination Strategies which Schmitt explains as “a guessing from one's structural knowledge of a language, guessing from an L1 cognate, guessing from context, or using reference materials”. (1997:135)

SOC: Social strategies. As its name implies, it is a strategy that involves interacting with other people to improve language learning, one can ask a teacher or a classmate for information about new words and the answer can be in different ways such as synonyms, translations etc.....

MEM which stands for memory strategies, Schmitt (1997:135) explain it as relating the word to be retained with some previously learned knowledge such as previous experience or known words.

Cognitive strategies (COG) they are similar to memory strategies, they include repetition and using mechanical means to study vocabulary, including the keeping of vocabulary notebook.

Finally, metacognitive strategies (MET) involve a conscious overview of the learning process and making decisions about planning, monitoring, or evaluating the best way to study.

When considering which vocabulary learning strategy to recommend to our learners, we need first to consider the overall learning context, the effectiveness with which learning strategies can be both taught and used will depend on a number of variables, including the proficiency level, L1 and culture of students, their motivation, and purposes for learning the L2, the task and text being used and the nature of the L2 itself. Schmitt (200:132)

## **Chapter One: Theoretical Background of The Study**

### **1.7 Vocabulary in an EFL classroom**

The simple explanation on how vocabulary is learned in classrooms was put forward by Schmitt. He showed that succeeding in teaching vocabulary is not a far reaching objective, it can be simply done by understanding how words are acquired which is in two different ways explicitly and incidentally, either ways words are learned incrementally. On the other hand, when talking about the best way to teach vocabulary, he noted that there is no right or best way to teach vocabulary, it depends on the type of student, the targeted words, the school system, and the curriculum, and other factors. However, there are only some guideline principles that should be considered when developing a vocabulary component. (2000:142).

Considering Schmitt point of view, the constant search for a best method and technique is not necessarily fruitful at the end, seeking a best way to teach vocabulary would be useless if the teacher himself is not aware of some principles when he tends to develop vocabulary knowledge in his learners.

#### **1.7.1 Explicit teaching**

When talking about the teaching of the vocabulary of a foreign language, the first thing that comes in mind is a list of words which are presented separately from any context and needs to be learned by heart. In order to understand it, translation and the use of bilingual dictionaries are the first tools used by both teachers and learners. Though research has shown the importance of using such strategies to teach vocabulary, it is advised to not fully rely on explicit and direct teaching of words.

Thornbury (2000:60) points out that the use of dictionaries in classroom was discouraged for the belief that it might inhibit the development of more useful things when learning vocabulary such as guessing from context, and if the dictionary is a bilingual one, student may rely too much on translation and sometimes the use of a bilingual dictionary might be misleading.

## **Chapter One: Theoretical Background of The Study**

However, he argued that the significant role that dictionaries play in vocabulary learning has been reassessed and seen as the number one sources of words and their meanings. On the Other hand, Nation noted that translation often criticized because it is encouraging the idea that there is an exact equivalence between words in first language and second language. However, translation has the advantages of being quick, simple, and easily understood. (2000:125)

### **1.7.2Incidental learning**

Schmitt (2010:29) defines incidental learning as “learning which occurs as by-product of language usage, without the intended purpose of learning a particular linguistic feature”.

In the case of vocabulary teaching, the most common tool to teach words incidentally is reading aloud to class or storytelling. What is happening when a learner reads a text in English is that he is, in an indirect way, acquiring words without the focus of acquiring them, incidental learning also make them expose to texts in which words occur with varying frequencies.

To sum up, Norbert Schmitt has illustrated that in a well-structured vocabulary program the need for a proper mix of explicit teaching and activities from which incidental learning can occur is necessary for the benefit of L2 learners. With beginners, it is probably necessary to explicitly teach the most frequent words until learners will have enough vocabulary to rely on themselves and start making use of unknown words they meet in context.

## **Chapter One: Theoretical Background of The Study**

### **1.8 Conclusion**

Traditionally, the term ‘vocabulary’ would mean a particular word with its meaning, though this might be slightly true, this conceptual chapter was an attempt to change the traditional idea that people have on vocabulary in a foreign language, it aimed at highlighting on the importance of vocabulary from its acquisition to its measurement and testing, and the complex procedure of knowing a word, as well as the significant role that vocabulary plays in the teaching and learning of a foreign language.



# Chapter Two

## Chapter Two: Data Analysis and Discussion

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## **Chapter Two: Data Analysis and Discussion**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The second part of the present research work is concerned primarily with the practical phase which is an attempt to describe the process of teaching and learning of the English vocabulary in an EFL middle school classroom. Thus, the researcher has chose two research instruments, namely a proficiency test administered to 4<sup>th</sup> year middle school pupils and a classroom observation. Data collection have been analysed quantitatively and qualitatively, and the findings have been interpreted from each research instrument.

### **2.2 Research Methodology**

One of the most crucial challenges that face the researcher is the choice of the appropriate research method that best fits the research objectives. Nunan (1992) acknowledges several methods of research including case study which is used in the current work.

#### **2.2.1 Research design**

The present Research paper is a case study dealing with Algerian 4<sup>th</sup> year middle school pupils. The process of conducting a research using case study was defined by Nunan as “one selects an instance from the class of objects and phenomena one is investigating”. (1992:75) In other words, it is the study of one entity, group, or organisation.

There are several types of case study. The first type is according to the purpose of research which includes three sub-categories: descriptive, explanatory, and exploratory. The descriptive case study aims at describing the phenomena, and attempts to answer the question ‘what?’

The explanatory case study examines the reasons of a particular phenomenon. It attempts to answer the questions ‘what’ and ‘why’

## **Chapter Two: Data Analysis and Discussion**

The last type of case study according to the purpose of research is the exploratory case study which is the chosen among the three to be used to conduct the current work. The exploratory case study focuses on the study of a problem, and the way of improving the existing situation. It aims to answer the questions ‘what?’, ‘why?’, and ‘how?’

The second type is the case study according to the number of cases which is divided into two types: the single, and the multiple case study. The former focuses only on one case while the latter aims at studying and comparing different cases under one research.

The third type is according to the units of analysis. This category also comprises of two sub-categories: The holistic case study where one unit of analysis is found, whereas, the embedded case study means that the case is divided into multiple units which are analysed separately.

### **2.2.2 The Sample Population**

The informants that were taken in this research were fourth year middle school pupils, as well as a middle school English teacher in Bouanani Bouziane middle school in Benikhallad. Wilaya of Tlemcen. The chosen sample, were about forty pupils, randomly chosen, as a research instrument they were asked to take a proficiency. The selection of such sample was due to the fact that they spent quite some time studying the English language (more than three years) and were thought to be as a suitable sample for the investigation of vocabulary. In addition to the test, classroom observation was also chosen and took place in several sessions with an English teacher. All of the informants were chosen randomly for the sake of making the data more accurate and generalizing the findings.

## **Chapter Two: Data Analysis and Discussion**

### **2.2.2.1 Teachers Profile**

The informant is a middle school English teacher, holder of a Licence degree, with six years of experience in teaching English in middle schools. The teacher is in charge of two different levels MS1 (Middle School year one) and MS3 (Middle School year three), which both of these levels classroom observation took place.

### **2.2.2.2 Learners Profile**

The researcher had picked forty four Algerian middle school pupils, males and females, randomly chosen; their age is from 14 to 17 years old. These participants are fourth year middle school pupils at Bouanani Bouziane middle school in BeniKhallad. They have been studying English as a second foreign language for more than three years.

The main purpose behind choosing such a sample population is that they have already exposed to the English language for a sufficient period of time. Therefore, the researcher has hypothesised that they have the necessary vocabulary to be tested on.

### **2.2.3 Research Instruments**

The researcher has followed an exploratory case study in order to investigate the teaching and learning on English vocabulary in Algerian middle schools. In order to do so, the researcher has made use of classroom observation, and a proficiency test administered to 4<sup>th</sup> year middle school pupils.

#### **2.2.3.1. Proficiency test**

The first instrument was a proficiency test administered to 4<sup>th</sup> year middle school pupils. The aim behind such choice was to identify their level in English vocabulary, and to discover whether or not our learners have issues when acquiring the English vocabulary, and when producing it as well.

## **Chapter Two: Data Analysis and Discussion**

### **2.2.3.2 Classroom observation**

The second instrument for data collection is classroom observation, more precisely: non-participant and semi-structured observation. The former indicates that the researcher does not participate in any way in the observed situation, whereas the latter will help the researcher have an agenda of issues in less predetermined or systematic manner. Cohen et al (2007)

The researcher has conducted classroom observation with two different levels 1MS and 3MS in six different sessions. The aim behind choosing such instrument was to get a closer look on how teachers in middle schools teach the vocabulary aspect of the English language, and what are the tools and strategies used by the teachers themselves to provide better understanding, and how learners interact and grasp what the teacher is explaining.

### **2.3 Data analysis**

Data analysis is a crucial phase that comes right after the data was collected. In order to gain a comprehensive insight of the research, two types of analyses were employed: qualitative and quantitative data analysis.

In short “qualitative analysis is making sense of data in terms of the participants’ definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories, and regularities”. Cohen et al (2007: 461). In other words, qualitative data analysis provides detailed description of the collected data in the form of texts, it helps to make inferences and draw conclusions in order to provide more explanations of the results, whereas, quantitative data analysis relies on the use of descriptive statistics of the results through numerical data (percentages, frequencies, and graphic representations).

## Chapter Two: Data Analysis and Discussion

### 2.3.1 Analysis of Pupils Test

The current test was chosen to evaluate vocabulary knowledge among 4<sup>th</sup> year learners. The aim behind this choice is due to the belief that the best way to assess a particular knowledge is by testing it. Therefore, a proficiency test with four main activities was designed for data collection. The instructions of the activities are as follow:

**Activity ‘A’:** the first activity requires from the pupils to put the right preposition in the right place.

**Activity ‘B’:** In this activity pupils were asked to choose a word that matches its definition.

**Activity ‘C’:** the learners were given numbers and asked to rewrite them in letters.

**Activity ‘D’:** pupils were given a list of words on one side and they have to choose their opposites from a list on the other side.

Activity 'A': Filling the gaps with the correct preposition

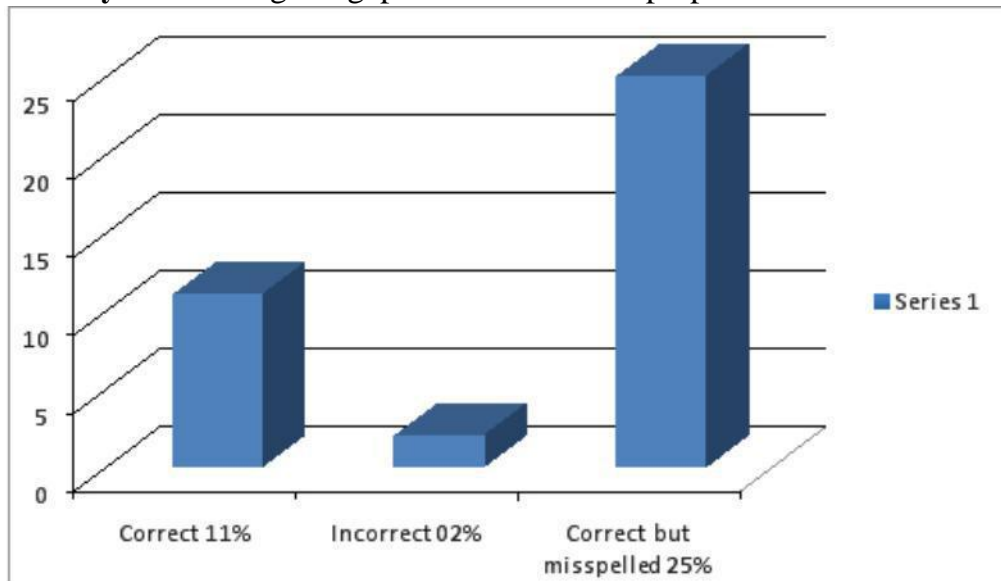


Figure 2.1 Detailed Results of activity 'A'

The first activity from the test was aiming to test the pupils' abilities to put prepositions in their proper place. They were given six sentences with a gap in each sentence to fill in with one of the prepositions: 'in', 'on', and 'at'.

Pupils didn't find troubles giving the correct answer except for question (4) with the preposition "in" before a moth where was in most answers replaced by "on", and with question(5) with the preposition "on" before the word "birthday" where most pupils put "in" instead

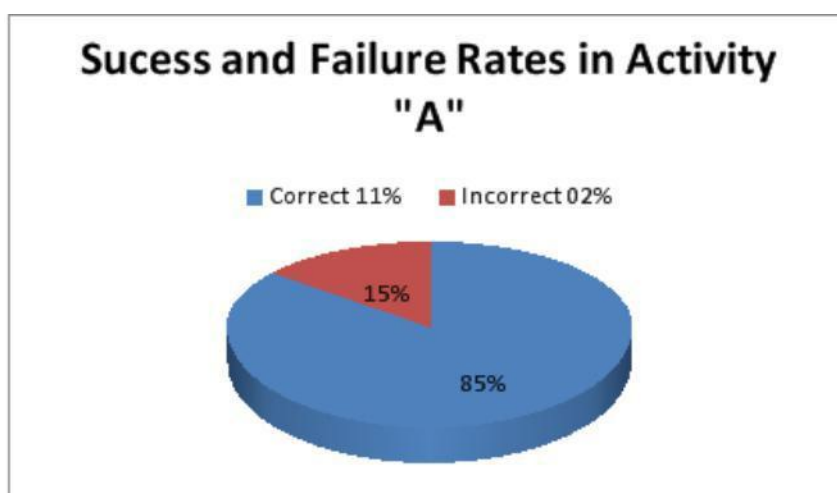
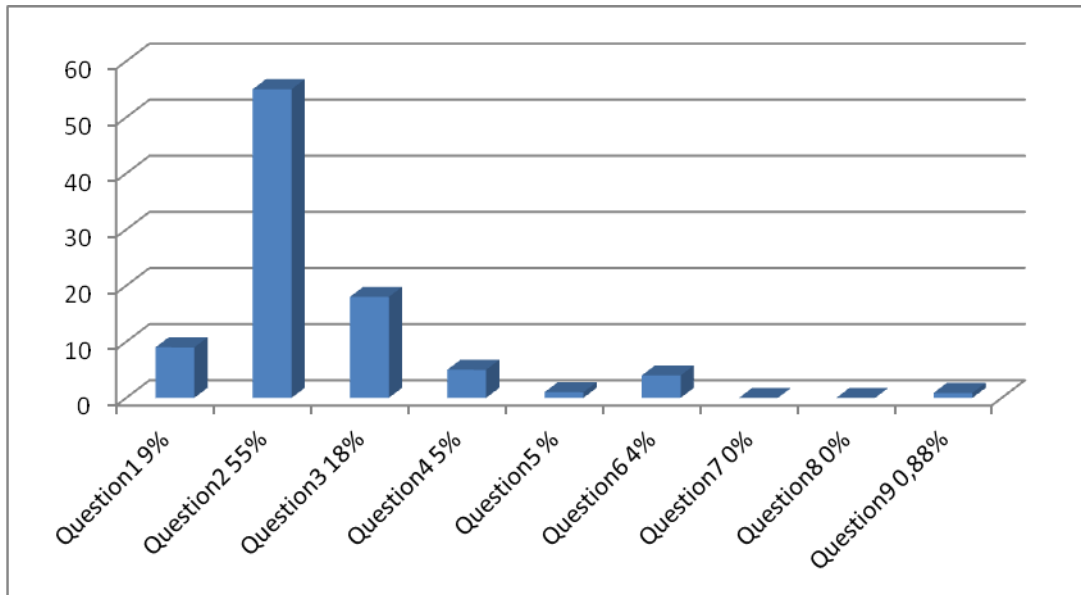


Figure 2.2 Final results of activity 'A'



### Activity “B”: Choosing the right word to go with each meaning



**Figure 2.3 Detailed results of activity ‘B’ in pupils' test**

The second activity was more challenging for the pupils. The questions aim to explore the pupils' ability to choose the correct synonym of a word whether be it with another word or a whole sentence. The words that were chosen were from beginners' level to intermediate level the above results showed that the pupils found some troubles answering this activity. Question 8 for example, had 0% correct answers, only 7 pupils tried to answer, and their answers were wrong. The best pupil (only one) had five correct answers out of nine; two pupils had four correct answers while the majority reconciled in getting only one correct answer.

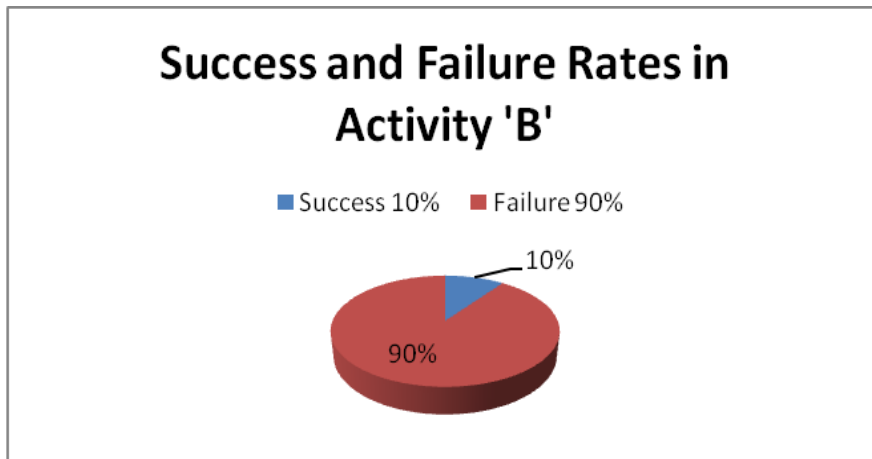


Figure 2.4 Final results of activity 'B'

**Activity "C": writing the numbers in letters**  
**Question "a":**

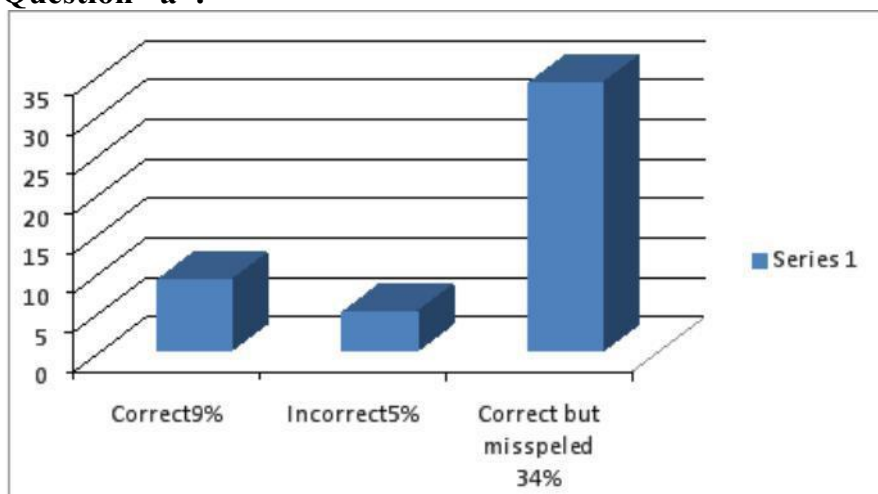


Figure 2.5. Detailed results of question (a) in activity 'C' in pupils test

The number that pupils were asked to write in letters was 38; only 9% got the answer correct. 34% answered correct but misspelled in the writing for example "thirty" sometimes was written thourty, other times therty, or thurdy. "eight" on the other hand was misspelled only once and was written ayti. 5% of the answers were wrong such as three and eight, and eighty three. Whereas, only 5% of the pupils wrote the number correctly with no spelling mistakes.

Question “b”:

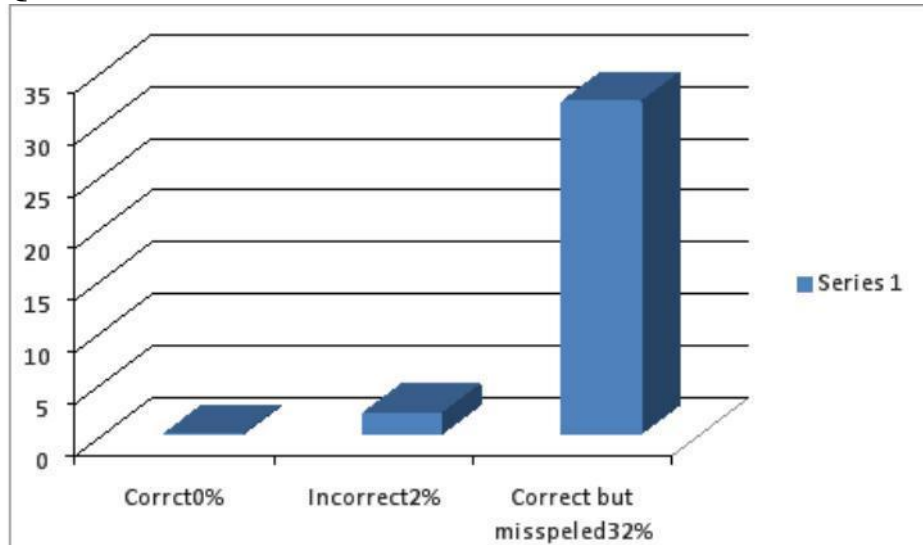


Figure2.6. Detailed results of question (b) in activity ‘C’ in pupils test

The number in question “b” was 1100. The above results show that no one (0%) got the correct answer and 32% misspelled in the writing of the number. The word thousand was written sometimes thousen, tousand, tawssane, other times toussent, tousend, tuwsen, touzant, and tauzane.

The word hundred was also extremely misspelled such as: heindrand, handred, handred , and hundrend . Whereas, only 2% wrote the full number correctly.

Question “c”:

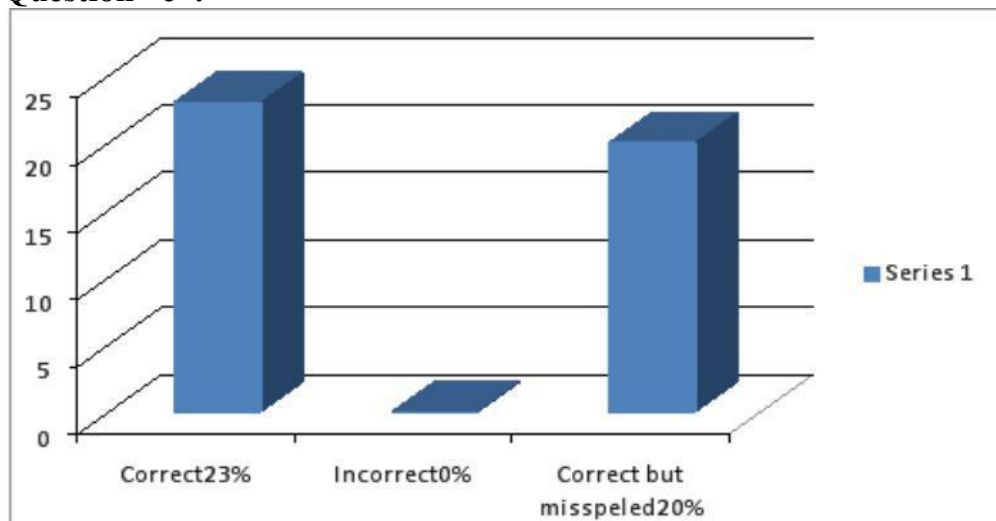
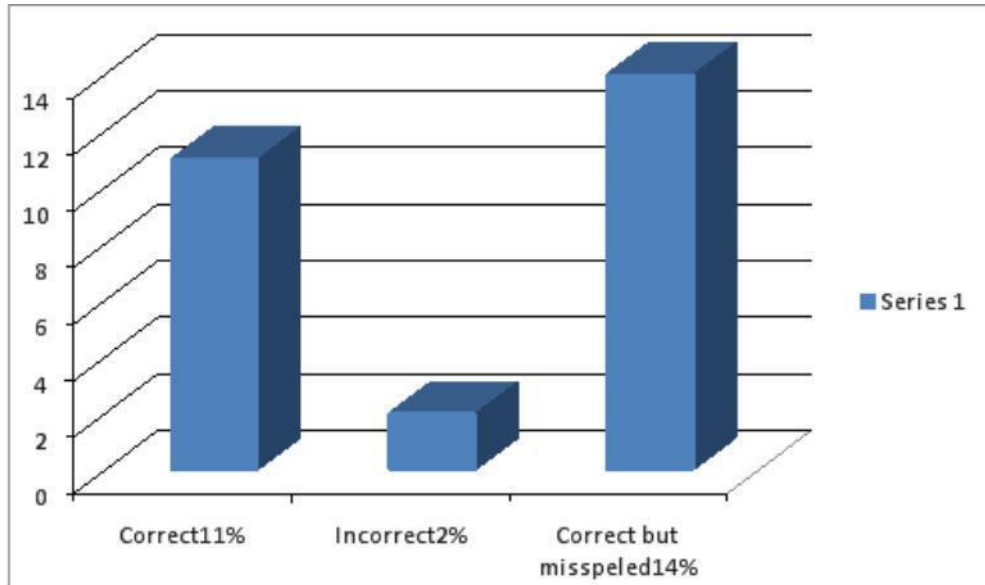


Figure2.7.Detailed results of question (c) in activity ‘C’

## Chapter Two: Data Analysis and Discussion

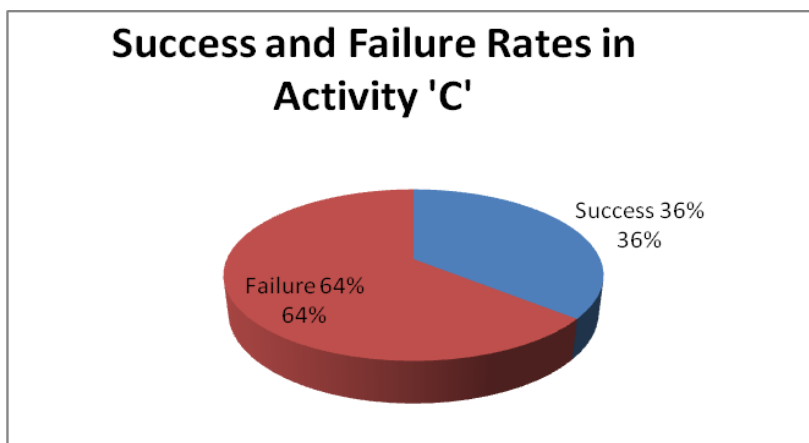
The number in this question was 25 and by looking to the results it appeared that it was an easy questions since no one got the answer wrong and 23% answered correct, whereas, 20% misspelled in the writing for example: twenty fave, and twonty.

### Question 'd'



**Figure2.8. Detailed results of question 'd' in activity 'C'**

The number in this question was 885 the above results show that 14% misspelled the number hundred and was sometimes written handred, handrent, and eighty was written ayti



**Figure2.9 Final results of activity 'C'**

Activity “D”: choosing the correct opposite word

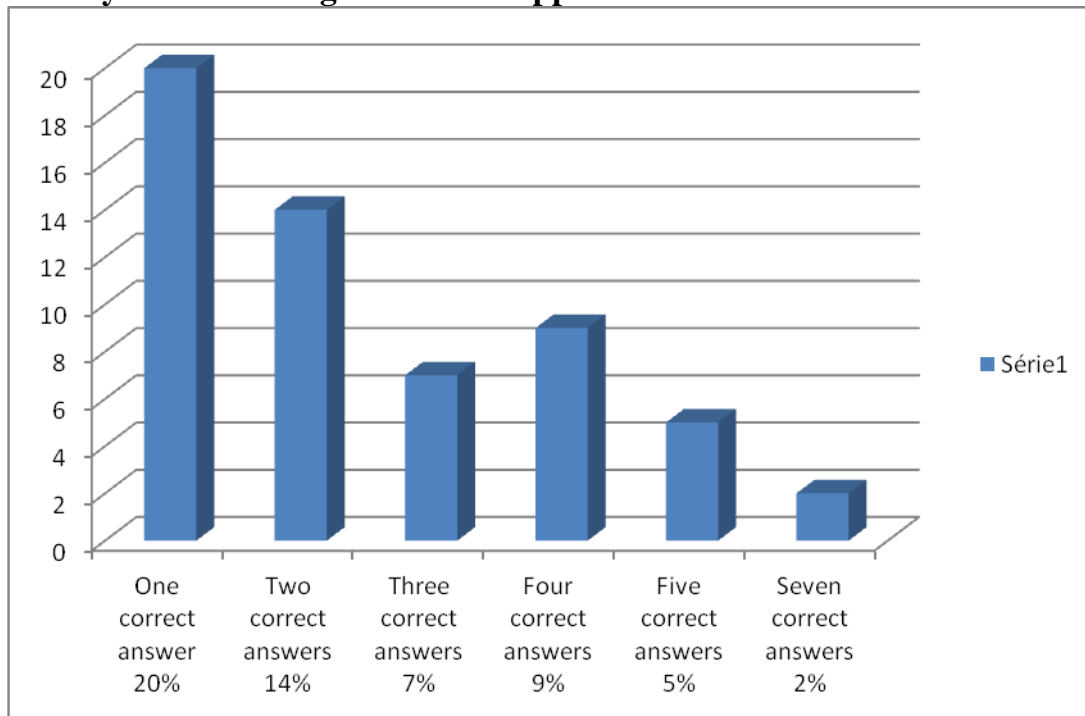


Figure2.10. Detailed results of activity ‘D’

The number of words that pupils were asked to choose the opposite from a given table were 15, the above results shows that only 2% (one pupil only) succeeded in getting all the answers correct, while the rest of the answers were between one correct answer to five correct answers.

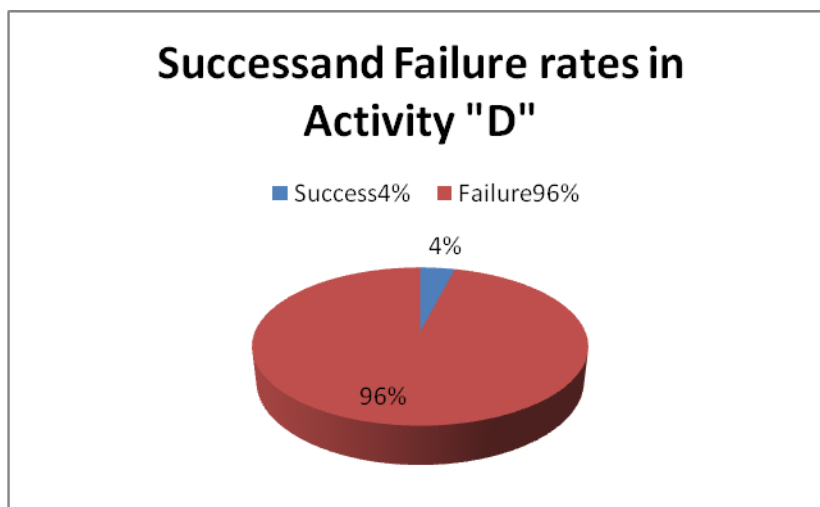


Figure 2.11. Final results of activity ‘D’

### 2.3.2 Analysis of Classroom Observation

The classroom observation used in this exploratory case study took place at Bouanani Bouziane Middle School in BeniKhallad into two different levels with separate six sessions, all of which were taken place with the teacher and its learners having no particular idea of the topic of the research work. The goal of this instrument was to obtain the necessary information of the use of vocabulary teaching, as well as learning strategies to teach and learn the vocabulary aspect of the English language.

The first three sessions were taken with first year middle school pupils with two different classes, two sessions with one class, and a session with another. The overall atmosphere was clam, no noise or disruption of the lesson. The setting was that the majority who sat in the front were girls and most of the boys were in the last rows of the classroom. The first impression that the researcher got from all the three sessions with first year pupils is, unlike third year pupils, they showed a noticeable enthusiasm for learning English, taking into considerations it is their first year to study English, and having a new subject matter is always exciting to learn, large number of them were always motivated to learn.

What the researcher observed in all the three sessions is the diversity of strategies used by the teacher to transmit and explain vocabulary knowledge to her pupils; Colorful pictures and flashcards were widely used whether for the explanation of a new word or for the recall of a previous-seen word. A similar strategy to pictures was used which is drawing. The teacher once drew a tree in the board to explain what the word means other times a clock etc....

In one of the sessions the teacher used her body language to explain the verb to swim, other times asked a pupil to come on the board to show to his friends what is a 'blue jeans' and a 'sports shoes', she even brought a small sample of rice and beans to explain the two terms.

## Chapter Two: Data Analysis and Discussion

Translation is also used when necessary, especially for abstract and difficult words which are better understood when introduced in the learners' mother tongue. Giving a synonym or an antonym is a useful way to make the pupils guess the meaning of a particular unknown word such as the word 'nice' which the teacher related it to the word 'beautiful' to explain its meaning.

The last strategy used is the integration of a meaning or creating a situation about a particular word. The researcher noticed that the teacher tried to put the unknown word in a sentence for better understanding or gives an example to which the pupils have to guess its meaning.

Meanwhile, the researcher observed the pupils using dictionaries from time to time to look for the meaning of a word sometimes without the teacher asking them to do so. They also have notebooks to write down all the new words they have seen throughout the session.

Similarly, the remaining three sessions were undertaken with two different third year middle school classes. The first notice was that both classes were not motivated to learn (one class was less motivated than the other), and only few pupils showed some enthusiasm to learn and participate with the teacher. Furthermore vocabulary strategies used by the teacher did not differ much; the teacher always makes a short review of the previous lesson including the key words. When dealing with a text the teacher explain the difficult words and write them down on the board when interpreting the text.

However, the learners did not made any effort in guessing a word's meaning whether from context or any other strategy, instead they wait for the teacher to translate it for them.

## Chapter Two: Data Analysis and Discussion

The following table illustrates the strategies the teacher had used for the attempt to clarify and explain a new word's meaning and how many times (in the six sessions) they have been used

Strategies and tools used by the teacher	Once	Twice	Three times	More
Pictures				<b>X</b>
Realia	<b>X</b>			
Translation				<b>X</b>
Integrating in a context			<b>X</b>	
Drawing			<b>X</b>	
Body Language	<b>X</b>			
Repetition				<b>X</b>
Synonym		<b>X</b>		
Antonym		<b>X</b>		

**Table 2.1 Vocabulary teaching strategies used by the teacher**



### 2.4 Summary of the main results and discussions

This particular part is devoted to the discussions and interpretations of the research results and findings

#### 2.4.1 Pupils Test Results

The results shown in pupils' test indicate that they, at some extent, failed in activity one, for example, pupils mixed between the proper place for using the preposition 'in' and 'on'. While in activity two, most of them failed to get the correct answer, the reason behind such failure is more likely to be that they were not familiar with most of the words, sometimes even if they did understand a word such as 'sport' they were not able to put it in the right place.

Similarly, activity three showed that most of the students know the numbers in English, but a vast majority of them did not know how to write it due to the fact that they were exposed to the oral form of numbers more than its written form.

Activity 'D' also revealed that finding a word's opposite can be difficult especially when words are isolated and not related to any sort of context, and the only available solutions for the pupils in such case is to rely on their guessing and their recall if ever met one of the words or its opposite.

#### 2.4.2 Classroom Observation Results

Furthermore, the results of classroom observation indicate that teachers of middle schools are aware of how to teach the vocabulary aspect of the English language. However the majority of pupils still don't know how to react or what shall they do when they meet a new word which they don't know its meaning, and what the teacher can do to develop some useful strategies for the learning of Vocabulary that pupils fully rely on the teacher to explain a new word's meaning.

## **Chapter Two: Data Analysis and Discussion**

### **2.5 Conclusion**

The second chapter is devoted to explore and describe the English vocabulary in EFL settings in Algerian middle school. After the data was collected through the use of two different research instruments which are represented in a proficiency test and a classroom observation. The data collected was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively, and were interpreted to get reliable results. Accordingly, the following chapter will aim to propose some useful solutions and recommendations to cope with the problems.

# Chapter Three

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## **Chapter Three: Suggestions and Recommendations**

### **3.1 Introduction**

After data collection and analysis in the previous chapter, it was found that Algerian middle school pupils do have a problem with the vocabulary aspect of the English language which will automatically hinder their learning and communication in English.

Therefore, the purpose of the following chapter is to propose some general solution and recommendations which would assist and guide teachers of English to develop vocabulary knowledge among their learners, and teach vocabulary properly.

### **3.2 Word consciousness**

Scott and Naggy (2000) define word consciousness as “the knowledge necessary for the learners to learn, appreciate, and effectively use words”. (2000:106)

In other words, being a word conscious means to demonstrate awareness and interest in new words and using them. Though the definition may seem simple, the great importance for teachers to help their learners become word conscious contributes in the growth of vocabulary , and being a word conscious teacher is the best way to promote word consciousness among students.

Developing such awareness among English learners from a very early age will contribute greatly to the way they look to the English vocabulary from a neglected point of view that words have no particular function to a very positive and more appreciative one which will help increase their learning.

Word appreciation is not different from art or music appreciation. For example, people can enjoy looking to a piece of art which can increase their depth of understanding, and the same can happen when learners of English appreciate words in English, it will simply make them understand it more and have the desire to always learn new words.

## **Chapter Three: Suggestions and Recommendations**

Promoting word consciousness among learners is on the teacher to transmit simply by introducing them to the beauty of words and how they, unlike grammar, can be played with, and met in a variety of meanings individually as well as when combined together. Scott and Nagy (2000:105) said that “words are the currency of written language, learning new words is an investment.”

### **3.3 Reading for pleasure**

“Just as the oral skills of listening and speaking can contribute to vocabulary growth, so can the written skills of reading and writing”. Nation (2000:238)

The great importance that reading carries for the fast learning of vocabulary was agreed on by a vast number of researchers in the field. However, in order to make reading more efficient another type of reading was introduced which is reading for pleasure.

Krashen (2000) defines pleasure reading as extensive and any sort of reading which is concerned with a subject matter that the student would read in his first language for pleasure, and it's not only an analysis of written texts, reading and then answering content questions or reading as a preparation for questions. Krashen also demonstrated that pleasure reading is completely voluntary. Readers have the option of skipping whole sections if they find it either too difficult or less interesting.

The main issue in developing pleasure reading in English among beginners, and young learners is finding suitable and comprehensible topics that students are genuinely interested in and appropriate to their English proficiency level. For example, some learners might be interested in sports, others in science fiction, and others in comic books etc....

The challenge that learners may face when reading for pleasure is when the learners themselves are beginners in the English language like the pupils of middle schools in Algeria, sometimes when asked to read on their own they find troubles finding suitable texts that meet their requirements, and comprehensible at the same time. Thus, the task of finding topics of interest for

## Chapter Three: Suggestions and Recommendations

reading is upon the teacher to discover. He is the one in charge of finding some reading topics that the learners will find pleasure in reading.

Krashen (2000) has made a few requirements for the success of pleasure reading including:

- 1) **Comprehensive:** he noted that pleasure reading is made comprehensible by the readers' own selection of passages or texts, and by the rejection of reading materials that is too difficult.
- 2) **Interesting:** which means that the learner has the option of only reading things of personal interest.

### 3.3.1 Reading and Vocabulary Growth

Research has shown that reading can lead to small amounts of incidental vocabulary learning, and these small amounts can become big amounts if learners read big quantities of comprehensible texts. Nation (2000:243)

Though reading for vocabulary learning is not considered as an innovative tool for the fast acquisition of the target language, researchers agree that reading for pleasure can help acquire a vast number of vocabulary without a particular effort and without the feeling that it is a sort of assignments that needs to be submitted when finished.

In the case of Algerian middle school pupils, reading is already presented in textbooks but this type of reading is always guided by the teacher and the topics chosen may, as if may not catch the interest of the pupil. Therefore, teachers need to do a little research about what is interesting for their pupils and the choice of the topics to read will be based on that. One thing that teachers need to bear in mind that learning vocabulary from reading cannot be effective if reading is not pleasurable.

To sum up we can say that reading in English can contribute to the acquisition of learners' vocabulary and develop their communicative abilities in the long term because it is an indirect way for the exposure of the language,

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and the more they read and find joy in what they read, the more their vocabulary becomes richer.

### 3.4 Choosing words to teach

The first question that a teacher asks himself is what are the words that I need to teach to help my learners build as much vocabulary as they can? In most cases, this question is already answered due to the fact that teachers are restricted with a curriculum and a textbook, therefore, they don't have much choice on what to teach since everything is already planned for them. However, these restrictions cannot prevent teachers from making some adaptations and changes, for the benefit of the learners without damaging their process of learning designed in their textbooks.

Hiebert and Kamil (2005) proposed some criteria on words that need to be taught

- Words that have different levels of utility
- Words which appear frequently in a variety of domains
- Words that can be worked with in a variety of ways
- Words for which learners can understand the general concept but provide precision and specificity in describing the concept

Hiebert & Kamil (2005:12)

The criteria mentioned above are those which teachers need to consider before choosing words to teach. The first criterion is different levels of utility which means words with different meanings and different usages and that can be used as an alternative for other words. These types of words when learned can make learners in an advantageous position for better expressing themselves without troubles.

The second criterion is words that appear frequently in a variety of ways. It is known that for each situation, domain, are a register of words used to describe



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that particular domain. Therefore, teaching those particular words which can be used in a variety of domains and situations with no limitations is very useful. Words that can be worked with in a variety of ways is the third criterion. The authors are referring here to words that can be useful when met as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs.....etc. Whereas the last criterion is words that provide general as well as specific description of a particular concept at the same time.

### **3.5 Effective Strategies for Teaching Vocabulary**

The second step after becoming well aware of vocabulary knowledge as a separate aspect of language, that needs a considerable attention, developing new strategies or even exploring old ones which are of great efficiency is crucial for getting on the right path to teach vocabulary properly, the following strategies are a few ones among endless other strategies that are of great help for teachers as well as learners in their path to learn and teach a foreign language

#### **3.5.1 Generative use of words**

This process of generation simply means that “when previously met words are subsequently met or used in ways that differ from different meeting with the word” Schmitt (2000:105)

This strategy may seem quite simple. However, Schmitt had emphasized that generative processing is an important factor for first and second language vocabulary learning.

In other words, if a teacher teaches a particular word then forget about, his learners will probably do the same, learners need to be exposed to different meanings of a certain word always in context so that it become more easier for them to remember. This strategy is for teacher to take into consideration whenever they intend to teach vocabulary whether in isolation or in context, the intended word needs to be put forward in another context which indicates a different meaning from the first one. For example, if a learner has met the word

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“right” in the sentence “the direction is on the right”, and then meets it in “it is our right to have education” the learner will need to rethink the uses of the word ‘right’ which will help to establish the memory of this word.

In brief words, generative processing is a long term strategy for vocabulary learning that can establish, and maintain a very sound vocabulary knowledge if used regularly to remind the learners, or introduce them to the previous-seen word in different meanings.

### **3.5.2 Learning from Context**

Learning from context is an indirect strategy to find out the meaning of an unknown word, relying on its position, and function in a text. Nation noted that the type of text can be long, short, or taking part in conversations, learning from listening to films, television or radio. (2010)

#### **3.5.2.1 Context clues**

Context clues are information available surrounding an unfamiliar word which a reader can use to infer a word’s meaning. Hiebert and Kamil (2005). In other words, context clues are hints found within a sentence, paragraph or a passage that a reader can use to understand the meaning of a new or unfamiliar word.

Several types of context clues were introduced including:

- **Definitions:** The author explains the meaning of the word right in the sentence or selection.
- **Synonym:** The author uses a word similar in meaning
- **Antonym:** The author uses a word nearly opposite in meaning

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- Example: The author provides one or more example words or ideas
- General: The author provides several words or statements that give clues to the word's meaning.

Hiebert & Kamil (2005:197)

Developing learning from context through context clues among foreign language learners is a critical step towards learners independently increasing their vocabulary and as Berrabah (2015) stated, it gives them a powerful aid to comprehension. Though this strategy can be developed easily among advanced learners who are familiar with a variety of words, introducing context clues strategy to beginners can train them to rely on themselves whenever met with an unknown word in a context.

### 3.5.3 Semantic mapping

Semantic mapping is a strategy used to brainstorm prior information that learners know about a particular subject before they learn about it in the study. "Semantic mapping works with any type of word, concept, character, and a theme". Allen (2004:98)

The process of word mapping starts when the teacher introduces the words that learners will be exploring, then they work in groups and try to come up with maximum information related to that particular word whether in individual words or even sentences, after they discuss and share their ideas a map is drawn as a representation for their discussion which will help them organize their work.

The use of such strategy provides teachers with an assessment of the background knowledge of their learners, and help learners work collaboratively

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with each other, and learn new words from the teacher, and most importantly from each other.

What is practical about this sort of activities is that it is not attached to a certain level of learners, it can be done with beginners as well as advanced learners of English, and can be as effective for both of them without the slightest difference among them, the only different thing is that beginners will rely on their teacher to bring suitable topics which are appropriate to their levels, whereas advanced learners can do that on their own.

### **3.5.4 The use of pictures, actions, objects, and songs**

Pictures, actions, and objects are essential tools in explaining the meaning of a word in a foreign language, and it can replace the traditional way of looking for a word's meaning in a dictionary. The importance of using such techniques is the transformation of the meaning of a word into an observable form, which is the abstract form of a concept, is transformed into an observable form or an object that can be touched. Schmitt (2000: 125) stated that the use of observable forms of words, the learned word most likely to be remembered, and whenever met or seen the learner will always associate it with the picture or the object that was introduced to explain the meaning of the word at first.

On the other hand, integrating music in the teaching of a foreign language is quite useful for making learning joyful, effective, as well as setting a good atmosphere and making learners feel at ease, and more importantly to develop learner's listening skills because songs they are easily available, and present new vocabulary and expressions in context, and most importantly learners become familiar with the pronunciation of native speakers. Berrabah (2015)

The above tools are highly advised to teach vocabulary for beginners, and young learners who would not feel bored in the classroom with only written and oral texts with no colors and music which will make them enjoy learning and, interact, and remember more.

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### 3.5.5 The word card strategy

The word card strategy is a simple strategy that requires using small card when encountering new words in a foreign language; this strategy is more concerned with learners when their learning is independent from that which occurs in the classroom. However, if the learners are beginners in learning the English language the teacher may start using it in the classroom as a model for them to help them organize all the new words they intend to memorize.

As Schmitt (2010) noted that learning from word cards is a way of increasing vocabulary size, and this strategy is better than vocabulary lists and vocabulary notebooks.

The first step teachers need to do is to choose suitable words to teach, or in the case of middle school pupils, the teacher tries to consolidate the vocabulary in the targeted lesson and brings more to consolidate and broaden the learners' horizons on a particular theme, the learners then prepare word cards and put the words on one side, and the meaning on the other side. The meaning can be replaced with pictures or even translations if the learners feel at ease knowing the word's meaning in their mother tongue.

Learning vocabulary through using word cards should not be seen in any way as an alternative to other kinds of strategies to vocabulary learning. It should be seen as a part of a well balanced vocabulary-learning program. Schmitt (2010:516)

This strategy may seem quite simple and there is no difference between writing down a word in a notebook or making a vocabulary word card. However, the process of associating a word with a picture or a definition or translation takes more time to do and the learner in making a word card grasp more information about the word itself rather than just writing it down.

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### 3.5.6 Word Walls

The problem encountered in the previous chapter about knowing a word, but not its spelling is very common among EFL learners. The fact that a learner recognizes a word when heard and can identify its meaning but when it comes to the written form he will be puzzled on how it should be written. A strategy similar to word walls is a representation of the strategies that can decrease such problem among learners. Words that learners hear all the time and become familiar with their pronunciation can see them as much as they can hear them, the written form of the word will be fixed in the learner's mind.

This strategy was introduced by Allen who noted that words need to be in full view to learners so that they can use them in their writing. (1999:70) after all learning and memorizing a great number of words would be useless if one cannot express and communicate with these words freely whether in a spoken or written form.

The above strategies were an attempt to open the teachers' eyes on what is being introduced and put forward to assist and guide and not impose any of the strategies mentioned above. After all, theories change every day and being up-to-date on what is happening in the field of applied linguistics and teaching English as a foreign language, vocabulary teaching more precisely is a crucial element for the development of the entire field.

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### 3.6 Vocabulary activities in language classroom

After teaching a particular language aspect, it is advised for learners to be assigned with activities to reinforce and evaluate their understanding of the lesson. Therefore, a set of vocabulary activities are introduced in the following few lines.

#### 3.6.1 Decision making, and productive tasks

These types of tasks are those which teachers can use to help learners move words into long- term memory. Thornbury (2002)

Decision making tasks is a sort of activities that cognitively challenge learners and make them in a position where they need to be conscious and awake and integrate different skills in order to solve one of these tasks

Thornbury (2002) proposed five types of decision making activities

- Identifying
- Selecting
- Matching
- Sorting
- Ranking and sequencing

Thornbury also noted that “the more learners perform these task types the better, for example an identification task could be followed by a matching task , which in turn could be followed by a ranking task”. (2002:94)

Identifying simply means finding words where they may be hidden whether in written, spoken, or recorded texts. For example, a text can be given to learners, after that, they will be asked to read, and then identify words which are related to a particular word given by the teacher, or ask them to read a text

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then turn it over and will be looking to a set of words and asked which of them occur in the text. Thornburry (2002)

On the other hand, Thornburry (2002:95) noted that selecting tasks are cognitively more complex to learners since they need to recognize words then making choices among them such as in 'choosing the odd one out' activities. Whereas a matching task involves recognize words then pairing them with a synonym, a translation, antonym, pictures etc... (2002:97)

The forth category is sorting activities which require from the learners to sort words into different categories .The categories can either be given or guessed. Finally ranking and sequencing activities require the learners to put the words in a particular order.

Decision making tasks seen previously require the learners to make judgment about words but not necessarily produce them which is the role of productive task where they are asked to incorporate a newly seen word into a spoken or written task.

Thornburry identifies two types of productive tasks

- Completion of sentences and texts
- Creation f sentences and texts

(2002:100)

### 3.6.2 Cooperative tasks to focus on vocabulary

Making learners to work together in groups or pairs is highly advised to improve the individual's learning ability, In an EFL classroom cooperative task to focus on vocabulary as an aspect of a language is highly effective in getting learners to explore a range of meanings that a word has.

Nation (2000:201) gave an example of a cooperative task that focuses on the word 'cancel', the instruction is as follow:



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Your football team is supposed to play on Saturday. List the reasons on why the game might be cancelled. Rank them according to how likely to happen. What is enjoyable about cooperative tasks that there isn't a right or a wrong answer, learners answers are all acceptable and correct, more importantly these tasks can be both problem solving activity, a brainstorming ones, and focuses on a particular word at the same time

### 3.6.3 Games

Activities in an EFL classroom play an important role to consolidate the understanding of the lesson admittedly, the effective teaching of the English vocabulary needs to be followed by well structured vocabulary activities. Berrabah (2015:197) suggests some criteria concerning activities in an EFL classroom such as the clear and visible adjective that each activity needs to have, not to be too cognitively demanding; and most importantly, according to him, the activity needs to remain the sufficient exposure to the target language.

As a start for suggested activities games or more precisely word games are considered very efficient especially with young learners to develop their vocabulary knowledge or to strengthen the one that they already have. In this context Thornbury said that “useful games are those that encourage learners to recall words, and preferably at speed”. (2002:102).

Playing has always been a pleasure for children to do, and mixing it with learning can come up with good results because learners, especially young ones learn better when they play the following two games are two different examples of what can word games be

#### 3.6.3.1 I'm thinking of a word

This activity is based on a game children used to play where someone thinks of a word and his friends need to guess which word. The same concept is brought

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to the classroom where a teacher thinks of a word and the learners have to guess according to a clues given such as a word discussed in the previous session, the teacher gives richer and more details each time they fail to guess the word until they succeed. This activity is not recommended to teach new words that have never seen before, but for the review of a previous-seen ones and to consolidate their understanding among learners.

The first example of a word game is an active game that can cause some noise in the classroom when learners are competing with each other to answer correctly, whereas the following type of games is more quite and require from the learner to concentrate.

### **3.6.2.2 Puzzles**

Word puzzles and riddles are a great way to challenge and test the learners' intelligence whether in information about the foreign language vocabulary or in general knowledge, always in foreign language. Puzzles are the type of activities that keep the learners focused on the activity in front of them until they finish, and solving a mystery with friends will always be beneficial for their learning as well as their mental welfare.

Integrating games in the EFL program is a necessary, and learners need to have activities in the form of challenging and fun games is without a doubt a substantial element for better results and achievements, and more importantly sustainable and long-term learning whether in vocabulary or any other aspect of the English language.

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### **3.7 Collocations**

Words are in constant flux, that's why it is challenging to learn two or more different words with two or more different meanings combined together, and form a new meaning which is known for the name collocation.

Thornury (2002: 106) referred to collocations as "a multi-word units loosely called chunks that behave as if they were single words.

Collocations were always difficult for foreign language learners to comprehend simply because it contradicts with what they have already learned. However, learning collocations is an important part of learning the vocabulary of a language. Learners have to make a special efforts to learn them because they are difficult to guess. McCarthy stated that "languages are full of collocation pairs, and therefore collocation deserves to be a central aspect of vocabulary study". (1990:13)

The importance of teaching collocations relies within the fact that collocations are from the heart of the language, the part that native speakers understand among each other make it very unique to get to know such complex aspect of the language, besides it enriches one's vocabulary and make it able to play with words freely. The only problem is that collocation would be above the level of beginners who already started to learn individual words and teaching collocations will confuse them, however, introducing collocation in a simplified with less complex words is welcomed to introduce them to this aspect of the English language.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

The present chapter tries to provide some suggestions and recommendations in order to help both teachers and learners teach and learn vocabulary in an effective way that can develop their vocabulary repertoire as well as their foreign language in general

# General Conclusion

**GENERAL CONCLUSION**

The field of foreign language teaching has witnessed numerous attempts to comprehend and solve how language works in the human mind, and what are the possible ways to teach a language properly. In the last few decades, those attempts were realized in countless theories and approaches that thought can help teachers and learners learn foreign languages, several theories were put forward with different orientations that focus on different aspects such as grammar and vocabulary.

In the present research work, the vocabulary aspect of the English language is chosen to illustrate to what extent vocabulary is crucial for English learning.

The first chapter, which is a theoretical background of the study encompassed a bigger picture on how is vocabulary knowledge taught and learned, this chapter also tried to lighten on the importance of vocabulary and the complex its of its mechanism in the acquisition. The theoretical backgrounds aimed at shedding some light to the basic elements which is needed for knowing a word and change the traditional idea that people in general have about vocabulary, as well as taking an overview on vocabulary in foreign language classrooms.

The practical part embodied in the second chapter exhibited the data collected from a test administered to fourth year middle school pupils, and from classroom observation. Moreover, some suggestions were put forward in the third chapter for both teachers and learners of English to get rid of the traditional look to vocabulary and help them teach and learn vocabulary more efficiently.

Before conducting the present research, the researcher stated two research questions which were:

- Why do Algerian middle school pupils forget a vast number of vocabulary that they learn?

The hypothesis for this research question was because of the lack of effective techniques for teaching vocabulary as well as the lack of exposure of the English language outside the classroom

The second research question was :

- What are the best methods and techniques for teaching vocabulary that will help foreign language learners maintain new words as much as possible?

The hypothesis was that the best methods are those which involve integrating context and meaning when learning individual words as opposed to teaching vocabulary separately and individually.

Concerning the first research question, the main findings revealed that the first hypothesis is partly true, because English in Algeria in a second foreign language and the exposure of English outside the classroom is nearly nonexistent. On the other hand, the lack of vocabulary teaching techniques and methods can influence the flow of vocabulary learning.

Similarly, the second research question is not necessarily correct, due to the fact that direct and individual teaching of words is as important as incidental learning, and there should be a combination between the two for better learning.

At the end it is important to bear in mind that the process of learning vocabulary is a long-term process that cannot happen overnight, but needs a serious persistent from both teachers as well as learners.

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# Appendices

Appendix A: Pupils Test

Gender :

Male

Female

Age :.....

**A/ Fill in the gaps with the correct preposition: in-at-on**

- 1-..... the summer, we go to the beach.
- 2-. We sometimes eat dinner ..... seven o'clock.
- 3-. Her exams are ..... June.
- 4- My brother always goes to the restaurant ..... his birthday.
- 5-Do you sleep well ..... night.?
- 6-don't put your hands .....your pocket.

**B/ choose the right word to go with each meaning:**

- Business
- Clock ..... part of a house
- Horse .....animal with four legs
- Pencil .....something used for writing
- Shoe
- wall
  
- Birth
- Dust .....game
- Operation .....winning
- Row .....being born
- Sport
- Victory
  
- Attack
- Charm .....gold and silver
- Lack .....pleasing quality
- Pen .....not having something
- Shadow
- Treasure

**C/ write this following numbers in letters**

- a)38.....
- b)1100.....
- c)25.....
- d)885.....

**D/ write down the opposites of each of the words on the left. Chose from the ones on the right**

- 1- Start:            finish
- 2- **Go in:** .....
- 3- **Find:** .....
- 4- **Catch:** .....
- 5- **Stop:** .....
- 6- **Succeed:** .....
- 7- **Raise:** .....
- 8- **Buy:** .....
- 9- **Depart:** .....
- 10- **Spend:** .....
- 11- **Love:** .....
- 12- **Accept:** .....
- 13- **Break:** .....
- 14- **Construct:** .....
- 15- **Remember:** .....

- Arrive
- Hate
- Come out
- Forget
- Fail
- Save
- Demolish
- Lose
- Mend
- Continue
- Drop
- Finish
- Lower
- Reject
- Sell

## Appendix B : Classroom Observation

**Vocabulary teaching techniques used by the teacher**

**Vocabulary learning strategies used by the learners**