Investigate Jordanian undergraduate EFL learners' using of vocabulary learning strategies levels (low, medium and high)

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ABSTRACT
This search aimed to search out the various ways utilized in learning vocabularies among Jordanian undergraduate EFL learners in 3 completely different proficiency levels (low, medium and high) in Jordan University of science and technology. The vocabulary learning strategies that are employed in this research embrace determination, social, memory, cognitive, and meta-cognitive that follows Schmitt's taxonomy. One hundred students from totally different proficiency level were chosen from just student. Schmitt's (1997) Vocabulary Learning Strategies' questionnaire was administered to the learners with 3 proficiency levels. Then, descriptive statistics and Anova were used to investigate the data. Descriptive statistics find out that the participants of the study no matter their proficiency levels were generally high strategy users who used of these strategies. So as to perceive if the results were statistically significant, ANOVA for between-group mean differences was conducted. It discovered the actual fact that there's no significant difference among learners with totally different proficiency levels.
KEYWORDS: Vocabulary learning strategies, Language learning strategies, Vocabulary learning strategy questionnaire

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I. INTRODUCTION

For those who wish to learn a language, vocabulary is the most important and is regarded as the central curriculum of formal education. Without a large vocabulary, we cannot name objects or express ideas about specific topics. Objects or actions convey what we mean.

Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Language learning strategies involve conscious and semi-conscious behaviors and thoughts used by language learners. The ultimate goal is to learn and understand the target language well (Schmitt, 2002). A specific type of language learning strategy aimed at acquiring vocabulary. There is no clear definition of this term, but as Schmitt argued, it is "a series of operations, steps, plans, and procedures used by students to facilitate retrieval, storage, retrieval, etc.), and the use of information" (Carril, 2009, p. 69). These methods are used by different learners at different stages of learning to speed up the acquisition and retention of the required terms. In terms of different variables (such as age, personality, etc.), Gender, attitude, language skills, etc.) .

Problem Statement and Purpose of the study.

Vocabulary isn't significantly practiced in EFL contexts in Jordan. It is a very challenging task to learn vocabulary and it is considered an unproductive experience. Most of the times, higher level learners lose interest in English when they come across difficult lexical items and most of the times they might want to skip these words because they are difficult to consolidate in memory or they might simply forget them after a short period of time due to a lack of knowledge about the various kinds of VLSs.

Strategies in learning vocabulary are very important and unfortunately students in any proficiency level in Jordan aren't familiar with most of them. Results on exams have shown that students can't make use of the lexical words they learn properly and the lexical items they already know fade into oblivion most of the time. Learning vocabulary and keep in its retention need rehearsal and use of different strategies by learners, thus,

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familiarity with them makes students become more cognizant of their own strategies and they will be avid to work towards learning the kinds of strategies they are less familiar with.

Based on what was stated above, the purpose of the current study is to investigate Jordanian undergraduate EFL learners' in JUST application of vocabulary learning strategies with regard to their proficiency levels (beginner, intermediate and advanced).

Research Questions
The following questions will be answered in this research:
1- Are Jordanian EFL learner's student high, medium, or low VLS users?
2- What are the most and the least frequently utilized categories of vocabulary learning strategies by Jordanian undergraduate EFL students?

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Different researchers have provided various vocabulary learning strategies and they have classified these strategies into different categories according to their findings. Several taxonomies of VLS have been proposed so far, being those of Gu and Johnson (1996), Nation (2001) and Schmitt (1997) the most outstanding. The taxonomy developed by Schmitt (1997) has myriad of advantages as stated by Jimenez-Catalan (Carril, 2009, p. 72). It's more standardized and it collects the data from students efficiently. It's quite easy for the data to be coded, classified and managed in computing programs because it follows the theory of learning strategies and theories of memory. In addition, it can be used in groups of different ages, those who come from educational backgrounds and target languages which allow comparison with other studies as well. Therefore, Schmitt's taxonomy of VLSs will be used as an instrument to gather the required information from the participants in this study.

Schmitt took four of the six categories established by Oxford, namely, social, memory, cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies and designed a new category, which includes those strategies used to discover what the new words mean without asking from another person: determination strategies (Carril,2009, p.72-86). All these VLSs are in turn sub- divided into two main groups: strategies for discovering the understanding of new words and strategies used to consolidate them once found. Subcategories of discovery strategies are determination and social strategies.

It is worth to note that the strategies alone are not the only factor, but the level of proficiency of each student that tells you which strategies are most effective to whom and at what level the students are most likely to succeed in their learning. This is yet another important variable that should be well understood. Now, let's review the studies done by other researchers on vocabulary learning strategies.

One of the most recent studies by Rabadi and Al-Muhaissen(2018), The study explores the use of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLSs) by Jordanian undergraduate students majoring French as a Foreign Language (FFL) at Jordanian universities. The vocabulary learning strategies (Memory, Determination, Social, Cognitive, and Metacognitive) were used in the study following Schmitt's taxonomy. The descriptive analysis showed that the participants of the study regardless of their year of study were medium strategy users overall. The results revealed that Memory strategies were the most frequently employed strategies, whereas the Social strategies were the least frequently used ones.

Furthermore, Jaradat and Bakrin (2017) their study examines the relationship between proficiency level and language learning strategies (LLSs) among Jordanian students enrolled at Universiti Utara Malaysia. Meanwhile, the students' level of language proficiency was determined by their scores in the UUM English Language Proficiency Test (ELPT). The results show that the students used language learning strategies at a high frequency level. In addition, this study shows that there is a positive relationship between language learning strategy and proficiency level.

One more study by Rabadi, R. I. (2016), The Study investigates the various vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) used by undergraduate Jordanian students majoring English Language and Literature in Jordanian universities. The descriptive analysis of the study showed that Jordanian EFL learners were "medium" strategy users overall. Memory strategies were the most frequently employed by them and Metacognitive strategies were the least frequently used strategies among them.

Another recent study by Rahimi and Shams (2012), searched to find if VLSs had a significant effect on the learners' scores obtained from the vocabulary tests. The results showed that VLSs had positive effect on the scores of learners who studied in intermediate level because those who got a good score were seen to use the techniques in the questionnaire more frequently to help them in better understanding of the words. Meta-cognitive strategies were used by those who gained a high score on vocabulary; however, social strategies were used least often.

III. METHODOLOGY

The research design in this study is quantitative. Descriptive and referential statistics were used to answer research questions.

Participants

The current studies were conducted in undergraduate EFL learners in Jordan University of science and technology, in Jordan. The subjects of this study were 100 undergraduate EFL learner first year students with three level of proficiency (28 low, 35 medium, 37 high). The proficiency levels of the participants were determined by the university acceptance test score which were randomly selected among the population of the current study.

Instrumentation

Schmitt's (1997, 2000) vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire adopted from Bennett (2006) was used for the present study. It is a 41 item Likert type questionnaire that learners give their responses on five-point Likert scales with the available answers being: 'never, seldom, sometimes, often and very often'. Moreover, five different strategies applied which are determination, social, memories, cognitive and meta-cognitive. This system, which seems to offer a reasonable variety of responses and is simple for the learners to answer, was adopted for this study. Schmitt's taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies was both clear and extensive, and so Schmitt's taxonomy became the source of the strategies to be surveyed. The questions on the survey were written in English.

Procedures

The respondents of different proficiency level completed the questionnaire in one session within 10 minutes. The rubric and instructions were clearly stated to the subjects so that the process of filling out the questionnaire would be clear enough for them. After collecting the data, descriptive statistics was utilized to analyze the data. Measures of frequency (mode, mean, median) were used to provide precise quantitative information about the typical behavior of learners with respect to the most frequently used vocabulary strategies. Anova was conducted to provide information on whether or not the three different proficiency levels differed significantly from each other with respect to the applied VLSs.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics was applied to answer the first research question i.e. Are Jordanian EFL learner's student high, medium, or low VLS users? According to oxford scoring system, score 2.4 and below show low strategy use, between 2.4 and 3.5 shows medium strategy use and score 3.5 and above show high strategy use.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Strategy use by Respondents

Strategies	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Alpha c
Determination	100	1.00	5.00	3.84	0.65	0.84
Social	100	2.20	5.00	3.75	0.64	0.85
Memory	100	1.43	5.00	3.79	0.72	0.89
Cognitive	100	1.59	5.00	3.95	0.54	0.88
Metacognitive	100	1.00	5.00	3.65	0.73	0.83
Overall	100	2.47	4.84	3.79	0.45	0.92

As depicted in Table 1, it is completely apparent those Jordanian undergraduate students EFL are highly strategy users with a total mean score of 3.95. Of all five strategies that were on the questionnaire, Social (mean=3.75), Meta-cognitive (mean=3.65), Memory (mean=3.79), and Cognitive (mean=3.95), were used quite highly among the subjects. This could be because they were familer of different types of strategies for vocabulary learning that may have not been included in their syllabuses. Also, it seems that the teachers themselves keep note of the strategies and there is introduction on these kinds of methods and how to use them. This is not match with Rabadi and Al-Muhaissen (2018), Based on the findings of the study, the students were found to be medium-level strategy users. The moderate usage of VLSs implied that the learners were not completely aware of different VLSs. The most frequently employed strategies were memory strategies and the least frequently used strategies were social ones.

On the other hand results Kafipour and Naveh (2011) came upon in which undergraduate students were found as medium users with regards to vocabulary strategy use due to the fact that these methods were not commonplace among the learners. In addition, this finding may be because of the students' limited range of vocabulary strategies. According to the open ended questions on the questionnaire, it was clear that most learners had their own way of vocabulary learning and they found it quite useful. It is clear that they only suffice to one strategy and think it is the best, like the use of repetition, using flash cards, asking questions about words,

etc. However, it is interesting to mention that according to the results, cognitive strategies were used highly by the students with a mean of 3.95. It perhaps is easier, faster or more available for a student summarizing meaning, guessing meaning from context.

Table 2. Mean strategy scores for three levels of proficiency

Proficiency level	Determination	Social	Memory	Cognitive	Metacognitive
low	3.84	3.75	3.95	3.79	3.65
Medium	3.92	3.80	3.90	3.85	3.80
High	4.00	4.00	3.88	4.00	4.00

As Table 2 reveals, the learners in low level of proficiency used all strategies over and over than other levels withthe highest mean belonging to Memory strategies (mean=3.95). This is in accordance with the results of Raquel Fernandez Carril (2009) who found out that first year students of English and even those with an extensive foreign language learning experience are more interested in vocabulary learning.

On the other hand, intermediate learners used cognitive (mean=3.85), memory (mean=3.90), and Determination strategies (mean=3.92) more indelibly which means they resort to repetition,   keeping a notebook, using flash cards, etc. that help them in retaining a vocabulary and its meaning. Memory strategies perhaps come in handy for them and are more convenient probably because it's a traditional way of retaining new words in mind. Furthermore, they might find it easier to communicate with their teachers or classmates to ask for the meaning of a word.

High levels, however, they used all strategy with (mean=4.00) for Determination, Meta-cognitive, cognitive and social in contrast to memory strategy (mean= 3.88). It can be understood that advanced learners have a strong tendency towards using different techniques because of their adequate knowledge of English and better English comprehension. The reason behind the more frequent use of different techniques can also be due to the fact that the learners are exposed to the English language much in Jordan. Therefore, they tend to use it always. In other words, they pick up or acquire the English language consciously due to exposure to the English language which is an important technique in learning vocabulary. This is similar to the findings of Riazi and Rahimi (2005).

To find out if these findings are statistically significant, ANOVAs for between groups mean differences was conducted

Table 3. ANOVAs for Between Group Mean Differences

Between Group mean differences	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Determination	8.85	2	4.42	12.90	0.000
Social	4.01	2	2.00	5.15	0.007
Memory	8.79	2	4.39	20.94	0.000
Cognitive	21.70	2	10.85	35.15	0.000
Metacognitive	11.82	2	5.91	13.98	0.000

According to Table 3, F (observed) for determination and meta-cognitive strategies are 12.90 and 13.98 also it shows that memory and cognitive are 20.94 and 35.15 respectively that are significant at P<0.05 with (sig. =0.000). On the other hand F (observed) that social strategy is 5.15 with sig. (0.007). This finding shows that there is no significant difference between groups among learners with different proficiency levels in this study.

V.   CONCLUSION

As was stated in the previous section, the participants of this study were high strategy users. Considering the proficiency level, the learners did not differ significantly in the application of all strategy. It indicates that students gained more knowledge of the language. The study can be valuable to teachers and learners and course designers as well. Learners can get more familiar with the strategies as they go through solving the questions on the survey, teachers can be trained in learning these strategies and teaching them appropriately to the learners and also the institutes can apply them in order to help their learners to gain a better quality in their vocabulary learning styles. Since learners are so motivated and enthusiastic to learn about these strategies.

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