



Faculty of Education  
Department of Curriculum  
And EFL Instruction

# **Using Autonomous vocabulary Learning Strategies To enhance Writing Performance Among EFL Prep Pupils**

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirements  
of the M.A. Degree in Education (Curriculum and EFL Instruction)

By

**Mai Hassan Ahmed Suleiman**

Teacher of English at

El Safeya Institute

**Supervised by**

**Prof. Magdy Mahdy Ali**

Professor of Curriculum  
and EFL instruction  
Faculty of Education  
Ain Shams University

**Dr. Dalia Ibrahim Yehia**

Lecturer of Curriculum  
and EFL instruction  
Faculty of Education  
Ain Shams University

2017



**Title:** Using Autonomous vocabulary Learning Strategies to enhance Writing Performance among EFL Prep Pupils

**Author:** Mai Hassan Ahmed Suleiman

**Supervisors:** Prof. Magdy Mahdy Ali, Professor of Curriculum and EFL instruction  
Dr. Dalia Ibrahim Yehia, Lecturer of Curriculum and EFL instruction

**Institution:** Faculty of Education, Ain Shams University

**Year:** 2017

## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the effect of using autonomous vocabulary learning strategies of oxford (mnemonics) to enhance writing performance of EFL preparatory pupils. The participants were second year pupils at El Hagah Safeya prep Institute in Cairo. Thirty pupils participated in each of the experimental and control groups. Both groups were pre-tested by using Vocab/ Writing Performance Test (VWPT) for equivalence in their writing performance. The experiment was conducted at the beginning of the second term of the academic year 2016-2017. The experimental group and the control group were post-tested by using the VWPT. Differences between the mean scores of the pre- and post-VWPT were calculated by using the t-test. The results showed that there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the post-VWPT in favor of the experimental group. The results also revealed that there was a significant enhancement in the pupils' writing performance as a result of satisfying their psychological needs through using the mnemonic devices of Oxford for vocab retention. The findings showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group in writing performance because of using autonomous vocabulary learning strategies of Oxford.

**Key Words:** Autonomous learning, Autonomous Vocabulary Learning Strategies of Oxford (AVLSs), Autonomous Learner (LA), Writing performance, Self Determination Theory (SDT)



## Acknowledgements

First I thank Allah for His Support in my thesis and

I pray for Him to Guide me to apply it for the good of the others

I wish to express my deep appreciation and profound gratitude to

**Dr. Magdy Mahdy Ali**, Professor of Curriculum and EFL instruction, Faculty of Education, Ain Shams University for his kind supervision and encouragement.

Since the beginning of the research, he helped in directing me to the right track. He enriched my experience as a researcher through his guidance. I really appreciate his agreement for giving me the honor of working under his supervision.

My thanks are extended to **Dr. Dalia Ibrahim Yehia**, Lecturer of Curriculum and EFL instruction, Faculty of Education, Ain Shams University for helping me in many details that of great importance to the research.

My thanks are extended to **Mrs. Lobna Abd El Reheem**, the principal of El Hagah Safeya Institute for helping me to conduct my research and my profound love and respect to **Mrs. Fatema Bedeer**, the principal of Ard El Genina Institute for her support to conclude the pre/posttests on the control group in her institute.

I heartily express my thanks to my dear colleagues **Mrs. Amour Ibrahim Ali, Mr. Fared Mohamed Fared and Mr. Shaker Mohammed Abdel Hady** for helping me in rating the pupils' writing, the most important part in the research.

I am deeply and forever indebted to **my husband, my daughters and my son** who helped me and bore a lot until I finished my work.

Finally, I owe my love and affection to my dear sister **Azza Hassan .Ahmed** for her psychological support that always motivating me in my sorrow and my happiness.



## Table of contents

### Contents

Abstract	ii.
Acknowledgements	iii.
Table of contents	v.
List of tables	vi.
List of figures	vii.
List of abbreviations	

### Chapter One Background and Problem

1-16

1.1. Introduction	1
1.2. Context of the problem: Pilot study: Appendix (A)	4
1.3. Statement of the Problem	7
1.4. Hypotheses of the study	8
1.5. Delimitations of the study	8
1.6. Significance of the Study	10
1.7. Definition of Terms	10
• Autonomous learning	11
• Autonomous Vocabulary Learning Strategies of Oxford (AVLSs)	12
• An autonomous learner (LA)	14
• Writing performance	15
• Self-Determination Theory of Deci and Ryan (SDT)(2000)	16
1.8. Organization of the Remainder of the Thesis	16

### Chapter Two Theoretical Background and Related Studies

17-50

<b>2.1. Part one: Vocabulary and autonomous learning</b>	
2.1.1. The importance of autonomy in vocabulary learning	17
2.1.2. The role of Memory in Vocabulary Learning	19
2.1.3. Studies related the autonomous vocabulary Learning Strategies	19
2.1.4. Studies related the effects of teachers' autonomy supportive	31
2.1.5. Teachers' role in an autonomous class: A strongly teacher led class	33
<b>2.2. Part 2: Vocabulary &amp; Writing performance</b>	34
2.2.1. Studies related to vocabulary and writing performance	35
<b>2.3. Part Three: SDT, vocabulary learning and writing performance</b>	44
2.3.1. The importance of SDT in language learning	46
2.3.2. Studies related SDT, vocabulary learning and writing performance	48
<b>2.4. Commentary</b>	

<b>Chapter Three</b>		
<b>Research Method and Procedures</b>		51-60
3.1.	The experimental design	51
3.2.	Participants of the study	51
3.3.	Variables of the study	52
3.4.	The study Instruments	52
3.4.1.	The vocab writing performance pre/posttest (Appendix B)	52
3.4.2.	Writing performance rubric (Appendix C)	54
3.4.3.	Interest inventory on Self-Determination Theory (Appendix D) in English & (Appendix E) in Arabic	55
3.4.4.	Satisfaction questionnaire (Appendix F) in English & (Appendix G) in Arabic	56
3.4.5.	Contents of the second term syllabus (Appendix H)	56
3.5.	Vocab/writing performance pretest	57
3.6.	The treatment	60
	Conclusion	60
<b>Chapter Four</b>		
<b>Results and Discussion</b>		61-85
4.1.	Quantitative Results	61
4.1.1.	Results of Pretest	61
4.1.2.	Results of Posttest	62
4.1.3.	Hypotheses of the study	64
4.2.	Qualitative analysis to the study	79
4.2.1.	The researcher reflection	79
4.2.2.	The pupils' reflection	80
4.3.	Difficulties the researcher faced during the treatment	82
4.4.	Discussion of the Study Results	82
<b>Chapter Five</b>		
<b>Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations</b>		85-89
5.1.	Summary of the study	85
5.2.	Design of the study	86
5.3.	Study Results and Findings	86
5.4.	Recommendations	87
5.5.	Suggestions for further Research	88
	Conclusion	89
<b>References</b>		91- 100



## Appendices

(Appendix A): The pilot study	101
(Appendix B): The Vocab/ writing performance pre/posttest	103
(Appendix C): Writing performance rubric	105
Samples of the pupils' writings	106-111
(Appendix D): Interest inventory on SDT in English	112
(Appendix E): Interest inventory on SDT in Arabic	113
(Appendix F): Satisfaction questionnaire in English	114
(Appendix G): Satisfaction questionnaire in Arabic	116
(Appendix H): Contents of the Second Term Syllabus	
Two Samples of lesson plan	117

## List of tables

Table (1):	The objectives of the syllabus in writing	56
Table (2):	Results of the two groups in the vocab/writing performance pre/test	61
Table (3):	The difference between two groups in the overall vocab/writing performance pretest	62
Table (4):	Results of the two groups in the vocab/writing performance posttest	62
Table (5):	The difference between the two groups in the mean scores of the questions of the overall vocab/writing performance posttest	63
Table (6):	The differences between the two groups in the mean score of the overall vocabulary posttest	65
Table (7):	The differences between the two groups in the components of the writing performance posttest according to the analytic rubric	66
Table (8):	Demonstrates Autonomy (n=30)	67
Table (9):	Demonstrates competency (n=30)	69
Table (10):	Relatedness (n=30)	71
Table (11):	Motivation	73
Table (12):	The mean and std. deviation of the Questionnaire	75
Tables (13-19):	Chi square for questions from (16- 22)	76-78

## **List of figures**

Figure (1)	Application of SDT	15
Figure (2):	Writing performance descriptors	54
Figure (3):	AVLSs that enhance writing performance	59
Figure (4):	The difference between the two groups in the mean score of the overall vocab/writing posttest	64
Figure (5):	The difference between the two groups in the mean score of the overall vocabulary posttest	65
Figure (6):	The difference in the components of the writing performance	66
Figure (7):	A pie-chart of autonomy	68
Figure (8):	A pie-chart of competency	70
Figure (9):	A pie-chart of relatedness	72
Figure (10):	A pie-chart shows the amount of motivation among the learners	74

## **List of abbreviations**

<b>AVLSs</b>	Autonomous Vocabulary Learning Strategies
<b>SDT</b>	Self-Determination Theory
<b>WIDA consortium</b>	World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment
<b>SPSS</b>	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
<b>VWPT</b>	Vocab/ Writing Performance Test
<b>LA</b>	Learner Autonomy

## **Chapter One: Background and Problem**

1.1. Introduction	1
1.2. Context of the problem: Pilot study: Appendix (A)	4
1.3. Statement of the Problem	7
1.4. Hypotheses of the study	8
1.5. Delimitations of the study	8
1.6. Significance of the Study	8
1.7. Definition of Terms	10
•Autonomous learning	10
•Autonomous Vocabulary Learning Strategies of Oxford (AVLS)	11
•An autonomous learner (LA)	12
•Writing performance	14
•Self-Determination Theory of Deci and Ryan (SDT)(2000)	15
1.8. Organization of the Remainder of the Thesis	16

## **Chapter Two: Theoretical Background and Related Studies**

<b>2.1. Part one: Vocabulary and autonomy</b>	
2.1.1. The importance of autonomy in vocabulary learning	17
2.1.2. The role of Memory in Vocabulary Learning	19
2.1.3. Studies related the autonomous vocabulary Learning Strategies	19
2.1.4. Studies related the effects of teachers' autonomy supportive	31
2.1.5. Teachers' role in an autonomous class: A strongly teacher led class	33
<b>2.2. Part 2: Vocabulary &amp; Writing performance</b>	34
2.2.1. Studies related to vocabulary and writing performance	35
<b>2.3. Part Three: SDT, autonomy and vocabulary learning</b>	
2.3.1. The importance of SDT in learning	44
2.3.2. Studies related SDT and vocabulary learning and writing performance	46
<b>2.4. Commentary</b>	48

### **Chapter Three: Research Method and Procedures**

3.1. The experimental design	51
3.2. Participants of the study	51
3.3. Variables of the study	52
3.4. The study Instruments	52
3.4.1.The Vocab/ Writing performance pre/posttest (Appendix B)	52
3.4.2.Writing performance rubric (Appendix C)	54
3.4.3.Interest inventory on Self-Determination Theory (Appendix D) in English & (Appendix E) in Arabic	55
3.4.4.Satisfaction questionnaire (Appendix F) in English & (Appendix G) in Arabic	55
3.4.5.Contents of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Term Syllabus (Appendix H)	56
3.5. The treatment	60
Conclusion	60

## **Chapter Four: Data analysis and Results**

4.1. Quantitative Results	61
4.1.1.Results of Pretest	61
4.1.2.Results of Posttest	62
4.1.3.Hypotheses of the study	64
4.2. Qualitative analysis to the study	79
4.2.1.The researcher reflection	79
4.2.2.The pupils' reflection	80
4.3. Difficulties the researcher faced during the treatment	82
4.4. Discussion of the Study Results	82

## **Chapter Five: Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations**

5.1. Summary of the study	86
5.2. Design of the study	86
5.3. Study Results and Findings	87
5.4. Recommendations	88
5.5. Suggestions for further Research	89
Conclusion	89