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# THE EFFECTIVENESS OF VOCABULARY TRAINING STRATEGIES ON ENHANCING READING AND WRITING ACHIEVEMENT OF SAUDI FEMALE STUDENTS AT THE INTERMEDIATE STAGE

A Dissertation Submitted for Partial Requirements of the PH.D.  
Degree in Education (Curriculum & EFL Instruction)

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Cairo, 1438 H , 2017 A.D

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE  
BENEFICENT THE MERCIFUL

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to the members of my family, especially my kid, my beloved sister and my husband.

Jewaher Al-Hragan,

**Title:** The Effectiveness of Vocabulary Training Strategies on Enhancing Reading and Writing Achievement of Saudi Female Students” at the Intermediate Stage

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to use selected vocabulary strategies to train Saudi female students on and determine their impact on enhancing their reading and writing achievement and their satisfaction with the training. The quasi-experimental design was utilized where two intact third year classes (N=40) in an Intermediate school were assigned to an experimental group and a control one. Four vocabulary learning strategies: semantic mapping, reviewing, guessing, and dictionary use constituted the basis of the training. Tools of the study included a pre/post English Language reading and writing achievement test and a satisfaction questionnaire. The results of this study indicated that the vocabulary strategies training program proved to have significant effect on the overall proficiency of students' English language writing, reading comprehension, and vocabulary acquisition. Furthermore, students were satisfied with the strategy training. A set of recommendations and suggestions for further research were presented.

**Keywords:** vocabulary learning strategies, semantic mapping, reviewing, guessing, dictionary use, English language achievement, Saudi Intermediate stage

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**CHAPTER 1**  
**INTRODUCTION**

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Strategy training aims at raising students' awareness of learning strategies and providing learners with systematic practice, reinforcement and self-monitoring of their strategy use with language learning activities,(KoJic-Sabo & Lightbown, 1999; Gu& Johnson, 1999; Lawson &Hogben, 1996; Wang et al., 1998).It is to be noted that strategy training studies are based on a growing interest in a cognitive perspective in second and foreign language acquisition research.

In Cognitive theory of development , (Gagne' et al., 1993) claimed that learning is seen as an active, constructivist process in which learners select, organize informational input, relate it to prior knowledge, retain what is considered important, use the information appropriately and reflect on the outcomes of their learning efforts In this dynamic view of learning, second/foreign language acquisition becomes effective if learners are actively engaged in their own learning.

Brown (2001: 208) claimed that language teaching methodology has recently seen a dramatic increase in attention to what he likes to call "strategic

investment" that learners can make in their own learning process. This means that language teachers have to equip their students with a sense of what successful language learners do to achieve success and to help them in developing their own individual pathways to successful acquisition of the language.

Brown (2001) highlights the emergence of strategies-based instruction and points to its roots in the 1980's of the twentieth century, citing the research of Rubin and Thompson (1982; 1994), who studied "good" language learners.

This early body of research identified certain successful language learners and the extracted relevant factors believed to contribute to this success. Research has also shown that the more classroom activities can model the behavior exhibited by the successful language learner, the better and more efficient students will be in acquiring the language, and specifically in developing their own autonomy as learners.

One consequence of the prominent shift within the field of language learning with greater emphasis being put on learners and learning than on teachers and teaching is the increasing awareness and interests in language learning strategies in general, and vocabulary learning strategies in particular. Being central to language, vocabulary is a critical element in the acquisition of all

language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening, so without vocabulary knowledge, a learner could not be a proficient language learner.

Vocabulary teaching / learning has gone through various shifts in emphasis according to the methodology advocated from one time to the other. For example, Zimmerman (1997: 5) is of the opinion that there was a time when "the teaching and learning of vocabulary were undervalued". Beck, et al. (2007) has shed light on evidence from research that indicates little emphasis on the acquisition of vocabulary in school curricula. However, towards the end of the twentieth century there has been a revival of systematic attention to vocabulary learning.

Michael Lewis's Lexical Approach (1993 & 1997) put explicit focus on the teaching and learning of lexical items as being the important building blocks of the language. Furthermore, many studies showed the importance of form-focused instruction by direct strategy instruction and focusing students' attention to vocabulary as an aid to comprehension. Hence, the current practice now guides students in specific ways to internalize vocabulary, i.e., strategy instruction.

Oxford (1990) argues that if learners use vocabulary learning strategies, and evaluate and monitor their own learning, they can take a more active role in the language learning process. In being active participants in the learning process,

learners become more efficient, more autonomous, and more positive in their learning.

Yang (2002) and Starks & Gretchen (2004) indicate that there are a variety of vocabulary learning strategies. Notable among these are the following:

**1. Semantic Mapping:**

It is a strategy designed to display information graphically. It generally includes a brainstorming session in which students verbalize associations on a topic or key concept as the teacher writes them on the board. The teacher facilitates the students' discussion to organize or categorize the associations into the form of a map. (Carrel, Pharis, & Liberto, 1989)

**2. Guessing Strategy:**

According to (Harmer, 1999) Students can guess the meaning of new words using alternative cues as follows:

1. Look for any definitions or paraphrases in the passage that may help them guess the meaning of the word.
2. Identify the part of speech of the new word.
3. Make use of the logical development in the context (e.g. cause and effect).
4. Look for other words in the passage that support their guess.
5. Check their guess against context to see if it fits in.

- 6 Analyze word structure (prefix, root and suffix).

### 3. Review Strategy:

Students are encouraged to keep a vocabulary notebook, in which they record new words, idioms and expressions. According to McCarthy & O Dell (1994), students should follow these steps:

1. Highlight any word or expression they had forgotten or were not sure about.
2. Choose ten words and expressions that they want to learn, and write them down.
3. Look up the words selected in an English-English dictionary.
4. Find some other words based on the same root. For example, looking up the noun “habit” will lead to the verb “habituate”, to the adjective “habit-forming” and “habitual” and the association, “*be in the habit of doingsomething*”, “get in/out of the habit”, etc.
5. The next day, students should ask themselves, how much they remember.
6. Test them, cover part of a word or phrase. Can they remember the complete word or phrase? (McCarthy & O’Dell, 1994).

#### **4. Dictionary Use Strategy**

The learner uses the dictionary as a tool to understand the meaning of words: Harmer (1999, pp.174-178) is of the opinion that :

1. The dictionary is a rich and varied resource for language activities and save student's time and effort during the learning process.
2. The dictionary provides a source of information about word roots, word formation, word buildings, word meanings, word use, spelling, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary development.
3. Regular access to the dictionary is essential for dictionary training and encourages good dictionary habits, and dictionary use strategies help the students become independent, and proficient dictionary users .This will give them greater control over their own learning, because independent students learn how to use dictionaries with confidence. And while students are working with dictionaries, their focus is on learning not on the teacher which allows the teacher more time to provide individual guidance and support.
4. Dictionary activities help to develop the confidence that comes from becoming an efficient user of the dictionary that permeates all areas of language learning and development. Students will use dictionaries more