

**Vocabulary Cards as a Strategy for Vocabulary Acquisition of English as a
Second Language: The Learners' Perspectives**

by

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Abstract

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The use of vocabulary cards has been advocated by various authors (Gairns and Redman, 1986; McCarthy, 1990; Schmitt and Schmitt, 1995; Hopkins and Bean, 1997) as a strategy to enhance vocabulary acquisition in both first language and second language acquisition. However, there has not been much focus on the students' perspectives of this strategy. The present study examines the learners' perspectives of the use of vocabulary cards as a vocabulary learning strategy with special emphasis given to the use of drawing as a strategy. Data were collected via a questionnaire, in-class observation and interviews with both learners and instructors. Results showed that learners recognized vocabulary cards as an effective strategy due to the variety of information included; however, they also had a few reservations concerning time. Regarding the drawing, learners were divided between those who considered the strategy lengthy and not completely effective and those who regarded it as relevant.

Dedication

Aos meus pais, José e Celcília

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Researchers, teachers, and learners do not have any doubt that it is desirable for language learners to have a wide range of vocabulary in a second language (L2) as well as in their first language (L1). Anderson and Freeboby (1981) referring to vocabulary and L1 point out that “An equally and consistent finding has been that word knowledge is strongly related to reading comprehension” (p. 78). Koda (1989) states that L2 development research has shown that “target language vocabulary knowledge contributes significantly to reading comprehension” (p. 529). Nation (1990) states that one of the reasons “... for having a systematic and principled approach to vocabulary is that both learners and researchers see vocabulary as being a very important, if not the most important, element in language learning” (p. 2). Nation adds that learners deem that many of the complexities of “...receptive and productive language use results from inadequate vocabulary” (p. 2). Laufer and Shmueli (1997) say that vocabulary is highly connected to “general language proficiency” in L2 (p. 90). Levine and Reves (1990, p. 37) note that, “Lack of adequate vocabulary is often cited by English as a foreign language (EFL) learners as one of the obstacles to text comprehension.” They add that learners claim that general vocabulary tends to be a greater source of difficulty than special terminology.

The large number of research articles produced in the 80’s and 90’s demonstrates that researchers and scholars seem to have been drawn to the study of vocabulary acquisition. Schmitt (1997) says that in the last 25 years vocabulary

learning and learners' strategies have regained attention. Despite such attention, Wesche and Paribakht (1996) argue, "The process by which a learner acquires new vocabulary in a second language is poorly understood" (p. 13). Furthermore, Schmitt (2000), commenting on how learners study vocabulary, indicates that learners' strategies should be taken into account as well. He comments, "learners do use strategies and find them helpful." Moreover, he states that more research is needed on the students' perception of strategies (p. 136). Thus, it appears that not only should there be more research on how learners acquire second language vocabulary, but also how they feel about the various strategies proposed.

Throughout the years researchers have come up with different ways to try to assure that learners increase their vocabulary. For instance, Harley (1983) talks about the use of grids. Duquette and Painchand (1996) have considered audio and video contexts as a means of helping learners with vocabulary acquisition. Lindstromberg (1985) looks into schemata as a means of learning words more easily, observing that "... learning a word as a member of a certain meaning-family makes it easier to learn how to use the word in sentences..." (p. 236). Stieglitz (1983) suggests a procedure based on a task developed by Johnson and Pearson (1978). This procedure entails semantic feature analysis and is supposed to help students understand the difference in meaning between words. The words, in a matrix, are assigned plus (+) and minus (-) signs so as to indicate which features correspond to them and which do not.

Schmitt and Schmitt (1995) in their article on vocabulary notebooks talk of using vocabulary cards as a supplement to extensive reading, implicit learning, and explicit classroom exercises. Among other features, learners are encouraged to include

an example, a keyword illustration, a translation and a synonym. Hopkins and Bean (1998) also present a personal account of a strategy they call Verbal-Visual Word Association. In their account, Hopkins narrated most of the procedure. He described what happened as well as his impressions of the strategy he used in his high school group. In his research, he dealt with Native Americans whose L1 was a variety of English, which he categorized as being similar to that of African American English. The procedure described in the study focused on using vocabulary squares to enhance vocabulary acquisition in L1. They are squares divided into four parts, in which the students would write a definition, a prefix, an example and a drawing or picture, respectively. As can be seen, this strategy is quite similar to vocabulary cards.

The type of vocabulary Hopkins and Bean (1998) chose to teach was roots and prefixes. Hopkins stated that the students, at first, were a bit resistant to the idea, but in time they took to the project. What he concluded was that there was a considerable amount of interaction among the students while preparing the vocabulary squares. “These drawings caused them to conceptualize their knowledge in a concrete and observable form that encouraged collaborative conversation,” said Hopkins (p. 279). He claimed that the students were motivated and involved in the project. The results of this project at the end of the semester proved to be quite satisfactory according to Hopkins.

Whereas in Hopkins’ vocabulary squares he appeared to emphasize the use of a drawing as a required feature of the procedure, in the vocabulary notebooks proposed by Schmitt and Schmitt (1995) drawing was a keyword illustration (an association based on a native language word and an L2 word) and was one optional strategy. What

these two strategies have in common is the concern that learners rely on more than a definition or translation of an unfamiliar word, but get a more structured view of the vocabulary studied.

Looking at the variety of strategies to study vocabulary, it may be burdensome for learners to choose one that suits learners' needs. Moreover, it will be relevant for the teacher to know how learners perceive the different strategies available to enhance vocabulary. Considering these two points, the idea for the present study comes from my interest in further investigating what Schmitt (2000) proposes, i. e., to learn more about how learners perceive certain vocabulary learning strategies. In the case of the present research I will look specifically at the use of vocabulary cards. Moreover, I investigate how beneficial learners find drawings to be for remembering lexical items. Schmitt and Schmitt (1995) vocabulary notebooks are taken as the point of departure. Yet I will focus on the learners' perception rather than its quantitative effectiveness. My aim here is to conduct a qualitative research project which will evaluate the learners' perspective on vocabulary cards, as well as the use of drawing, in the L2 acquisition of phrasal verbs, whether or not they are transparent (i.e., have a meaning that is both literal and obvious).

The choice of qualitative research was based on Marshall and Rossman (1989) statement that this type of research "...values participants' perspectives on their worlds and seeks to discover those perspectives..." (p. 11). Furthermore, according to them, this type of research "... views inquiry as an interactive process between researcher and participants, and that is primarily descriptive and relies on people's words as the

primary data” (p. 11). Since what I am looking at is the learners’ perspective on a vocabulary learning strategy, this type of research seemed to be the ideal one.

Thus, the present study raises questions about the learners’ attitude towards using vocabulary notebooks as a means of enhancing vocabulary. Would L2 learners consider the activity relevant or not? Would they be willing to keep records of the type of information as that required in vocabulary notebooks? Would they find it helpful? What would be the perceived effect of drawing as an aid in learning vocabulary? How effective are vocabulary cards to a particular set of vocabulary items, such as English phrasal verbs?

Why phrasal verbs? As McPartland (1989) has pointed out, “Phrasal verbs are ubiquitous in English.” Moreover, she says, “Although there is a common belief that these verb-particle combinations are confined to informal speech, they occur in both written and spoken language in formal and informal register” (p.150). Phrasal verbs are rather complex for L2 learners primarily because of the various meanings attributed to some of them and the endless number of verb-particle combinations that exist. Richard Side (1990) presents a list of eight reasons why students do not like phrasal verbs. Those reasons are the following: 1) a confusing number of verb-particle combinations, 2) multi-meanings, 3) idiomatic meanings, 4) the existence of Latinate equivalents often used by teachers to explain the meaning of phrasal verbs, 5) the random aspect of the particle, 6) separateness or not of the verb-particle, 7) register and appropriateness, and 8) L1 interference. Moreover, McPartland states that “... a non-native speaker who insists on using single-word verbs instead of phrasal verbs will never sound native or near native like” (p. 150). Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman

(1999), too, are of the same opinion: “Yet they are ubiquitous in English; no one can speak or understand English ... without a knowledge of phrasal verbs” (p. 425). It seems irrefutable that teachers should allot class time to dealing with phrasal verbs.

The organization of this study is as follows. Chapter two consists of a review of the literature pertinent to the topic investigated. In this section, various accounts of vocabulary teaching and learning as well as vocabulary acquisition are presented. I also talk about the implications of depth of processing in vocabulary acquisition. Finally, an account of phrasal verbs, their classification, difficulties and importance, is presented. In chapter three I provide a thorough description of the participants, as well as the material and procedures used. As part of the triangulation, a questionnaire, in-class observations and interviews with both the subjects and the instructors of the groups were carried out. Once all these data were collected (students’ interview, students’ questionnaire and instructor’s interview), I matched them and assessed the results. These results are presented in chapter four. Then, in chapter five I discuss the findings and present a conclusion in chapter six.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

This chapter consists of a brief overview of vocabulary in second language (L2) teaching throughout the centuries. It also contains an account of the different approaches to vocabulary teaching and learning as well as various perspectives on vocabulary acquisition. Special emphasis is given to the Keyword method due to its importance to the present research. Moreover, a succinct explanation of depth of processing is introduced. Lastly, I present an account of phrasal verbs, their challenge and importance to second language learning.

2.1 Vocabulary Teaching and Learning

This section provides a historical background of the different methods and approaches to second language teaching, from The Grammar Translation method to the Communicative Language Teaching approach. I pay special attention to how vocabulary is addressed by those methods and approaches. I also address the present situation of vocabulary teaching in an L2. Moreover, I introduce issues to be taken into account when teaching vocabulary such as what it means to know a word and what words should be taught. Finally I talk about the different techniques and approaches to teaching vocabulary.

Second language learning is definitely not a modern issue. Schmitt (2000) talks of records of Roman children studying Greek around the second century BC (p. 10). Zimmerman (1997) and Schmitt (2000) present overviews of the vocabulary trends in the various methods and approaches throughout the last two centuries. The Grammar

Translation Method, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, advocated the study of vocabulary using bilingual lists of words. This method had as its main objectives to prepare learners, as Zimmerman says, “to read and write classical material” (p. 5). L2 was seen as a means to exercise the mind and difficulties with the use of vocabulary were solved by etymological analysis of the word (Zimmerman, 1997, p. 5).

Established by Henry Sweet in England in the 1880’s, the Reform Movement emphasized language learning in context. Sweet believed in teaching contextualized “carefully controlled spoken language” as cited in Zimmerman, 1997 (p. 7). According to Zimmerman the most significant change the Reformers introduced in vocabulary instruction “... was that words came to be associated with reality rather than with other words and syntactic patterns” (p. 8). Then, the Direct Method emerged at the end of the nineteenth century. It emphasized oral skills over written skills. Zimmerman points out that this method “stated that interaction was at the heart of natural language acquisition” (p. 8). Concrete words were taught through pictures, gestures or realia while abstract words were taught by grouping them according to topic or association of ideas (Zimmerman, 1997, p. 8-9). Schmitt states that Audiolingualism has “... no clear method of extending vocabulary...” (p. 14). Zimmerman (1997), quoting Larsen-Freeman, 1986, points out that in the Audiolingual method, “... vocabulary items were selected according to their simplicity and familiarity” (p. 11). Zimmerman adds that the choice of new vocabulary was based on the possibility of this vocabulary being used in drills, which seems to lead to a restriction in choice of words. Moreover, translation was an unacceptable way to study vocabulary. The explanation for that comes from Fries, cited in Zimmerman, who states that “... it is falsely assumed that

words have exact equivalents in languages” (p. 11). Fries adds that the only type of word that may be translated and still carry its integral meaning are technical jargons.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) focuses on the language meaningful communication, mastery of functions (for instance, how to make a complaint), and “how language connects together in a discourse...” and relegates vocabulary to a secondary status (Schmitt, p. 14). Zimmerman notes, “... vocabulary has not been the focus of attention in Communicative language research or methodology” (p. 13). Quoting Van Ek (1976), Wilkins (1972) and Widdowson (1979), she says that the focus of CLT is “... the appropriate use of communicative categories” and “language as discourse” (p. 13). Zimmerman states that Krashen and Terrell describe their Natural Approach as comparable to other communicative approaches. Vocabulary, in this method, is considered “...as a bearer of meaning, ... to be very important to the language acquisition process” (p. 15). From the information presented here it can be concluded that no method has considered vocabulary acquisition as a primary importance in second language acquisition. Table 1 below presents a summary of the various methods and approaches and the vocabulary of role according to these methods and the approaches.

Table 1. Vocabulary Acquisition in the different Methods and Approaches:

Methods/Approaches	Role of Vocabulary	Technique
1. Grammar Translation	Important – used to read and translate classic works	Bilingual dictionary and word lists
2. Reform Movement	Somewhat important – used for communication	Controlled vocabulary and use of context
3. Direct Method	Somewhat important – Vocabulary to help speech. Speaking and listening came first	Concrete words taught by using gesture, pictures and realia Abstract words – grouped according to the topic
4. Audiolingualism	Vocabulary that can be used in drills.	No clear method, and translation is avoided at all costs.
5. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)	Secondary status Vocabulary used for communication	Used in notional categories and functions
6. Natural Approach	Very important to the language acquisition process	Taught via comprehensible input. Focus on understanding messages

According to Prince (1996), vocabulary learning did not receive much attention in the past, “but now has become the focus of much research...” (p. 478). Schmitt (1997) says that systematic work on vocabulary did not really begin until the twentieth century. Schmitt says “In the last 25 years the field of second language acquisition has seen a reemergence of interest in the area of language study, vocabulary (Meara, 1987) and appearance of a newly organized aspect” (p. 199). Throughout these years,

scholars and researchers have been investigating different approaches, methods and techniques not only to teach vocabulary and enhance retention but also to try to understand how learners learn vocabulary.

Nowadays scholars, researchers and teachers seem to agree that vocabulary is fundamental in L2 acquisition from several perspectives. Regarding the learners, Zimmerman (1997) begins her chapter on historical trends in vocabulary acquisition by saying, “Vocabulary is central to language and of critical importance to the typical language learner” (p. 5). In addition, Luppescu and Day (1993) say, “The importance of vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension is well-established” (p. 263-4). This view is supported by Levine and Reves (1990) who also stress the importance of extensive vocabulary for academic reading (p. 37). From the language mastery perspective, Lindstromberg (1985) emphasizes the importance of a wide vocabulary if learners want to master English. Nation (1990) points out that “... giving attention to vocabulary is unavoidable. Even the most formal or communication-directed approaches to language learning teaching must deal with needed vocabulary one way or other” (p. 2). Finally, Wheatherford (1990), quoting Fuller, says, “You just can’t learn a language without learning words- - lots of them” (p. 1).

Although vocabulary has been finally established as an important part of language acquisition, there are several issues to be taken into account before actually considering the teaching and learning of vocabulary. The first concern would be to understand exactly what it means to know a word. Richards (1976) tries to tackle this issue when he presents nine assumptions as to what it entails to know a word. He says that knowing a word involves knowing how to combine it with other words, being

aware of its sociolinguistic features as well as semantic behavior, derivations and relationship with other words, not to mention its different meanings. He also says:

... in preparing teaching material we begin with a rich concept of vocabulary. The goal of vocabulary teaching must be more than simply covering a certain number of words on a list. Then we must look to how teaching techniques can help realize our concept of what it means to know a word (p. 88).

Nation (1990), too, has discussed the different points to think about when we talk about learning a word. He enhances Richards' (1976) assumptions and organizes a list of questions concerning the form, function, position, and meaning of the word to show what is involved in knowing a word (p. 31). Furthermore, he subdivides vocabulary knowledge into receptive and productive knowledge of a word. Palmberg (1990) says that vocabulary knowledge according to Faerch, Hasstrup and Phillipson (1984) is a "continuum between ability to make sense of a word and ability to activate the word automatically for productive purposes" (p. 1). It may become a burdensome task to attempt to teach all aspects of every word. Thus it is essential that teachers decide what aspects of the words to teach by considering if they want their learners to use the words receptively or productively.

The second concern is which words to teach. It may be thought that low-frequency words might be the most problematic to learners. However, Levine and Reves (1990) state that unfamiliarity with everyday vocabulary constitutes a bigger problem than technical terms. Laufer (1998), as well, has pointed out that everyday vocabulary can be more troublesome than jargons (p. 258). Some researchers believe

that word-frequency counts may be one way to handle the problem of which words to teach. Nation (1990) suggests word-frequency counts as one way to choose vocabulary to teach learners of English. According to him, frequency counts can help teachers and course designers in various ways: “They can help a teacher develop a feeling about which words are useful and should be given attention and which are infrequent” (p. 19-20). Yet he is aware that frequency counts can also present problems such as: 1) some relevant words that do not occur in the first or second hundred words, 2) some high-frequency words are not appropriate for beginning level learners, 3) the various lists do not always agree, 4) they may present an inappropriate order to teach the words, and 5) they may not be as dependable above a certain level. Richard (1970) also mentions flaws in frequency counts: “Teachers and course designers have often had to ignore the frequency lists and rely on their own discretion as to which nouns to be taught” (p. 88). He proposes a list of some of the things to consider when preparing a list of words to teach learners of English: frequency, language needs, availability, familiarity and learning burden.

The third important issue is how to teach so that learners will learn the words more effectively. What would be the best approach to vocabulary teaching that would help learners acquire the words more easily and effectively? In trying to answer this question Gairns and Redman (1986) state that word frequency and recency of use are two of the most important factors that affect the storage and retrieval of foreign language (FL) words in a learners’ mental lexicon (p. 88-9). Laufer and Shmueli (1997) suggest that to memorize vocabulary one important thing is frequency of exposure. Nation (1990) points out that learners need five to seven exposures to a word

to make sure learning will occur. Sixteen or more exposures will be needed in the case of implicit learning. Another approach emphasizes the quality of the word processing rather than the quantity. Quoting Schmidt (1990,1992), Laufer and Shmueli say, "...one of the conditions for transforming input into intake is noticing and attending to the new material" (p. 91). Palmberg (1990) suggests, "Learners' personal interest seems to be another relevant factor for the storage and retrieval of words. This could explain why some words are more accessible than others" (p. 4). The conclusion drawn from these statements is that there are a few points to reflect on concerning how to teach vocabulary and that undoubtedly learners' multiple exposure to the word plays a fundamental part in the process of using a word comfortably and adequately.

Taking all of these issues into account, scholars and researchers have presented a variety of techniques and approaches to help learners learn vocabulary. One of the most popular ways of dealing with L2 vocabulary among learners is to use bilingual dictionaries. Researchers have divergent opinions on the topic. Laufer and Shmueli (1997) say that a study by Atkins and Knowles (1990) carried out in Europe concluded that 75% of language learners make use of bilingual dictionaries. Laufer and Shmueli add that it does not mean bilingual dictionaries are better. It may mean that learners need, psychologically, to rely on their L1 (p. 93). Besides, their research has shown that "Glosses in L1 proved to be more beneficial for retention scores than glosses in English" (p.103). A possible explanation for this finding may be that learners could focus exclusively on the new L2 word since the L1 was fully familiar (p. 103). Luppescu and Day (1993) have looked into the role of bilingual dictionaries in vocabulary learning while reading, and concluded, "... the use of bilingual dictionaries

while reading can facilitate the learning of vocabulary by EFL students ...”(p. 275). However, they have also found a few shortcomings: 1) bilingual dictionaries can be misleading due to the large number of entries in several cases, and 2) learners may spend twice the time reading a text when using dictionaries. Schmitt (1997), too, calls attention to the wide use of bilingual dictionaries, and he presents another drawback. Schmitt comments that Tomaszczyk’s subjects (1979) regarded the information in bilingual dictionaries as generally less complete than monolingual dictionaries (p. 209-10).

Prince (1996), on the other hand, looks at the issues of context and translation. In his study about context versus translation, he concludes that the weaker group performed better when recall was by translation. He says, “...high developed ability to learn words via translation links may in some cases be detrimental to the establishment of the skills and strategies required to handle discourse” (p. 486). Moreover, he says, “...context provides the means to identify the meaning of the new word and not necessarily the means to learn it” (p. 489). He realizes that learning vocabulary through reading helps learners develop strategies such as anticipating and inferring. It also raises learners’ self-reliance and awareness of words in discourse for communication besides exposing them to examples of collocation. His final conclusion is that context is important but that learners should also isolate the word and study it thoroughly. Coady (1993) also comments on this issue. He has found that learning vocabulary through context is a paradox, since students find less frequent words in texts and often do not have a wide enough vocabulary to enable them to read the texts (p. 7). He points out that simplified texts have received criticism because they do not prepare learners

for the real texts they will encounter; but then teachers will need to handle the enormous task of preparing learners for that type of text. Qian (1996) investigated the use of decontextualized and contextualized lists of words for Chinese learners. He collected his data in five steps: pretest, instruction, recalls 1, 2 and 3. The pretest was carried out a month before the experiment. In the group that worked with a word list (Group D), subjects were given a list of 15 words, which they memorized using rote memorization. The group that worked with words in context (Group C) worked on 15 words in a text. In order to find the meaning of the word, they used guessing, context clues, and substitutions, among other strategies. The first recall was carried out after a 20-minute break of the instruction. The subjects' task was to provide the equivalents of the 15 English words. Group D would provide the translation of the words into Chinese, while Group C would find a substitute for the word as they had done previously. Recalls 2 and 3 followed the same procedure. Recalls 2 and 3 took place one and three weeks, respectively, after instruction (p. 129-30). The results showed that in recalls 1, 2 and 3 the 'word list group' had a percentage of retention of 75%, 67%, and 61% respectively. The 'context' group had retention of 66%, 58%, and 51% in recalls 1, 2 and 3. Qian observes, "... the effect of decontextualized vocabulary learning on later recall is clearly stronger than contextualized vocabulary learning" (p. 131). Nevertheless, he realizes that both of these approaches contribute to the learner:

... although learning vocabulary in context seems to be less effective in terms of retention, the context in which words are presented can provide some additional linguistic, semantic, or sociolinguistic knowledge of the target words. (p. 134)

Lindstromberg (1985) follows a similar line of thought. He points out that words should be taught in context. He also proposes the use of grids in addition to schema and different types of diagrams to study vocabulary. In the tree diagram, the words are displayed in the shape of a tree. The main word is placed on the top of the tree and the related ones come from the top in the shape of branches. In the box diagram, the main word is displayed in a box on the top of the diagram and the related words, in boxes below the main one in a sort of pyramid-like shape. He also suggests that complex grids should be used with more advanced learners (p. 238). According to Lindstromberg, the use of schemata is advocated as a support for vocabulary teaching and can be used for different purposes in the classroom such as teaching new vocabulary, review activities, and serving as a diagnostic tool (p. 239). Harvey (1983) has also backed the use of grids to teach vocabulary. He points out that grids present numerous possibilities for helping learners see different elements and categories in vocabulary; they can also personalize their grid. Furthermore, grids can be used in a variety of consolidation exercises which are tasks for learners to internalize vocabulary. Channell (1980) proposes the use of grids as well as scales to teach vocabulary as well. Moreover, she realizes that they are not the final answer to vocabulary acquisition, but rather a positive step toward that goal.

Schmitt and Schmitt (1995) encourage the use of vocabulary notebooks, which are notebooks/cards on which learners write down information such as a definition, sentence, and translation, as a strategy to enhance vocabulary learning. Hopkins and Bean (1998) made use of a similar technique for studying L1 vocabulary, which they titled vocabulary squares. In such strategies learners take notes on different aspects of

a word. This way they will have access to several pieces of information about a word all in the same place.

Weatherford (1990) presents a series of techniques to teach vocabulary. He suggests the use of flashcards, which are rather similar to vocabulary cards on which students record information about the words. One advantage he sees in this strategy is that the cards can easily be carried around. Moreover, the process of writing about the words helps memorization (p. 4).

Concerning visual aids, Weatherford mentions an old saying that "... one picture is worth a thousand words..." and adds that "Some learners rely heavily on their sense of vision in the learning process" (p. 5). Furthermore, he suggests role-play, a combination of vocabulary and culture, vocabulary through art and music, the root word approach (which would mean breaking the word into roots and affixes in order to teach it), mnemonic devices, semantic fields, cognates and direct borrowings (between L1 and L2), among others.

In this section, I mentioned an extensive variety of methods, approaches and techniques for teaching vocabulary. Teachers doubtlessly have a wide range of activities from which to choose, and they must discover which ones are the most effective for their learners. Teachers cannot always rely on researchers to answer this question, since researchers do not always seem to have yet an exact answer as for which of these methods are the most effective ones leading to acquisition.

2.2 Vocabulary Acquisition

This section focuses on some of the issues pertaining to vocabulary acquisition. I concentrate on the mental process of acquisition and the techniques related to this process. I address the importance and the applicability of L1 vocabulary acquisition research to L2 vocabulary acquisition research. I also address the implication of L1 vocabulary in L2 vocabulary acquisition. Furthermore, I discuss vocabulary acquisition as a slow process. Issues of passive versus active vocabulary are presented. I also talk about explicit and incidental learning. Finally I consider specific methods and approaches which have been supported by some researchers and scholars. In the view of the present research, special emphasis is given to the Keyword method (Atkinson 1975).

Allen (1992) notes, “No unifying theory of second language vocabulary acquisition has yet been proposed...” (p. 1). On this subject, Schmitt (2000) says, “...we may not have a definitive understanding of the vocabulary acquisition process until neurologists are finally able to physically trace words in the brain” (p. 117). In a quest for the answer to this question, researchers have looked into different ways to help teachers and learners in the process of acquiring vocabulary.

One of the points to consider when discussing vocabulary acquisition is the role the L1 plays in this process. Ellis (1994), and Williamson (1989) seem to agree that a learner’s L1 plays a major role in L2 vocabulary. Ellis points out, “There is evidence to suggest that the learner’s L1 plays a major role in L2 vocabulary acquisition” (p. 21). He argues that, from a recognition point of view, acquisition may be easier in the cases where the L1 and L2 have cognate words; even though pronunciation may present

problems at first. Stoller and Grabe (1993) talk about how the L1 can help or hinder L2 vocabulary acquisition. They suggest that transfer affects L2 learners at the syntactic and lexical levels. At the lexical level, it could be helpful when cognate words are considered. On the other hand, it could be counterproductive when false cognates are taken into account. They also state that L2 learners may have “a more sophisticated and elaborate knowledge of the world” (p. 29), which may be an advantageous factor for L2 learners. Gass (1988) declares that a great deal of transfer takes place when the L1 and L2 are similar, whereas when the languages are different, such transfers do not occur as often. She provides an example in which she implies that, due to the similarity between Italian and French, an Italian learning French will be more likely to transfer vocabulary from the L1 than a Japanese speaker learning French (p. 100).

Concerning research on L1 vocabulary acquisition, Williamson (1989) argues that it is largely applicable in L2 acquisition (p. 1). Schmitt (2000) and Stoller and Grabe (1993) share Williamson’s opinion that much of this research is applicable in L2 acquisition as well. To prove that L1 vocabulary research has definitely contributed to L2 vocabulary research, Stoller and Grabe present a list of some of the implications of L1 research on L2 vocabulary acquisition. First, they state that in both cases vocabulary knowledge is the basis for reading. Second, the range of vocabulary skills and instructional approaches introduced will be dictated by the learners’ needs, their motivation, their objectives, necessary vocabulary, depth of vocabulary knowledge and the curricular goals (p. 30). Third, they emphasize the importance of incidental vocabulary learning in both L1 and L2 vocabulary acquisition. They urge that L2 learners be required to read extensively. They call attention to the importance of L1

and L2 teachers to help learners become independent. Teachers can do so by raising learners' awareness of word families, stems and meaningful affixes, showing them "*how and when to use context cues to derive meaning for new words*" (p. 32). Teachers should also teach them how to adequately make use of monolingual dictionaries in both situations. Fourth, Stoller and Grabe note the importance of multiple exposure and context in the vocabulary acquisition of the L1 and L2 and the use of elaborate learning techniques such as the Keyword method. Fifth, they say that a person's word knowledge consists of many degrees of knowledge and this is true in both cases. Finally, the learner's motivation was found to be essential in both L1 and L2 contexts. It can be concluded from their statements that L1 research has made a substantial contribution to L2 vocabulary acquisition research.

Laufer (1998) and Schmitt (2000) agree that the techniques and approaches used to teach L1 vocabulary can be adapted and employed to teach L2 vocabulary; however, the process of vocabulary acquisition in L1 and L2 is different. Laufer (1998) says that learners' cognitive knowledge is more developed than that of a child, and that despite L2 learners' age, they have already been through a process of vocabulary acquisition. Moreover, the amount and nature of exposure to the L2 differs from that of the L1. Grammar also poses a problem since learners already have a basic L1 grammar at the age of 5 or 6, and that will cause older learners to have difficulty with the L2 grammar. Because of that, the learners and the teacher have the tendency to emphasize correct grammar and neglect vocabulary (p. 266). Schmitt (2000) mentions not only the age and amount of exposure issues, but also motivation and culture as well as the learners' L1 itself (p.116). The L1 also interferes when we consider that learners

already have a set of grammar rules as well as words in their minds when they encounter the L2 and that knowledge may be transferred when learning an L2.

Taking into account the implications of L1 vocabulary in L2 acquisition as well as the amount of vocabulary that learners are usually expected to learn, it can be concluded that vocabulary learning is a process that takes learners a great deal of time and effort. It is a slow process according to Schmitt (2000, p. 137). He believes that word acquisition occurs in the following order: on the first exposure the learners will be aware of the form and meaning, and in further exposures they will develop a deeper understanding of the word. Only at a later stage will they be able to develop a more refined knowledge of a word (such as frequency, register, and collocation). He also points out that "...some word knowledge aspects develop at different rates than others" (p.118). Furthermore, Stieglitz (1983) talks about exposing the learners to words several times and in different contexts. He says, "Words must be introduced and used many times in various situations before they can become part of the learner's functional English vocabulary" (p.71).

Ellis (1994), on the other hand, addresses the topic by saying that "Learning a word involves a gradual process of adding depth to an initial, shallow representation" (p. 24). From Ellis' remark the importance of reviewing and recycling the material studied can be seen. Therefore, L2 teachers must be aware that vocabulary learning is not a linear process. Moreover, "...forgetting is a natural fact of learning" (Schmitt, 2000, p. 129). Schmitt notes that vocabulary acquisition is "of incremental nature" (p. 117). Learners will need to have contact with a word on various occasions before they

finally acquire it. Thus, it cannot be expected that they will acquire a word even after a few exposures to the word.

It is understood that vocabulary acquisition can be a burdensome task for learners, especially when we take into account the amount of vocabulary in a language, its peculiarities and variety of meaning. Consequently, Stoller and Grabe's (1993) statement that "vocabulary is a language area that needs continued growth and development for native and non-native speakers alike" comes as no surprise (p. 38). Stieglitz (1983) says, "A very important part of learning a new language is mastering vocabulary". He adds, "The success of the students in becoming proficient in any language will depend, in part, on the extent and richness of his/her experiences and previously acquired concepts" (p. 71). Laufer (1998) points out, "It is an important component of fluency in speech and learners themselves associate progress in language learning with an increase of the number of words they know" (p. 256). It can be seen from these statements that vocabulary acquisition is an important, complex and life-long task.

Not all the vocabulary we learn is essentially to be used actively. Many of the words we learn are used mostly for reading or listening. Thus, another important point to bear in mind is that learners will develop passive and active vocabularies, which are also referred to as receptive and productive respectively. Laufer (1998) defines passive (receptive) vocabulary as the "...understanding of the most frequent and core meaning of a word..." (p. 257). She subdivides active (productive) vocabulary into two types: controlled and free. The former involves "producing words when prompted by a task" whereas the latter means to use words at one's free will (p. 257). Nation (1990) takes

these concept and breaks it down into richness of detail. According to him knowing a word involves knowing several aspects of a word, such as its form, position, function and meaning. Moreover, he talks about such knowledge at the receptive and productive levels. Receptive knowledge, he says, entails recognition of those aspects of a word in its written and spoken form. Concerning productive knowledge, he states that it "... includes receptive knowledge and extends it" (p. 32). In order to use a word productively, learners need to have a much deeper understanding of it.

According to Laufer (1998), "Knowledge of words may progress from superficial to deep at various stages of learning" (p. 255), which means that "...the learning of a word usually progresses from receptive to productive knowledge" (p. 256-7). Although studies have frequently shown that receptive vocabulary tends to be larger than productive vocabulary, Schmitt (2000) comments that this may be questionable and says, "... it may be better to consider the degree of receptive/productive control of the various *word-knowledge aspects*" (p. 120). For example, learners may be able to pronounce a certain word properly and use it in conversation and yet may not know how to spell it. The opposite may happen even more often: they may be able to understand the written form of a word and not be able to produce it. However, Ellis (1994) comments that, even though the general assumption is that receptive vocabulary precedes productive, "It is perfectly possible to envisage a learner having productive knowledge of a word without receptive knowledge" (p. 5-6). He gives as an example the word *cosmopolita* in Spanish. Ellis says that he may be able to use this cognate word while speaking Spanish, "...and yet be unable to recognize..." it in oral input because he is not yet familiar with the

phonological aspect of the word (p. 6). Here we encounter another point of concern for teachers when teaching vocabulary. Teachers must also take into account whether they are aiming at teaching passive or active vocabulary in order to develop the best approach.

Considering the extensiveness and complexity of vocabulary acquisition and all the details and subtleties that are entailed in knowing a word, it cannot be expected from either L1 or L2 speakers of a language that they will acquire new words exclusively by studying them. Schmitt (2000) points out, "...for second language learners at least, both explicit and incidental learning are necessary, and should be seen as complementary" (p. 121). Williamson (1989) says that studies show that words can be learned incidentally despite the context (p. 4-5). Ellis (1994) shares the same point of view. He adds that it is unrealistic to think that learners can learn a large amount of vocabulary intentionally; part of it needs to be acquired incidentally (p. 2). Incidental learning will take place when learners are exposed to language in a more natural way, through reading, listening or speaking to native speakers. Ellis (1994) mentions some factors which may influence the acquisition of vocabulary through oral input. He says that several researchers have concluded that learners tend to acquire words in the following order: nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs (p. 8). Words that are too similar may cause problems. Word length can also play a part: short words are easier to process and remember than longer ones. Another point is the degree of correlation between form and meaning; a word that arouses a mental image is more easily remembered. The frequency with which the learner sees the word, as well as the presence of contextual clues, is to be considered. Interaction where there is meaning

negotiation may help input results. Ellis even suggests, “Most L2 vocabulary is learned incidentally, much of it from oral input” (p. 24).

As stated previously, explicit learning is also necessary and takes place mostly in the L2 classroom. Hulstijn (1997) agrees that learners “Quite often... need to intentionally learn words and remember them” (p. 204). In order to help learners with explicit learning, researchers have looked into various approaches. Stieglitz (1983), for instance, has considered the use of a matrix on which learners might list a word’s features and assign to them + or – to indicate whether each feature was pertinent to that word or not. Duquette and Painchaud (1996) have studied the use of audio and video contexts. One of the conclusions they reached is that watching television with subtitles has proved to be rather effective in vocabulary acquisition (p. 147). They also call attention to Brown’s (1993) conclusion “...that the learning of vocabulary is best enhanced by presenting pictures before sound, followed by written input” (p. 163).

Several researchers appear to advocate the Keyword method which, according to Atkinson (1975), “can be described as a chain of two links connecting a foreign word to its English translation” (p. 821). He points out, “The Keyword method divides vocabulary learning into two stages” (p. 821). The two stages Atkinson mentions are an acoustic stage, where the learners make a sound association between an L1 and an L2 word, and an imagery stage, where they create a mental picture association of those words. Hulstijn (1997), on the other hand, subdivides the Keyword method into three stages. In the first stage learners choose an L1 word that resembles the L2 word intended to be learned. In the second stage, learners come up with a keyword. They build a strong association between the two words so that when they see or hear the

word they immediately recall the keyword. In the third and final stage they create a mental picture combining the two words. This picture should preferably be an odd, bizarre one (p. 204). Gairns and Redman (1986) give as an example the word *Rathaus*, which in German means ‘town hall’, and sounds like the word ‘rat’ in English. In order to remember the meaning of this word, they suggest that learners picture an enormous number of rats coming out of their local town hall (p. 92). Such bizarre images are said to help learners remember the meaning of words.

Hogben and Lauson (1994) point out that “...while use of the Keyword method has not always proved superior to use of other strategies, no other strategy has consistently surpassed it” (p. 367). Moreover, Hulstijn (1997) does understand that it may not seem like an appealing method. Some teachers find it unusual to relate words that have nothing else in common except for their orthography or sound. It may also present some detriments because it may work better with concrete words than abstract ones. Yet he calls attention to the fact that

The keyword method does not claim to offer a substitute for this entire process of adding all semantic and formal features to a node in the mental lexicon. It functions only to help establish one of the necessary feature links in the initial phases of this process (p. 212-13).

In addition, Brown & Perry (1991) say that the Keyword method provides an initial connection between an L2 word and the L1; and they conclude in their study that a combination of the Keyword and the Semantic method (association between a word and its definition) would produce a better result than that of the Keyword method by

itself. Allen (1992) calls the Keyword method a more controversial strategy and comments: "...it has proven to be surprisingly successful" (p. 10). Coady (1993) believes that many of the techniques to learn vocabulary at the moment are ineffective "...because they do not induce the reader to associate the new word-forms and concepts in the mind together with the schemata they already know" (p. 11-12). He considers the Keyword method the best method for that, and he argues that research proves it (p. 12). Kasper (1993), too, strongly advocates the use of the Keyword method. One of the advantages she sees is that the teachers are able to present a great number of words in little time. Moreover, since it is an effective method, a great deal of practice afterwards will not be required. Another advantage she points out is that "Practically speaking, the keyword method is as effective for very good learners as it is for poorer ones" (p. 248). Ellis (1994) believes that the Keyword method is effective when it comes to recall (p. 2). Finally, Schmitt (2000) mentions the issue of the depth of processing: the deeper the processing, the better for retention and recall. The Keyword method appears to rely on this assumption. Schmitt (2000) observes that studies of 'deeper' vocabulary learning strategies like associations and the Keyword method "have been shown to enhance retention better than rote memorization" (p. 132-3). Furthermore, Schmitt and Schmitt (1995) also suggest the use of a Keyword illustration as an item to be included in their vocabulary cards.

It seems that there are still several questions to be answered. However, a great deal of research has been done which has provided tools with which teachers can work. L1 research has made a considerable contribution to L2 research in this area. Moreover, it seems to be the consensus among quite a few of the researchers and

scholars that the use of associations and imagery, such as the one proposed by the Keyword method, has a rather positive effect on vocabulary acquisition. In the following section, I examine how the use of imagery, pictures or some type of illustration can help retention and recall.

2.3 Depth of Processing

This section clarifies the concept of the depth of processing, a concept which numerous L2 vocabulary researchers utilize in their research. Furthermore the use of visual stimuli as an aid to retention and recall is examined. I also consider its proposed relevance to second language vocabulary.

Craik and Lockhart (1972) defined Depth of Processing as "...a series or hierarchy of processing stages where greater 'depth' implies a greater degree of semantic or cognitive analysis" (p. 675). This whole processing takes place in stages. The preliminary stages analyze the "...physical or sensory features as lines, angles, brightness, pitch and loudness while later stages are more concerned with matching the input against stored abstractions from past learning" (p. 675). They suggest that deeper analysis leads to "...more elaborate, longer lasting, and stronger traces" (p. 657). These traces would be the equivalent of etchings that are left on the memory. In other words stronger traces conduct information to the long-term memory and consequently lead to better levels of retention and recall. The Keyword method, as Schmitt (1997) states, is strictly connected to the depth of processing hypothesis.

Craik and Lockhart (1972) view the depth of processing hypothesis as having three levels of storage in the memory: sensory stores, short-term memory and long-term memory. They believe that to take information into long-term memory, we must create

more effective traces. Craik and Lockhart also point out that “Given that we recognize pictures, faces, tunes and voices after long periods of time, it is clear that we have long-term memory for relatively literal nonverbal information” (p. 674). According to them,

Highly familiar, meaning stimuli are compatible, by definition, with existing cognitive structures. Such stimuli (for example, pictures and sentences) will be processed to a deep level more rapidly than less meaningful stimuli and will be well-retained (p. 676).

Taking these statements as the starting point, it can be argued that when learners make use of pictures, or drawings, to study vocabulary, they may create deeper traces because they will be producing their own personal visual aid, which is clearly a familiar stimulus to them. Such a stimulus is very probable to lead to a better retention of the vocabulary. As advocated by the Keyword method, pictures seem to provide a very valuable strategy for recall. Furthermore when it is required that learners not only create a mental imagery but also draw it on a card, we are taking the Keyword method strategy a step further and therefore may be creating deeper traces.

In addition, when I suggest that learners make up their own examples instead of copying from a dictionary, once again, learners are encouraged to engage in a deeper processing and therefore a better-established input. In addition, as Craik and Lockhart (1972) point out, “...various factors, such as amount of attention devoted to a stimulus, its compatibility with the analyzing structures, and the processing time available, will determine the depth to which it is processed” (p. 676).

Schmitt (1997) agrees with the depth of processing hypothesis in the sense that deeper levels of processing will occasion more effective learning. Yet he adds as well “relatively shallow processing strategies can be effective too” (p. 201). Schmitt states that, according to Nation’s (1982) research, learners managed to learn a great deal of vocabulary through word lists. Moreover, he says that rote repetition can also be effective if learners are used to this approach. Finally, he concludes, citing Cohen and Aphek (1981) that shallower tasks may be more adequate for beginners whereas deeper tasks would be more beneficial to intermediate and advanced learners. Thus, it can be argued that a deeper processing can be relevant in the case of intermediate and advanced learners studying more complex words, i.e., words that will demand more from learners because they are a part of the lexicon that is totally unfamiliar to the learners.

Moscovitch and Craik (1976) point out that recall depends on, among other things, the quality of the trace. They emphasize, “...the qualitative nature of the trace (as determined by the level of processing) may set an upper limit on recall and recognition” (p. 450). They mention that uniqueness is another factor that may enhance recall. Moscovitch and Craik conclude in their study “...the results suggest that the principles of depth and uniqueness are both necessary, in some form, for any final theory of memory” (p. 457). Lesgold and Goldman (1973) state that the result of their study supports “...the uniqueness aspect of bizarreness as a potentially critical factor in successful mediation” (p. 202).

Uniqueness and bizarreness bring us back to the Keyword method since this is exactly what this method proposes. When learners are encouraged to produce unique,

yet not necessarily bizarre, images as well as examples to help them recall a word, we are leading them to a deeper process. Moreover, instead of just images, what I propose here is that learners actually draw a picture that will help them remember a word. In other words, I aim at leading the learners to use a deeper processing when studying a word.

The use of pictures has been proven to be effective in vocabulary acquisition. Price and Finkelstein (1994) observe that pictures helped students enhance memory of SAT vocabulary. Dolphin (1987) points out “I hesitate to resort to the jaded cliché...but many a picture can indeed provoke, if not ten thousand words, then a thousand, and the words in the picture itself acquire additional force from their setting” (p. 243). Likewise, the Keyword method, which makes use of mental pictures, has also proven to be effective.

Depth of processing may not be the final answer to vocabulary retention and recall, or for acquisition. However, it does raise some interesting points, one of them being whether deeper processing may lead to stronger memory traces. Considering that deeper processing enhances the chance of stronger traces, it would be likely that a more elaborate process would help learners with a more demanding type of word such as phrasal verbs. In the next section, I present an account of phrasal verbs, their classification, difficulties and relevance in L2 acquisition.

2.4 Phrasal Verbs

This last section presents definitions as well as a brief explanation of the different types of phrasal verbs according to several grammarians and researchers. Learners’ difficulties as well the importance of teaching and learning these English

verbs are considered. Due to their importance for both native and non-native speakers of English, phrasal verbs were the type of vocabulary with which I chose to work. That is why this section was included in this literature review.

According to Alexander (1988), “One of the most common characteristics of the English verb is that it can combine with prepositions and adverb particles” (p. 152). Alexander (1988), and Moon (1997) call this type of verb + preposition or verb + adverb particle combination phrasal verbs. Moon adds that these verbs, which are of Germanic origin, are typically, but not exclusively, monosyllabic. Leech and Svartvik (1975) do not call all of them phrasal verbs. They subdivide them into phrasal verbs, prepositional verbs and phrasal-prepositional verbs. Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) call these verbs “multi-word verbs”.

Alexander (1988) classifies phrasal verbs as 1) essential combinations, which are verbs that must be accompanied by a preposition such as *listen to*; 2) non-essential combinations where the preposition is used to reinforce the meaning of the verb as in *drink up*; and 3) idiomatic combinations in which “Sometimes the primary meaning of a verb is completely changed when it is combined with the preposition or the particle...” (p. 152). Under idiomatic combinations are the verbs that will allow various combinations with different particles and prepositions, e.g. “*make: make for (a place)* (=go towards), *make off* (= run away), *make up* (=invent), etc” (p. 152).

In addition to this classification, Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) present a subdivision of four types of phrasal verbs. The first type is intransitive phrasal verbs, which “...consist of a verb plus a particle...” (p. 347). These verbs do not require a complement (direct or indirect object). Examples of this type of multi-word verbs are

sit down, break down, and get up. The second type shown is transitive phrasal verbs, which are those that take a direct object such as *drink up, call off, and find out.*

Regarding these verbs Quirk and Greenbaum say that in most cases the direct object can either come between the particle and the verb or after the particle. However, these phrasal verbs cannot be followed by a personal pronoun, e.g. **find out it, *call off it *drink up it.* The third type is called prepositional verbs, which are verb + preposition combinations, for instance, *call on, come by and go into.* The fourth type is the phrasal-prepositional verbs, which “consist of a verb followed by two particles” (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973, p. 351), for instance: *put up with, look forward to and stand up for.* The last two types of verbs take a complement after the preposition. Moon (1997) calls attention to some of the “particularly prolific” ones which are *come, get, go, put and take,* while the most common particles are: *up, out, off, in, on and down* (p. 45).

Phrasal verbs present a challenge to L2 learners of English. According to Moon, “they are usually considered problematic in terms of L2 teaching and learning”. Some of these problems are specialized meanings, placement of nominal and pronominal objects, stylistic heterogeneity, the distinction between British and American English, and random combinations (p. 46). She also says that the most complicated aspect of this type of verb is one of semantics. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) draw attention to the fact that learners cannot know the meaning of the phrasal verbs by looking at the verb and the particle. That is because when they are placed together they acquire a new meaning (p. 425). They add,

Furthermore, the meaning of idiomatic phrasal verbs is not only obscure; it is often deceptive because while one expects to be able

to figure out the meaning because the words look familiar, knowing the meaning of the parts does not necessarily aid comprehension (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1999p. 436).

Side (1990) adds to Moon's list: idiomaticity, learners' preference for the Latinate equivalent, and L1 interference. Moreover, he affirms that sometimes textbooks and the teachers may add to these difficulties because of the way they present the material (p. 144). Cornell (1985) notes that semantics and collocation seem to be two rather serious sources of difficulties concerning phrasal verbs. He adds that another reason why students have difficulty with multi-word verbs is the limited exposure to this sort of vocabulary. Gairns and Redman (1986) observe that teachers and material writers tend to postpone the teaching of this material until the intermediate and advanced levels. They comment that this is an unwise procedure because learners will be overburdened with vocabulary when they reach those levels (p. 34).

If this type of verb is so complex, why take the time to teach them in ESL/EFL classrooms? First of all, McPartland (1989) and Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) have pointed out that phrasal verbs are constantly found in English. Cornell (1990) agrees and states that the number related to phrasal verbs speak for themselves. According to Cornell there are at least 700 phrasal verbs which are used in everyday English, and there are at least 3,000 officially recognized phrasal verbs (p. 270).

Throughout this chapter we looked at several ways in which researchers, scholars, and teachers view vocabulary learning and acquisition. What they fail to consider is what learners think is effective or how learners feel about those techniques, approaches, and strategies. Schmitt (1997) calls our attention to this fact. He says that

very often researchers, teachers and scholars are concerned with what they believe learners should be doing to enhance vocabulary and forget about what learners are actually doing to improve their vocabulary. Schmitt, quoting Horwitz, (1988) and Wenden (1987), says that we must consider our learners' feeling towards the various learning strategies. Schmitt suggests that one way for us to advance in vocabulary learning strategies is to keep researching and yet ponder what strategies learners are actually using and "how effective they believe those strategies are" (p. 217).

In view of this situation, the present study seeks to investigate the learners' perspectives of one of the strategies previously mentioned. The strategy chosen to be investigated is an adaptation of Schmitt and Schmitt's (1995) vocabulary notebooks which, as stated before, are notebooks/cards in which learners take notes on various aspects of a word so as to remember its meaning, usage and specific features of this word. Researchers in both L1 and L2 vocabulary acquisition have advocated this technique. Hopkins and Bean (1998) mention the use of vocabulary squares, a very similar strategy to vocabulary notebooks. In their case, vocabulary squares were used to help learners acquire L1 words. Schmitt (1997) points out that several authors have recommended notebooks as a means of learning different aspects of a word and recording extra information later. To name but a few authors that support the use of vocabulary notebooks, there are Gairns and Redman (1986) and McCarthy (1990). McCarthy says that "The very act of writing a word down often helps to fix it in the memory, even if only with regard to its spelling". He suggests the use of index cards due to their flexibility concerning the amount of information that can be inserted (p. 127). Moreover, McCarthy states that "The vocabulary notebook is probably the most

common form of written student record” (p. 127). In addition to that, according to Schmitt (1997), Schmitt and Schmitt (1995) propose a type of vocabulary notebook that “incorporates the progressive learning of different kinds of word knowledge for each word, and also the use of expanding rehearsal” (p. 216).

I opted to investigate the use of vocabulary notebooks because after analyzing the different strategies and techniques, this method seemed especially appealing. One significant advantage of this method is its flexibility and versatility. Learners can create a personalized notebook to suit their needs and interests, i.e., they can choose to include whatever they feel is necessary for them in the learning process. Moreover, learners can make use of several of the other strategies at the same time and learn various aspects of a word.

Schmitt (1997), quoting Chamot and Rubin (1994), raises an important issue. He points out that the effectiveness of a learning strategy depends on number of factors, including the learner’s proficiency level, background knowledge, context of language, and learner’s personality traits. Furthermore, he emphasizes that the learners’ cultural background also plays an important role in how they approach the topic (p. 202).

These issues that Schmitt (1997) discusses reinforce the importance of vocabulary notebooks for learners. When using this strategy, learners have the opportunity to make their own choices from a wide range of items as to what to include in their notebooks. Moreover, they can even make choices of a practical nature such as whether to use index cards or a regular small notebook to keep the words records.

The type of vocabulary I selected was phrasal verbs because it composes an important part of the English learners’ lexicon. Moreover, McPartland (1989), as well

as Potter (1965), affirms that, contrary to the common belief, phrasal verbs are used in both spoken and written language. McPartland adds “in formal and informal registers” (p. 150). Cornell (1985) also says that they may be found in formal discourses. Obviously, it is essential that phrasal verbs be taught both in EFL and ESL settings. As Cornell (1985) sustains, “Phrasal verbs are important, and because they are important they are worth dealing with specifically in practical language courses...” (277). He reasons that teachers should set realistic goals for learners. Teachers cannot expect learners to learn a large number of phrasal verbs. Cornell suggests the use of the following criteria when teaching this type of verb: idiomaticity, replaceability, restrictions and frequency (and usefulness). He declares that it is worthwhile taking time to teach phrasal verbs, “...but not without a process of selection and gradation having taken place, even at the risk of controversial inclusions and omissions” (p. 277).

It is of prime importance to clarify at this point that the present research will look into prepositional verbs of the idiomatic type. Therefore, verb + preposition combinations such as *add to*, *hope for*, *refer to* etc will not be considered. I understand that they may also pose grammatical problems for L2 learners. Yet, the main concern here is with those that may cause lexical difficulty.

Thus the present study aims at analyzing the learners’ perspectives of vocabulary cards as a strategy for studying vocabulary, especially phrasal verbs. I investigate the use of vocabulary cards as a whole; and specifically, I pay special attention to drawing as one of the strategies of acquiring vocabulary.

Chapter 3

Research Description

The present chapter contains information regarding the subjects who participated in the study. I also provide a detailed description of the study. Moreover, the material used to carry out the study as well an explanation of the choice of material is also presented.

3.1 Research Questions

The review of the literature and the growing importance of vocabulary acquisition and teaching have led to the following research questions:

1. What is the students' perspective on vocabulary cards as a strategy for vocabulary acquisition of English as a Second Language (ESL)?
2. What is the perspective on adult learners on the use of drawing on vocabulary cards to develop L2 vocabulary?

3.2 Participants

The participants in this study were 13 students in the Intensive English Program (IEP) at West Virginia University. These students were divided into two groups: an intermediate and a low-advanced group. The intermediate group consisted of four Arabic speakers and four Spanish speakers. Of the eight only seven participated in the whole process of the study. In the low-advanced group there was a greater variety of backgrounds. There were two Spanish speakers, one Arabic speaker, two Chinese speakers, and one Japanese speaker. The age range in the intermediate group was

between 18 and over 40 while in the low-advanced it was between 18 and 30. Two instructors in the IEP also took part in the project. One of the instructors was a native speaker of English, and the other one was a native speaker of Brazilian Portuguese.

3.3 Procedures

The treatment was carried out in a Reading/Vocabulary class. This class, consisting of two back to back fifty-five minute class periods, met three times a week (Mondays, Wednesdays and Friday). The in-class part of the study took three class periods of 60 to 90 minutes. The first step in the in-class part of study was to invite the students to participate in it. This introduction to the treatment took place on the week before the treatment started. I went to both classes and explained to the students what the study entailed. The instructors had previously received detailed information about the whole procedure before I went to the classes. They were also given their role in the process, which was to proctor the students after I had explained the main activity to them. The students were informed that the project was part of my thesis project, and that I was interested in learning how people learn vocabulary. They were also told that the study consisted of studying about 10 verbs and then writing information about the words on index cards. Since it was important to work with words that were new to them, we would begin with an activity to verify which words they were already familiar with and which ones they were not. At this point, they were informed that the activities used as part of the research would not affect their grades in any way. They were allowed to ask questions about the project after the explanation was over. Once all the questions were answered, the students received the consent letter, in which they found information regarding the research as well as the researcher. All students signed a

consent letter. One copy remained with me and another one with the students. The students did not receive any form of payment or credit for taking part in the study and their participation was voluntary. I would provide all the material.

The use of vocabulary cards appears to be encouraged and, at times, required in the Reading/Vocabulary classes in the IEP. In the case of both groups who participated in this study, vocabulary notebooks (cards) were a requirement. Therefore, all the subjects were somewhat familiar with this strategy of studying vocabulary. Concerning the vocabulary notebooks used in the Reading/vocabulary class, the instructors in both groups appeared to be following a similar pattern to that of the cards proposed in the study. Instructor A of the intermediate group said that the items he suggested the students include in their vocabulary notebooks were very similar to those proposed in the study. He suggested information such as definitions, synonyms, antonyms, collocations, and semantic maps. Instructor A also suggested, “a picture or a drawing, sentences, translation, paraphrasing, giving a description of the word.” The difference he mentioned between the vocabulary notebooks used in class and the vocabulary cards used in the study is that in the former the students had the freedom to include the items they judged necessary. He said, “I gave them the ideas, and they would choose.”

Instructor B of the advanced group also mentioned that the vocabulary notebook used in her class and the vocabulary cards introduced in the study were similar in various ways. The difference, she pointed out, was that the one proposed in the study offered a greater variety of items. Instructor B also noted that she required that the students use at least one piece of information. Another difference, yet a minor one, was that in both groups the students were using regular notebooks whereas during the study they made

use of index cards instead. The instructors' reason for using notebooks is their concern that the students are more likely to lose index cards than regular notebooks.

In the first session the students took the vocabulary pretest and answered the informational questionnaire. The pretest (Appendix B) consisted of an adaptation of Nation's (1990) vocabulary level test. The type of vocabulary with which I chose to work was phrasal verbs. This decision was made based on the fact that this type of verb is frequently present in the English language, both in spoken and written language. Moreover, as stated in the previous chapter, several authors agree that they are essential for those learners who want to master English. In the pretest there were 40 phrasal verbs divided into groups of five. Eight sets of words were used. In each set there were five phrasal verbs and seven definitions to be matched with the phrasal verbs. The phrasal verbs were selected from a combination of McPartland's (1989a) list of phrasal verbs, Moon's (1997) list of the most prolific verbs to form phrasal verbs, and the list presented in the eslcafe.com (2000). As for the definitions to match those verbs, the sources consulted were eslcafe.com (2000) and the Collins COBUILD dictionary (1987). In the pretest an example was provided so that the students could have a clearer idea of what they were supposed to do. It was decided that they would fill out the questionnaire before the treatment was carried out. I intended to have the two different perspectives of their view of vocabulary study, one before and one after the treatment. The students filled out the questionnaire (Appendix C) before the treatment started. This questionnaire was based on Levine and Reves's (1990) questionnaire. The questionnaire was chosen as the basis for this study because it contained both personal questions and general questions about students' learning strategies. Those

questions would enable me to learn about students' background as well as their perception of vocabulary study before they were exposed to the specific strategy I was going to investigate.

Both tasks took about an hour of the class. The pretests were corrected and the results provided feedback concerning which phrasal verbs could be included in the study. Based upon the results of the pretests, 12 to 14 phrasal verbs that were unfamiliar to the students were chosen after the pretest was administered. The words were not the same for both groups; the subjects had different needs. In the intermediate group the words selected were *get over*, *get by*, *give up*, *catch up*, *show off*, *run out of*, *put up with*, *look up to*, *get over with*, and *take up on*. In the low-advanced group the phrasal verbs studied were the following: *pass out*, *turn up*, *put off*, *show off*, *talk back*, *take out on*, *get around to*, *go off*, *cut back on*, and *get around to*.

In the second session, the students were told exactly what they were supposed to do. I explained to the group that each student would receive five 5"x8" index cards and a dictionary. The Longman Dictionary of American English (1983) was used during both class periods when the students prepared the vocabulary cards. Subjects used it to look up the meaning of the phrasal verbs they were studying. All subjects used the same dictionary, which I provided. This specific dictionary was chosen because of its accessible language to the students. As stated in the preface of the dictionary: "The definitions in the Dictionary are written using only the 2000 most common English words – The Longman Defining Vocabulary". Moreover, it is noted that "Longman pioneered the use of limited vocabulary as the best way to guarantee that definitions are clear and easy to understand" (p. ix).

On each card they would write information about a phrasal verb. 5"x8" index cards were chosen to serve as the vocabulary cards (see Appendix A for sample cards) because it was believed that this material would be easy to handle and would facilitate the organization of the words. Besides, index cards could also be used in in-class activities to review the material, Schmitt and Schmitt (1995) suggested.

The students were instructed to use one card for each word. They would include four pieces of information about each verb. First, they would look up the definition of the word in the monolingual dictionary and write it down. Then, they would either copy an example of the word used in a sentence from the dictionary or create their own sentence. If they decided to create their own sentence, they were told to have their teacher verify whether their sentence was appropriate or not. Concerning the example, I suggested that the students write a sentence related to their own lives and experiences to make the sentence somewhat more meaningful to them. Moreover, perhaps it would facilitate recall. The third item was a drawing. They would draw a picture that they thought would help them remember the word. Those three items were compulsory.

The fourth item on the index card could be chosen from a list of eight suggestions. The options were a synonym of the word, an antonym, a translation, pronunciation (they could either use the one from the dictionary or create their own), a word that would help them remember the one they were studying, a semantic map, the degree of formality, a stylistic note (whether the word is positive or negative), or a collocation.

The informational elements of the index card were chosen based on previous research findings. First, definition is essential so that learners know what the word means. Gairn and Redman (1986) pointed out that “To understand a word fully, ... a student must know not only what it refers to, but also where the boundaries are that separate it from words of related meaning” (p. 13). The dictionary in which they were looking up the definition of the words would help them with this aspect of the word. Moreover, since the students had to look the meaning up in a dictionary, this helped them become more independent instead of always depending on the teacher for the meaning of words. Besides Stoller and Grabe (1993) call attention to the importance for language learners of knowing how to use a monolingual dictionary. In this part of the task, the students would have the opportunity to improve that ability with the help of their instructor.

The sample sentence was chosen because it would be a means for them to be exposed to the word in context. Even if it were a single sentence, it would give them some idea of what kind of environment the word occurs in. Moreover, as Qian (1996) pointed out, context may supply “additional linguistic, semantic, or sociolinguistic knowledge” of the word. The drawing choice was based on the assumption that pictures would help learners remember and recall the words more easily. Schmitt (1997) pointed out that “Imagery has shown to be more effective than mere repetition for the reading passage” (p. 212). Although he was referring to mental imagery, I decided that by using drawing we would be taking imagery a step further. Instead of having learners just create a mental picture, I asked them actually to draw; as best as they could, the mental picture that they had created. Levine and Reves (1990)

suggested that with a “visual presentation, whether in printed form or with a picture, the learners are apparently assisted by their long-standing visual learning habits...” (p. 40). They added, “It also seems to be easier to recall visual images of a word even in the context of long-term memory”(p. 40). Moreover, they stated that scores on visual presentation of vocabulary were much higher than those of auditory presentations (p. 43). In the case of the task proposed, learners would be exposed to both the written form of the word and a picture that would go with it. This item also allowed for some creativity.

The first three items on the cards would provide an overall view of the word, and they would provide some guidance to the learners. However, I also wanted to give them some freedom to choose what they thought was important to include about the word. That is why I decided that the fourth item would be of their choice.

The items included were mostly taken from Schmitt and Schmitt (1995). According to them, a vocabulary notebook can be “ a loose-leaf binder, an index card binder, or on cards which are kept in a box” (p. 137). The information they proposed to be included in the card is: a translation, a synonym, a collocation, semantic maps, roots and derivations, the number of times students hear the word in a day, an example, or a keyword illustration. They suggested that the students include various items as they reviewed and recycled the word. The students would use their own judgment and criteria to do their cards. The inclusion of synonyms would give students access to more words with which to work. The antonym would probably help enhance their vocabulary. A translation would provide the L1 support some learners deem necessary. Pronunciation would help them learn how the word was realized. The semantic map

would provide the words related to the word studied. The formal/informal and positive or negative items would take care of the sociolinguistic aspect of the word. Collocation would also help with the environment in which the word occurs.

Once the students received all this information, they were handed the dictionaries and cards. They carried out the task in a group, but each person was supposed to have his/her own set of cards. From that point on, the instructor conducted the class. He/she worked on the first card with the students as a model. Since the subjects were already familiar with vocabulary cards, one example was enough for them to know what their task was. Soon after the instructor gave the example, students started working on the words on their own. The instructor of the class walked around helping the students whenever they were needed. I remained in the classroom throughout the class period observing the students while they were working on the activity. I too helped the subjects whenever they asked me to. It appeared that my participation might contribute to my gathering of the data. As Marshall and Rossman (1989) stated, "It is our experience that some sort of participation usually becomes necessary as the researcher helps out with small chores ..." and they added, "Such interaction is usually highly informative while remaining informal" (p. 79).

At first it was expected that the students would take around 50 minutes of the class. However, it took both groups more than that.

In the third and last session, the students worked on the last five verbs. The procedure was basically the same. However, this time the teacher was in charge the whole time. In the beginning of this session he/she reviewed the tasks with the

subjects, and immediately thereafter they began to work. This time students in both groups used less time to finish the activity.

The students, as well as the instructors, took part in an interview after the treatment was over. I chose to use interviewing because as Seidman (1998) stated, "...interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience." (p. 3). The interviews would give me an insight into the subjects' perspectives on the vocabulary cards. The subjects were asked questions (Appendix D) regarding the experience of working on the vocabulary cards.

During the interviews, I chose to use a rather informal register. This style was preferred so that the subjects would feel more comfortable and less intimidated during the interviews. Besides, several of the interviewees, especially intermediate students, had limited English proficiency and, consequently, they did not fully comprehend the questions. Thus, I had to rephrase and repeat some of the questions several times.

In the following chapter I present the findings encountered in the questionnaire, interviews and class observations. These findings were subdivided according to the different patterns identified in the various sources of information.

Chapter 4

Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the findings obtained regarding the perceptions of students and their experiences working with the vocabulary cards. I have decided to organize and present the information by grouping the related themes in the different sources of data. Comments and observations tended to fall in to seven categories: learners' perspectives of their learning styles; attitudes toward monolingual dictionaries, definition and context; attitudes toward drawing and visuals; attitudes toward translation and bilingual dictionaries; attitudes toward synonym and word association; attitudes toward the type of vocabulary; and positive and negative aspects of vocabulary cards according to learners and instructors. From these data I focused on the information that enabled me to answer the research questions posed earlier: (1) what is the learners' perspectives on the use vocabulary cards as a strategy for vocabulary acquisition? and (2) what are adult learners' perspectives on the use of drawing on vocabulary cards to develop L2 vocabulary?

The subjects' perspectives concerning different aspects of the vocabulary cards developed in the two-session in-class treatments and thoroughly described in the previous chapter are reported here. Table 2 below presents a summary of the categories of vocabulary learning strategies identified in the questionnaire and the interviews. It is an overview of the information obtained from various sources of data. Pseudonyms are used to refer to the instructors and subjects to maintain anonymity. Furthermore, it

should be mentioned that the subjects' quotes inserted here are exact reproductions of what they said. No changes or corrections of errors were made.

Table 2 – Summary of the categories of vocabulary learning strategies identified in the questionnaires and interviews.

Categories:	Subjects:													Total
	Ahmed	Amna	Andrés	Blanca	Bruno	Gloria	Ibrahim	Ignés	Jim	Ohman	Pedro	Tomiko	Ya-Chem	
Visual (Picture)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			X	X	10/13
Auditory						X						X		2/13
Tactile	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	12/13
Bilingual dictionary	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		10/13
Monolingual Dictionary							X	X						2/13
English words Association							X	X						2/13
Definition	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	10/13
Context	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	12/13
Drawing	X	X	X	X	X		X		X		X	X		7/13
Translation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	13/13
Synonym		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X			X	8/13

Note. The X indicates the learners who mentioned they used or would be interested in using the strategy.

4.2 Learners' Perceptions of Their Learning Styles

It was inferred from the questionnaire that most of the subjects were more of the “hands-on” type of learners. Twelve out of the 13 subjects mentioned learning better when they were involved in doing things. This characteristic of the subjects can be seen as positive in relation to the cards because when working on the cards they would actually be producing something. Thus, they would be learning the words by creating the cards. Gloria and Amna, for instance, believed they learned better by doing whereas Tomiko learned by both hearing and doing. Blanca as well benefited from the “hands-on” type of activity. She noted she learned better by doing. Pedro, Othman and Ignés said that they remembered better when they wrote and that they learned better by doing. This indicated that they, too, would benefit from tactile tasks.

The use of visuals seemed to appeal to several of the subjects. The analysis of the questionnaire showed that several subjects seemed to be visual learners. In response to the question regarding remembering things, Ibrahim, Jim, Amna, Ya-Chen, and Ahmed pointed out that they remembered things better when they saw a picture or they wrote down information, and they learned better by seeing and doing. Gloria and Tomiko appeared to be both visual and auditory. They recalled things better by seeing a picture or listening. Andrés preferred to use visual stimuli to remember things. He remembered things better when he saw a picture and learned better by seeing. Blanca, as well, benefited from visual stimuli. Bruno remembered better when he wrote and learned better by seeing. Thus, it can be seen that several of the subjects perceived themselves as visual learners.

The learners' self-perceived styles of visual and tactile learning would be regarded as positive considering the activity proposed in this study.

4.3 Learners' Attitudes Observed in Class

During the in-class treatment, the subjects had to follow specific instructions given to them. They were not free to create their vocabulary cards the way they wanted. Yet they demonstrated a great deal of involvement, especially in the intermediate group. The subjects seemed to be concentrating on what they were doing. They also frequently asked for the teacher's feedback on the cards they were creating. The subjects did appear to enjoy making the cards.

On the first day they began working on the cards, the subjects in Group A interacted considerably in their small groups. The basic strategies observed were note taking, exchanging information and asking for suggestions from other members of the group. They also frequently asked for the teacher's feedback. In the second session, it was observed that the subjects interacted less. They continued asking the instructor for feedback concerning their sentences and drawings, but they were working more quietly in their small groups. In Group A both sessions took longer than planned. Despite that, the subjects worked cooperatively and were on task throughout the sessions.

In the advanced group, Group B, the subjects worked more quietly. The group was divided into two smaller ones of four students each. One group seemed to interact more than the other. Yet the latter group still seemed interested in creating the cards. Once again the strategies used by the subjects were note-taking, exchanging of ideas and asking for the teacher's feedback to complete the various items. Group B's behavior remained the same in both sessions. They worked more quietly and needed

less time to carry out the task. In both groups, the subjects frequently asked the instructor for feedback concerning the three different compulsory items: the sentence, the definition and the drawing.

Both Groups A and B seemed very comfortable with my presence in class. There were several instances in both groups when the subjects asked me for help either with the sentences or the drawings. Both instructors always assisted the students whenever they needed help.

4.4 Attitudes Toward Monolingual Dictionary, Definition and Context

Monolingual dictionaries did not seem to be a top priority for the subjects who participated in this study. In the questionnaire it was found out that only two out of 13 subjects, Ignés and Ibrahim, seemed to frequently use this type of dictionary. The majority of the subjects (Amna, Blanca, Pedro, Andrés, Gloria, Ya-Chen, and Othman) commented that only sometimes did they use English-English dictionaries. Tomiko, Bruno, Ahmed and Jim said they rarely used a monolingual dictionary.

When consulting English-English dictionaries, Ignés, Amna, Blanca, Tomiko, Andrés, Gloria, Ya-Chen, Jim and Ibrahim took advantage of all the information found in them. These students read both the definition as well as the examples provided. Ibrahim noted that he tended to focus more on the definition. Pedro and Bruno focused solely on the definition. Othman pointed out that he sometimes used a monolingual dictionary. Yet his reply to whether or not he read the definition and examples was unclear.

In the treatment it was observed that in a few instances the subjects looked to the instructors for assistance when the subjects could not understand the explanation in

the dictionary. The subjects were quite vocal when they did not understand a definition of a phrasal verb. Yet, since the English definition was a requirement, they included it on all cards. In general, the students appeared to be handling the monolingual dictionary reasonably well. In both Groups A and B the subjects sought the instructors' feedback concerning the sentences whenever the subjects decided to create their own sentences. In Group A, within the small groups, there was a constant exchange of information about the words, and there were suggestions as to what sentence to write. That took place more consistently during the first session.

The subjects' comments in the interview suggested that these two compulsory items, definition and example, were considered quite significant elements. Table 4 (Appendix E) illustrates this. According to the subjects, the definition of a word provided the explanation to the word and ought to be included. Subjects frequently referred to definition as meaning. Ya-Chen pointed out that "Because when you learn the new word, just you don't know what the word means, so if you meaning, you can know what the word mean." Ibrahim said that "The most important part is the definition and the example because when you write the definition you memorize it and when you write the example, it will increase your comprehension and the meaning." He considered the definition the most important item on the card, and added that a combination of definition and example was an effective one. Pedro agreed, "...definition, from English to English is very important too. Because you know what happen in this language because sometimes in, say different things in my language and different things in English." Bruno pointed out that the definition together with examples might facilitate understanding: "Because in the definition...eh...I...I...um I

think all...all the word...all word and ah...I try many, many examples of my understand in this word is better.” According to Amna, the definition provided a more careful explanation of the word’s meaning. She commented, “...because when we read the word’s meaning, it’s explanation the word more carefully.”

One of the subjects considered the use of definition in English as an opportunity to enhance their vocabulary. When they read the definition they were exposed to several words they already knew and words they did not know. Gloria said that by studying the definition they may improve their vocabulary. She observed, “...when you use meaning in English, you need more words. I prefer because you amplite [enhance] your words.”

Nevertheless, three subjects declared that dealing with an English-English dictionary could be a burdensome task. Ahmed’s complaint about monolingual dictionaries was that a word’s multiple meanings led to confusion. He pointed out, “...but sometimes the word have many meaning and this is the problem.” Two of the subjects declared that there were times when they looked up the definition and it contained too many new words, and they needed to verify the words defining the one being studied. Thus, they ended up having to search the meaning of several words to find the meaning of the original one. As a result, they resorted to a translation.

Tomiko’s comment on the topic was that “Um...the sentence is very formal. Formal. Sometimes I can’t understand this English meaning. Or English meaning use more difficult vocabulary (Laughter).” Ya-Chen shared Tomiko’s point of view. She noted, “Sometimes English-English definition you can’t (Laughter) understand.” In spite of that, she would also include an English definition in her vocabulary cards, as

would the majority of the subjects. Table 4 (Appendix E) shows which subjects would consider the definition a positive item to be included.

Context, as stated previously, is very important in vocabulary acquisition. Not only do learners need to know what a word means, but also how to use it, and context provides the latter. Subjects appeared to be aware of that and they did perceive it as an important item to be inserted. Furthermore, the subjects themselves commented that the example enabled them to see how the word could be used. According to Tomiko, the example included on the card provided a means to know "...how to use this vocabulary, so, I need example or English meaning." Ibrahim noted that "when you write the example, it will increase your comprehension and the meaning."

A few of the subjects seemed to be of the opinion that by creating their own sample sentence, as opposed to copying it from the dictionary, they would be more likely to learn the word being studied. Jim frequently created his own examples when he studied vocabulary. He said, "I study vocabulary always like make a sentence. Today I read... I learn this vocabulary and I always write sentence this follow. When I read, study sentence and always make a sentence myself." Moreover, he noted that when he tried to use a word in a sentence, he might learn it more easily. He adds, "And the sentence it help you to combine or something ... you can if we. Maybe yesterday you learned the one vocabulary, and today you want to speak the other; you can use the sentence, you can learn, you very easy to speak." Ahmed, too, found it more effective to create his own examples. He said that,

I think it's help for us remember the sentence, but I think we take
the sentence from the dictionary if interested in making the

sentence. You make the sentence; I think you don't forget the word. But you take the sentence from the book, the dictionary Longman, I think you forget the sentence. But the sentence for you a special sentence, it's good.

Gloria was of the same opinion. She noted, "...the sentence, especially the sentence, when you make it, because when you copy the sentence of the dictionary is more difficult. It's the sentence is more confuse when you copy of a dictionary." Blanca observed, "When I write one sentence, I use the new, new word. It's more clear for me because in this sentence, this sentence, I...I practice eh...my cotidiano..." [Her everyday activities] (Laughter)." She also considered writing her own example as an effective strategy to learn the new word. Ignés, likewise, viewed the example as a way to learn how to use the word. She pointed out, "Because is the best for you know how do you can use the...the word in a sentence and if I use the ah...if I write my sentence, eh, correct I can use in my vocabulary when I am talking with somebody."

Ya-Chen seemed to have a diverging point of view. She commented that there were occasions when the example did not help her understand the meaning. She said, "Sometimes sentence. Sometimes the sentence cannot help you know the words and the definition because maybe sentence you wrote test. [Thinks quietly for a while.] For you just read the sentence the meaning maybe not clear or worse." Amna did not make any specific comment concerning the examples.

On the topic of having learners create their own examples, Instructor B pointed out a potential problem. If the teachers required the learners to create their own examples, the teachers would be liable to have an overload of work. It might be a

limitation to the use of the cards. She stated, “One other thought is that if this teacher has each vocabulary sentence for each student in the class, depending on the number of words that can become a very burdensome task.”

The subjects’ attitudes towards monolingual dictionaries and the two compulsory items (definition and context) appeared to be quite positive for the most part. They did present some negative points in using them, but they also seemed to agree that it is important to consult an English-English dictionary and to include a definition and a sample sentence.

4.5 Attitudes Toward Drawing and Visuals

In the questionnaire, a variety of answers emerged concerning the use of visual types of association. Andrés and Blanca said they always associated the words with a drawing or a picture. Tomiko and Othman often used a picture. Pedro, Bruno and Ibrahim used visual stimulus occasionally. Ahmed, Ignés, Ya-Chen and Jim rarely used pictures and drawing. Gloria never used visual associations with a new word. One of the subjects did not seem to fully comprehend the question; she only answered it partially. Amna had no comments on the use of either visual stimuli or motion as types of association with new English words. In summary, several of the learners seemed to often make use of visual stimuli.

During the in-class treatment, the subjects showed a great deal of interest in the illustration component of the cards. In Group A the small groups were exchanging information about what to draw to illustrate certain idioms. This took place in both sessions. They also asked for the instructor’s opinion about their drawings. Group B

behaved rather similarly to Group A: the subjects exchanged ideas as to what to draw. In both groups all of the subjects seemed to be concerned with doing a good job.

In the interview, it was noticed that subjects identified both advantages and disadvantages in drawing. One positive aspect, according to the subjects, was that the drawing might help them remember the words more easily. Amna, for instance, said “And the picture also tell us about the meaning.” Ahmed seemed to agree with Amna. He stated, “When I see the card now, I think I look the picture I remember the meaning. The picture. But sometimes you can’t know what it mean, but for me I think it clear.” Moreover, he commented, “The drawing because when you just looking for the card, first you look picture and you remember the meaning.” He appeared to believe that the drawing helped him recall the word if he forgot its meaning.

Blanca seemed to make use of drawing regularly. She explained that “I study vocabulary generally I use picture.” Furthermore, she stated, “...because for me it’s very easy learn one word when I, when I paint [draw]” and added, “When...when I eh...use drawing the word, eh ... when I need this word, I remember this word for [because of] the picture.” Moreover, one of the subjects saw the drawing as another way to express meaning. Gloria commented, “You express the meaning in other way...in other way. And it’s important when you relation the other form, the meaning.”

However, the inability to draw led some subjects not to appreciate this particular task. Gloria said, “And uh...I don’t like the drawing, but the drawing is good (Laughter).” Othman says, “I like everything, but I don’t like drawing...Because I can’t draw (Laughter).” Ignés reacted the same way in relation to the drawing. She

said, "...In my notebook. Ah, when I don't know the synonym or maybe the word don't have synonym, I put the...definition but in my words. Ah, but I don't like drawing."

When it came to the drawing, time was another important concern. Some subjects noted that drawing was a time-consuming task. Bruno mentioned postponing the drawing part of the activity because it took more time to perform. He commented, "But it's very slowly too (Laughter)" and "...the drawing need more time. In another items is menos [less] time. It's less time." Jim agreed with Bruno. Jim said, "Because you have to spend a lot of time in this vocabulary." He also pointed out that the amount of work he has in the IEP did not allow him to spend time drawing. He observed, "I don't have the time. I have a lot of homework to do. I can't spend a lot of time in...It's not too, too fast to learn, I think."

Yet another restriction a few of the subjects mentioned was that there were instances when the drawing was not enough to express the word's meaning and they had to add words to their drawings, turning their illustration into a type of comic strip or the like. Jim commented that "Because have some vocabulary, you look draw something and you have lot of, like take for. You have two people, you have to write what they are talking about." Similarly, Gloria noted that apart from drawing she had to include a dialogue so that she could clarify the meaning of the phrasal verb. She said, "...but I need relation additional word represent the change in the drawing. Only the drawing, I additional [add] word for connect the meaning." Moreover, she commented that the only person who can interpret the drawing is the person who created it, "...but it's difficult you, when you interpret for other person it's difficult the

drawing. Only for you.” Ibrahim also commented on the difficulty of not using words to clarify some of the illustrations. He stated, “But some phrasals [phrasal verbs] I think it’s hard to draw something. So I was, I was obliged to draw something, to write something.” He said that in the case of phrasal verbs in some instances it was rather difficult to use only the illustration to express the meaning of the word.

The instructors pointed out that the students seemed rather involved in drawing the illustrations to the phrasal verbs. Furthermore, the learners seemed to want to show their drawings to their classmates as well as their instructors. Instructor A commented, “they were also showing me their drawings, so I think they were really enthusiastic about those.” Instructor B observed, “I suspect that the thing they had the most fun with was the activity where they could illustrate what they were doing.” She pointed out that what the learners enjoyed the most was

the drawing, because perhaps was little more creative than the typical exercise of just writing down words. And... sometimes people are self-conscious about their artistic skills. So, that sometimes makes people laugh when they come up with something. (Laughter) and I think it just gave them a chance to be creative and creativity I think is satisfying to people.

Even though most of the subjects who participated in the study appeared to be visual types of learners, only five out of 13 seemed to approve of the use of drawings without restrictions. Four of the subjects definitely did not like the task and four perceived limitations to the strategy due to time or the need to use dialogues to help clarify the drawing.

4.6 Attitudes Toward Translation and Bilingual Dictionaries

Among the strategies used when encountering a new word, the use of a dictionary seemed to be a popular choice. Yet the subjects' replies to subsequent questions in the questionnaire led me to conclude that they were referring mostly to using bilingual dictionaries. When they came across a new word, Bruno and Ignés looked up the word in a dictionary and took notes in their notebooks. Amna, Gloria and Ya-Chen first tried to guess from the context, and if they did not succeed they would resort to a dictionary. Tomiko asked the teacher for help whereas Pedro looked for a translation. Ibrahim and Ahmed asked the teacher first, and if they still could not understand, they looked the word up in a dictionary. Jim tried to guess the meaning of the word. Andrés did not seem to have understood the question. His answer was unrelated to the question. Several of them did mention using a dictionary. However, the answers on the frequency that they used an English-English dictionary, shown previously, demonstrated that what they actually used was a bilingual dictionary.

During the treatment, it was observed that the subjects in the small groups who spoke the same L1 would frequently interact in their L1, which would alienate the other members of the group. This took place especially in Group A due to the restricted variety of languages (Arabic and Spanish) spoken by the members of the group. It was also noticed that the majority of the students had a bilingual dictionary that they used quite often. This may be an indication that several of the learners may not feel as comfortable using the L2.

Translation proved to be a popular strategy. Even though the vocabulary-card task was a rather guided task, the subjects were given the freedom to add an item that

they judged relevant or essential, which was the fourth item. For this item they could select among eight pieces of information, which are enumerated in the previous chapter. However, several of them resorted to translation for at least some of the words. Perhaps due to their level, they still relied considerably on their L1. Some of the subjects may have used translation because of the education system in their countries. Kuwaiti students when studying English seemed to be required to translate paragraphs from English to Arabic and vice-versa. Thus, it seemed logical that they would be accustomed to making use of translation to study new vocabulary. Ibrahim commented,

But, of course, I have to know the meaning in Arabic because, uh... in Kuwait the English test has a translation part which is translate the paragraph, the Arabic paragraph to English and also the English paragraph to Arabic. So, I have to know the correct word in Arabic. So, it will be an excellent meaning. The best meaning.

Amna, also a Kuwaiti, used translation on several of the cards. When asked about her choice for the fourth item, she said, "I think the famous one is translation," meaning that she very often used translation. She admitted having to use translation so that she could fully understand a new word. She commented, "And also I want to know the meaning in my language... it's in translation. uh... also translation because I must know the meaning in my language (Laughter) to be easier to me to talk." Gloria was another example of a student who depended on her L1: "And translation... translation is more important for me." Blanca compared her understanding of a translation to that

of a picture. She realized that teachers very often discourage the use of translation. Yet she insisted on using it. When asked what her choice was for the fourth item on the card, she commented, “Translation. Translation because is the same as the picture. When I ...um...I know that many teachers say: ‘No translation’, but for me I need eh...have clear about the meaning in my...in my language.”

Tomiko reacted similarly to Blanca. She explained that the definition, the example and the picture did carry a great deal of meaning. Moreover, she admitted that using translation might be a hindrance, saying, “If I write down in my own country language, I will reinforce my own language. It’s not helpful for memorize vocabulary.” Nonetheless, she still needed to know the meaning of the new word in her own language. She remarked, “I can understand English meaning, English example and picture, but it’s not perfect. Sometimes I will confuse what mean this idiom, so I use, I write a translation.”

Two of the students found shortcomings in using translation. Ahmed pointed out that translation did not help recall words and even considered it a ‘waste of time’. He stated, “If you didn’t use the vocabulary, you forget. I always translate some word when I read the newspaper, but because not good, because you remember just the word you use it and hear it. But some word I translate but don’t use it. Translate is a waste of time.” Pedro, too, admitted that translation did not necessarily help enhance retention. Yet he used it because it was easier. He commented,

R: And you think it’s easier to remember when you
 know the translation?

Pedro: Um... not really. (Laughter)

R: So, why did you choose it?

Pedro: So, because it's easy. I don't know. Maybe.

Ahmed and Pedro introduced the issue of comprehension versus retention and recall. They appeared to be of the opinion that translation did help for an immediate understanding of a lexical item. However, when it came to adequate use of collocation of the word meaning later, translation did not present an efficient result.

Reliance on L1 still seemed to be rather important to the subjects. All of the subjects mentioned using translation and its relevance to their understanding of certain words. Bilingual dictionaries were noticeably important for the subjects.

4.7 Attitudes Toward Synonyms and Word Association

English word association was a strategy more frequently used by a restricted number of subjects. Ibrahim and Ignés noted that they always tried to associate the new word with another English word they knew. Amna, Ya-Chen and Tomiko pointed out that they often used this strategy. Most of the subjects (Bruno, Othman, Ahmed, Pedro, Jim, and Andrés) said that they used such a strategy only occasionally. Gloria admitted that she rarely used this type of association, whereas Blanca said she never used it.

It was observed during the treatment that the learners would occasionally ask the instructors for help finding a synonym to include in the cards. No other comment was made during the treatment concerning synonyms. Only in the interview did I learn more information on this item.

The students seemed to understand the importance of using synonyms. Yet, in the interview, they stated that whenever they could not find a synonymous word, some

tended to resort to a translation. Ignés believed that a synonym and a translation are the simplest items to include. She pointed out, “Yes. Writing and always I try to put a synonym...” She made it a point to use it as often as possible. Andrés said that knowing synonymous words was helpful when it came to writing, which was a noteworthy point. He added that it was a way to avoid repetition in texts. He commented, “The meaning, eh...antonym. Eh...draw the picture is important eh... [Subject is quiet for a while] Synonym for...for when you needs to write need change the no every time the same word. Maybe you need change the word.”

A few of the subjects mentioned alternating between translation and synonyms. They commented that whenever they were familiar with a synonymous word to the one studied, they used a synonym. However, if a synonymous word was unknown to them, they fell back on what was familiar to them: a translation. Ya-Chen appeared to follow this pattern. She declared, “Similar word and our country word too. Translation. Sometimes English-English definition you can’t (Laughter) understand. Maybe use our country word to translate it’s more easy for me. The similar word [synonym], I put I know I have learned similar words in the vocabulary card. So, it’s easy.” Blanca likewise said, “Sometimes translation is no important. Sometimes it’s important; sometimes it’s not important for me. When I...I...I have clear the word, [I understand the word] translation is not important. But when is new word, is important for me. Only when the, the word is new for me. Only eh...only in this moment.” Blanca seemed to deem that whenever the meaning of the synonymous word sufficed for her understanding of the new vocabulary, she would not seek a translation. However, if the

synonym was not enough, she searched for the meaning in her native language.

Othman followed the same procedure. He commented,

I don't know but sometimes choose this [translation] sometimes choose this [synonym]. But I don't know. But I think synonym it's good because you can learn two words. It's better. But if you have anything for writing or you can write anything. But if you need to learn, you can all this write meaning write synonym.

Because you will learn two word not one word.

Jim was another example of a student who proceeded in the same way. Asked on which occasion would he use a synonym and on which occasion he would use a translation, he replied, "No, how to, I don't know how to memorize this word, for...for...for a similar word...Yeah, it's easier. It's easier to remember. So, maybe I can always write a translate in the here. If I understand, another word, instead of this word [I am familiar with a synonymous word], I always write this one here [Synonym]."

Instructor B commented on her students alternating between a definition and a translation. She stated that they started the semester using mostly translation. However, as the semester progressed, they began to use synonyms on their cards. At that point she said, "...I see some of them doing more definition. I think the majority is still translation." Instructor A mentioned that his students sometimes used synonyms, yet he did not go into detail.

4.8 Attitudes Toward the Type of Vocabulary

In the questionnaire there was no question related to the type of word used. I did not deem it necessary to ask them about the vocabulary studied at that point. It was more relevant to obtain the subjects' comments on the strategies they were accustomed to using.

It was during the interview that the subjects commented on the phrasal verbs. Some subjects suggested that vocabulary cards were more relevant and worthwhile, and perhaps even necessary, to study more complex vocabulary such as the type chosen. Yet it would not be as necessary when studying more common, everyday words. Gloria for instance, when asked if the cards were helpful or not helpful, noted,

I think helpful...for example, in this word, idiom, when you need, when you need the meaning of the two, three word, you need because it's more easy. But I think when it's only one word is more work only one. For example, when you need memorize um...a table, you need, is more easy for you visualize. It's a, when you use words of the use diary [daily] ... the table, the chair, it's more easy for you visualize in relation for the...for the...for the life. But is more important this kind of technique. What this is? Technique? When you need this word put up with when you...need the meaning of the two, three words.

Furthermore, Gloria commented that she intended to use vocabulary cards in the future to study more complex words. She said, "For difficult words, sí [yes]. But I think it's a not all the words. It's good for this type of word." Ibrahim, like Gloria,

considered vocabulary cards an interesting way to study phrasal verbs. To the question of whether he liked or disliked creating the cards, Ibrahim replied, “What I like is the phrasal verbs...Because Americans are using more phrasals [phrasal verbs] and more idioms and, of course, I have to know the meanings, the definition and how to use it. So, it’s uh...to improve my English. And I also in my vocabulary I usually write the idioms.” He also noted that he intended to continue using vocabulary cards because, “...in the reading class we have the book called *Take It Easy*, it’s only American idioms. I think some idioms I have to write it on the cards to help me understand and to use it as much as I can.”

Amna, too, pointed out that the strategy was adequate to study this type of vocabulary. She said, “I think, uh, this one is a good one because of they use it...many people use it here and also in the movies they use this word. I think we must know them. I wasn’t know about this word (Laughter) [She is referring to the phrasal verb].” Ignés, as well, commented that the strategy was appropriate for studying phrasal verbs. According to her, doing the cards helped her learn a more complex type of vocabulary. She stated, “Vocabulary Eh ... I like because is...I...I only study...eh...simple words. Eh. Only one word and this is two verbs. And I learn this, better these words is different because I never study two words. For example, I never studied *get over*, never, only simple.” Blanca agreed with her peers. She commented, “It’s interesting because it’s new, this vocabulary is new for me and it’s eh...few eh...few word eh...I can say eh, one, about the. For example is *show off*. I, I say eh... many thing only one, only twice word [two-word verb].”

The instructors did not make any comments regarding the type of vocabulary chosen. They did mention before the treatment that the learners were studying that type of vocabulary in their regular class.

4.9 Positive and Negative Aspects of Vocabulary Cards According to Learners and Instructors

The subjects perceived positive and negative aspects in using the particular vocabulary cards they created during the treatment. One of the positive aspects was that this strategy enabled subjects to analyze a new word from different perspectives: a definition in English, an example and a drawing. When asked why they liked or disliked the vocabulary cards, Ignés, Pedro, Bruno and Ahmed made the following comments. Ignés declared that “because you in three different way you learn the word.” Pedro commented, “I like because I learn more about the new word. It’s good because you make sentences about this word and maybe you remember a little more.” In addition, Pedro seemed to believe that by creating the cards they would get more practice with the words. He noted, “Make sentences or drawing, or, or practice.” Bruno likewise mentioned the variety of items included in the cards as a positive feature. He said, “because is more eh...word to word is more definition, translate, sentence...Maybe...eh...learn more in more time but learn more.” Amna referred to the same point regarding vocabulary cards. She commented, “Yeah, sometimes it help us because we didn’t know the meaning, there is a sentence and also if we don’t understand the sentence we can see the picture.” Ahmed also commented on the versatility and the well-rounded information provided by the vocabulary cards. He remarked, “But if explain what the meaning of picture maybe I wrong but it’s complete

together, meaning and sentence and drawing. It's complete." These subjects seemed to approve of the resourcefulness of the cards, i.e. they could see the words from different angles.

One of the subjects, Blanca, appeared to already employ a similar strategy for studying vocabulary. When asked how she usually studied vocabulary she answered, "I study for example, I like definition, I drew the...the meaning I...I write translation. I like because this is my methodology for learn, for learn. When I need for learn one word, I ...I follow this steps."

In addition, vocabulary cards appeared to be an effective tool to review words which had been studied. Ya-Chen had an organized method for arranging her cards and commented on using the cards for reviewing the material. The fact that she was making use of index cards facilitated this organization. When asked how helpful or not helpful the cards were, she pointed out, "For me I make my vocabulary card. I put the card from A to Z. So, sometimes I forgot some word, I can check the card or I can find what I have done" and she added, "I think it very useful for learning vocabulary words. Because sometimes you have seen the word before but you can't remember. If you put in the card you can find if you have learned the word [you can go back and check the word]." Andrés agreed with Ya-Chen. He observed that "It's more activity for me, it's more eh...more tools, more other, other, other activity interesting for me. Because you need practice." Blanca was of the same opinion. She commented, "I put vocabulary cards in my closet, in my, in my bedroom. And sometimes I saw, I look the vocabulary. I use this." Once again, the use of index cards facilitated this type of strategy.

Nevertheless, the subjects also pointed out a negative aspect of this vocabulary learning strategy. According to Tomiko, creating vocabulary cards was time-consuming. Furthermore, she commented that dictionaries were more practical and offered the same information as the cards. She added that she preferred dictionaries to the cards. When asked whether she liked or disliked the vocabulary card task, Tomiko said:

I like make these cards, but I don't like spend a lot of time for make this cards. This card is very good, nice, but I spend a lot of time for make this card and I don't know if I when I use again ... but I will not use this card because it's not useful. Because I don't have this card always. I usually have dictionary. This dictionary have vocabulary and idiom and example, everything, so I don't need this card. So, I will not use this card.

From my observation in class and Tomiko's comments in the interview, she appeared to be the type of modern learner who preferred to use a bilingual electronic dictionary. Typically, when she encountered a new word, she would consult her electronic dictionary and take notes on the translation. Although she was quite cooperative during the treatment, it seemed that Tomiko would only use vocabulary cards if it were required of her.

Ya-Chen had a suggestion for improving the cards: a change in the design of the cards. She proposed that instead of having both the word and information about it on the same side of the card, the word should be placed on one side and the information about the word on the other side. She believed that this way the students could assess

whether they knew the meaning of a word or not. She declared, “I think maybe because I always put this definition on the back. Because I think I learn the word I can use the sentence to think of the meaning. What the word mean. If I really don’t know I can come back to see. Turn around and look.”

Instructor A did not seem to find vocabulary cards useful. Moreover, he considered the strategy quite time-consuming. He seemed to agree with Tomiko, one of the subjects. When asked if he would use vocabulary cards while studying a foreign language, Instructor A replied, “I might, but I’m not really sure. Because I think it’s very time-consuming. So I might use it. But then again, I might not.” He pointed out that a dictionary would be more useful. He commented that “I’ve always used a dictionary, like, a real dictionary. So, whenever I was studying, whenever I am studying, I have a dictionary close. So it’s always there handy. So, whenever I need I use it.”

Instructor B, on the other hand, considered vocabulary cards a valuable activity. She stated, “I think that a running vocabulary notebook [or cards] for us is a very good thing to do.”

Vocabulary cards, as an in-class activity, were welcome by both instructors. Instructor A commented,

R: Do you have anything else you’d like to comment about the process in class?

Instructor A: Yes, I'd like to say that it was a pleasant activity. I really enjoyed and I think that the students, I think the students enjoyed it too.

R: You would see this as an activity they would use every now and then, but not something that they would do regularly?

Instructor A: Right. Just like any other activity that you are not supposed to do, say every class because it gets...

As can be seen, Instructor A regarded the activity as a motivating task to be used every now and then, but it could become a repetitive activity if used too often. Instructor B agreed with Instructor A in the sense that using this task frequently would not be as appealing to the students. She said, "I think for a uh, week's worth of activity that they did in our class that they did enjoy it because it gave them new opportunities to, to look at the different ways of learning new vocabulary."

Instructor B commented, as mentioned previously, that it could become a burdensome task for the teacher to have to correct all the sentences the students created. She stated, "Depending upon how they manage and it might not be something that many teachers would want to do."

The instructors' perspectives on the vocabulary cards in relation to the subjects coincided in several instances. Both instructors stated that the subjects seemed to have enjoyed doing the vocabulary cards. Instructor A pointed out that "I believe they really enjoyed the task. They really appreciate it." Instructor B said that "Yes, I think they

enjoyed participating in the exercises.” Moreover, they both mentioned that a conscientious learner would be more likely to take advantage of such a strategy.

Instructor A said,

Well, because some of them are just, I mean, it’s not really nice to say, but they’re just lazy. So, they’ll say: “Well, I’m not gonna do this. It’s fine to do it in the classroom, you know, like with everybody else and if you got the help from the teacher, but I’m not gonna do it alone.

Instructor B shared Instructor A’s opinion. Instructor B remarked, “I think some of them who are studious and who enjoy that type of organized activity will take advantage of it, yes. Or they will do if they are required to. Others who are not oriented in that direction probably will not.”

The instructors did not see the compulsory items as an inadequacy. On the contrary, they considered this aspect a positive one. Instructor A observed that the pre-established items function as guidance to the learners. He commented, “Because they don’t really know what they are doing, so they have to have some kind of guide. Like someone guiding them, telling them what they are supposed to do.” Instructor B mentioned the diversity of the compulsory items as positive. She said,

I think the compulsory items were good because it forced them to focus on specific definition and um... and sentence structure as well. Those two in particular and then the drawing also forced them to go into three different directions with their understanding, their word understanding. And so I think, I think they were good.

In their own classes, however, the instructors allowed more freedom for students to choose what they wanted to include. Instructor A commented that in his class he did not require specific items in the vocabulary notebook. He permitted the learners to choose whatever they considered more important or relevant to learn regarding the word. According to this instructor, his learners usually included a translation, a definition of the word, a synonym, an antonym, or a sentence. Group A, according to the instructor, seemed particularly interested in including the antonym to a word in their notebooks. Commenting on what his students tended to include in the vocabulary notebooks, Instructor A said, “They use translation, like definition of the word. Um... Some people will include a sentence, the opposite. They really like the opposite too.” Instructor B did not demand any particular item either. Yet she required that the learners include at least one piece of information about the word. According to her, the students alternated between a definition and a translation. Although the latter appeared to be a first choice on the part of the students, Instructor B commented that towards the middle of the semester, “...I see more and more definitions creeping into there.”

The overall view of the use of vocabulary cards for studying vocabulary seemed to be a positive one, considering that the majority of the subjects involved in the study found it important to use this strategy. Moreover, the subjects seemed to have found more positive than negative aspects in creating the cards. Table 3 provides a summary of what was discussed in the last part of this section.

Table 3 – Perspectives on Vocabulary Cards:

Positive Aspects	Negative Aspects
<p>A. <u>Learners’ Perspectives:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learn different aspects of a word 2. Provide a tool for review 3. Help with complex words 4. Provide an organized manner to study vocabulary 	<p>A. <u>Learners’ Perspectives:</u></p> <p>Time-consuming</p>
<p>B. <u>Teachers’ Perspectives:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Show drawing as a motivating task in class 2. Present a guide to students (referring to the compulsory items) 3. Present a variability of information about words 	<p>B. <u>Teachers’ Perspectives:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Time-consuming 2. Burdensome for the teachers if they have to correct the students’ sentences.

4.10 Summary

The subjects, in general, seemed to value the task of doing vocabulary cards. It appeared that the consensus was that vocabulary cards do help them to learn vocabulary. The subjects have found positive and negative aspects in using vocabulary cards as a strategy (see Table 3). The positive aspects were the variety of information about the words, their practical use for review, and the type of vocabulary chosen to be studied. The subjects also identified positive and negative aspects of using drawings.

They commented, for instance, that the drawings helped them remember the words, apart from being a different way to express the meaning of a new word.

The drawbacks the subjects mentioned were that drawing was time-consuming and sometimes inadequate to express the meaning of a word. On the other hand, the majority appeared to agree that the other two compulsory items, definition and context, were extremely important when studying vocabulary. The students did mention as a detriment the difficulty of understanding an English definition. Yet most subjects judged it necessary to include this piece of information when creating their own vocabulary cards. Finally, the two optional items most appreciated by the subjects were translation and synonyms. In general, the subjects, despite their level, seemed rather dependent on their L1. They all relied on their L1 to fully comprehend certain words. Although synonyms were also an option for several of the subjects, they only resorted to this strategy when they were truly familiar with the synonymous word.

The results found in the various sources seemed to coincide. The subjects appeared to be consistent in their answers on the questionnaire as well as the interviews. The researcher's and the instructors' observations of the process also seemed to concur. In the following chapter I discuss the points raised here in more detail.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The findings seemed to indicate that the subjects did appreciate the vocabulary cards activity that I proposed. Twelve out of the 13 subjects reported that they remembered things better by applying the information to carry out a task. Besides, I observed that the students usually showed interest and motivation while working on the cards in class. Both instructors' comments confirmed this observation. Although the subjects made some negative comments, the positive aspects surpassed the negative with respect to the vocabulary cards (see Table 3). It appeared that the subjects found the activity helpful. Based upon this evidence, I concluded that the subjects enjoyed working on the cards.

5.1 Positive Reaction

The interview, in particular, provided me with considerable information about how the students felt in relation to the various items on the cards. Some subjects repeatedly commented that the vocabulary cards were particularly advantageous for studying more complex words such as phrasal verbs. Several of the subjects likewise referred to the importance of knowing these types of idioms to properly speak English. Their comments concurred with what Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999,) Gairns and Redman (1986) and Cornell (1990) have to say on the topic. These researchers agreed that knowing phrasal verbs was essential to achieve a good command of English. The subjects considered the vocabulary cards a useful strategy for studying that type of vocabulary.

During the interview the subjects and the instructors commented that one of the useful and worthwhile aspects of the vocabulary cards was the variety and multiplicity of information that was added to the cards. Moreover, according to Instructor B and some of the subjects (Ahmed, Gloria, Blanca and Pedro), the items complemented each other. This indicated another positive feature to the strategy. The fact that the items complemented each other, according to the subjects' statements already shown, helped the learners have a better understanding of the words.

Apart from the versatility factor, the subjects also pointed out that the cards were useful for reviewing material previously studied. Ya-Chen commented, "Because sometimes you have seen the word before but you can't remember. If you put in the card you can find if you have learned the word." McCarthy (1990) supported this statement on reviewing material. He affirmed, referring to vocabulary cards, that "they can be flicked through for alphabetical searching or just 'browsed' in and, most usefully of all, they can be rearranged as the user perceives new possible groupings and associations between words" (p. 127).

Schmitt and Schmitt (1995) emphasized the importance of recycling vocabulary and how vocabulary cards could be used in this task. They also stated that the learners had the convenience of regularly including new information about the words in the cards. The subjects did not specifically raise this issue. From their perspectives, however, vocabulary cards presented an effective tool for reviewing words. Ya-Chen, like McCarthy (1990), mentioned that cards can be organized alphabetically. In addition to that, Blanca and Amna called attention to the fact that the vocabulary cards could also be placed around the house, for those learners who find this strategy

beneficial. All these points seemed to contribute to a positive view of vocabulary cards.

Another advantage Schmitt and Schmitt (1995) saw in using vocabulary cards was that “Use of vocabulary notebooks is one learning strategy that can outlive the classroom and be a continuing resource provided that teachers encourage students to keep them independently” (p. 140). The subjects did not directly mention this point. However, it could be deduced from their comments that they tended to agree that the cards could be used outside the classroom. This could be inferred when the subjects commented on the possibility of using the cards after returning to their home countries or placing the cards on the walls and doors at home (Blanca and Anna mentioned using this strategy).

Students were not completely unaware of the importance of obtaining more information about the words and of employing more elaborate processing. However, they did not always seem to be willing to take the effort to do it. The point of which the students did not seem fully aware was that that knowledge might enable them to go beyond the translation and the grammatical aspect of a word. As McCarthy (1984) pointed out, “Of paramount interest should be the communicative effects of such relations as synonymy, antonymy, and hyponymy across sentence, conversation and discourse boundaries” (p. 15). The cards may not provide information to the extent McCarthy suggested, yet they might help students take a step further from where they usually were, a step which might make it possible for the learners to learn a few of the other important aspects of words.

5.2 Negative Reaction

Two of the people who participated in the study, one subject and Instructor A, did not seem to share the opinion of the students above. These two people considered this task to be time-consuming and as a result rather pointless, and they believed a dictionary to be more helpful. Tomiko pointed out that “If I use this card often, if I use, it is very useful, but I don’t have this card always. So, it’s not helpful. I will use a dictionary.”

However, if these two people considered that the idea was to insert information on the vocabulary cards progressively rather than immediately, they would realize that the cards would not be as time-consuming. Furthermore, the learners ideally were to recycle the words and add information to the vocabulary cards. As Schmitt and Schmitt (1995) suggested, learners did not have to include all the information the first time they did the cards (p. 139). The inclusion of items could happen over time. It would be a way for the learner to recycle the vocabulary on a regular basis. Thus, they would have better chances of retaining the words. According to Schmitt and Schmitt, “even better known words need to be enriched to achieve a native-like level of knowledge; it is just a matter of how much time and effort the learner is willing to expend” (p. 139). It may involve being a more hands-on, organized type of student, and also wanting to take the time to do the cards.

5.3 Vocabulary-Card Task

The vocabulary card task was a rather guided one. The original idea of vocabulary cards was to present the various word aspects that could be included in a card, and then allow the students to choose what to include. In this study, the

vocabulary cards were used to guide the students so that they could have a clearer idea of what the cards were and the different types of information that the students could include. Schmitt and Schmitt (1995) presented a detailed schedule to show how to use vocabulary cards. In this schedule the learners were monitored through the whole process, step by step. In other words, learners needed guidance when they began to use this strategy.

The instructors, as well, agreed that the compulsory items (definition, example and drawing) came as an advantage rather than a shortcoming. According to them, the learners needed a model that they could follow. The subjects likewise appeared to approve of the items I chose. Except for Amna, all the subjects would include at least two of the compulsory items when creating their own vocabulary cards. Several of the subjects seemed to agree that looking up and taking notes on the definition of a word, adding examples and including an illustration were important points to consider when learning a word. The subjects may not have followed the exact steps proposed in the study, yet they seemed to form a rather similar pattern.

It was pointed out in the previous chapter that some of the groups' interactions were quite restricted on some occasions. This quietness within the group could be interpreted as an indication that the subjects had the ability to understand the words and also to select an example and a drawing by themselves. Thus, they did not need to ask for help. It might also mean that the subjects were becoming more confident and independent and could rely more on themselves and not have to consult their classmates as often. In that case, the vocabulary cards would be achieving one of the objectives, which is to help learners become more independent. On the other hand,

their quietness could also mean that they were not comfortable with their classmates. It could also mean that after a while the task became somewhat mechanical, and they did not believe it necessary to interact as much.

For the most part, the students seemed motivated and involved in creating the vocabulary cards. As seen in the previous chapter both instructors agreed on this. My observation also showed this.

5.4 Use of Monolingual Dictionaries

Regarding monolingual dictionaries, most of the subjects gave the impression that they seldom used such dictionaries. However, during the treatment, the subjects did use an English-English dictionary in class, and they did not seem displeased to do so.

In the interview, I learned there were some objections to monolingual dictionaries. Two of the subjects pointed out that the definitions in English frequently contained unknown words, which made it difficult for them to understand the definitions.

The subjects seemed to be aware of the importance of looking up the meaning of words in a monolingual dictionary and also of knowing how to use the words in context. However, the subjects did not always seem to be putting that into practice when working on their own vocabulary cards. Based on the subjects' answers in the questionnaire, it appeared that only two of them used a monolingual dictionary regularly; most consulted this type of dictionary only occasionally.

When consulting a monolingual dictionary, the subjects might read the definition and the examples given, but they would not necessarily include such information on their vocabulary cards. In fact, the instructors mentioned that the students did not often include definitions and examples on their cards. A contradiction was noticed here. The subjects said that the items were important. However, they did not actually use a definition and an example in the vocabulary notebook they made for their regular class. One argument presented by some subjects to explain their behavior was that sometimes they could not understand the monolingual dictionary. They claimed that the definitions could be rather complex. On the other hand, some subjects looked at monolingual dictionaries as an opportunity to improve their vocabulary. It seemed that learners have different opinions on this topic.

5.5 The Use of Examples (sentences)

The example was almost unanimously accepted as a significant item to be included on a card since it provided the context in which a word was used. Some subjects emphasized that learners should create their own examples because it would be more meaningful. It seemed that they accepted the suggestion I gave in the beginning of the treatment. I recommended that they create their own examples [sentences].

One of the subjects mentioned that she could not understand the meaning of a word by looking at the example. However, the objective in including an example on a card was not to explain the meaning of a word, but rather to show learners in what context the word was used. Laufer and Shmueli (1997) said that teachers advocated learning vocabulary in context whereas students resisted this idea (p. 479). This would explain this learner's resistance.

In Instructor B's group the students did not seem to use examples at all.

Instructor B's observation led me to conclude that. She said:

I ask them for a definition, or a translation and it can be either one.

I suggested, at the beginning, with this group, I suggested at the beginning, that they start with a translation. Simply because they were still struggling so much. But I have encouraged them to go ahead and include/go into an English – English um... definition to get them beyond the use of translation, the chore of translations. I have not required anything beyond that. Though I suggested other options.

Comparing the subjects' comments and the instructors' statements, it appeared that there was a conflict between knowing what is important and actually utilizing it. In theory the students claimed examples were important and would be willing to use examples in their cards. In practice, however, since creating sentences could be time-consuming and more demanding, students were not often willing to take time to do so. Some learners seemed to prefer to resort to a faster and more immediate approach and did not use an example.

5.6 Drawing: Positive and Negative Reaction

Schmitt (2000) mentioned that it was important to allow students to use their creativity. Gairns and Redman (1986), too, commented on its usefulness in the form of a drawing when studying vocabulary. They pointed out

Many students (not only children) enjoy drawing and it is worth exploiting this where possible as a storage device. It has the

advantage both of the ‘personal investment’ effective indication of meaning. (Whether the drawings are good or not is irrelevant; what matters is that they should be recognizable to the learner.) (p. 99)

In the case of the strategy proposed, the drawing was the item that allowed for creativity. Several of the subjects’ comments conformed to Gairns and Redman’s (1986) statement in the sense that the drawings were considered beneficial for recall. Moreover, several the subjects commented that drawing is a unique way to help them remember a word. Ahmed commented on the topic:

R: What did you like or dislike about them?

Ahmed: I like when we draw the picture don’t forget the mean and the sentence and the meaning, but sometimes the word have many meaning and this is the problem.

Bruno also mentioned that “And drawing – is good because in the time always remember your draw.” Tomiko, as well, perceived the drawing as helpful for remembering a word. She noted:

R: Which of the obligatory items do you think helped you most to remember the word? Why?

Tomiko: Picture. It’s more easy (Laughter) to understand. It’s more just see. I don’t need to read, just to see and I can understand.

In the treatment, it could be observed that several of the subjects were quite interested in showing their work not only to their classmates but also to their instructor and even to me. Some seemed quite proud of the result. Both instructors observed the same positive attitude towards the drawing task. As Instructor B pointed out, the creative aspect of the drawing added to the task. She commented, “And...sometimes people are self-conscious about their artistic skills. So, that sometimes makes people laugh when they come up with something. (Laughter) and I think it just gave them a chance to be creative, and creativity, I think, is satisfying to people.” In general, the subjects’ comments seemed to show that they perceived the drawing task as an advantageous one.

As Gairns and Redman (1986) pointed out, many students enjoyed drawing and would benefit from the task. However, five of the subjects mentioned not enjoying this part of the task. As a matter of fact, when asked about the vocabulary cards, one of the first points some subjects made was that they did not like the drawing task. Eight out of the 13 subjects had reservations about this item. Four of them considered the drawing a rather demanding task. Even though they noted that drawing was helpful and subsequently commented that it could potentially help them recall vocabulary, they did not like doing it. When asked why they did not like the task, they answered that it was because they did not like to draw. It could be that they were self-conscious about their artistic abilities as Instructor B suggested. It could be that they would be more satisfied using a picture rather than having to create their own. It seemed to be a matter of individual preference. The other four subjects commented that drawing was time-

consuming and, at times, required written dialogues for clarification. The subjects appeared to perceive it as a disadvantage.

Two subjects, Gloria and Tomiko, suggested that the illustration for the cards had meaning only for the person who created it. These students appeared to consider this point as another disadvantage. Nevertheless, considering Gairns and Redman's (1986) statement cited above, not only was the quality of the drawing irrelevant, but it only had to be meaningful and recognizable to the learner. It should be remembered that the cards constitute a personalized strategy and are meant for the individual learner to study vocabulary. Thus, the fact that one student could not utilize another student's cards would not be seen as a drawback. The cards are intended and designed to suit the individual needs of the learners.

It was interesting to note that the subjects tended to draw people and things related to their lives, often things that were familiar to them. Some of the students drew the people in their family, their classmates, or places where they go. Bruno and Ahmed were examples of students who did that. Bruno observed, "I...That's very humor with Othman. Othman is good people. This day oh Ahmed and me eh...drawing Othman with in the show off with the girls." Pedro pointed out that "I remember the word, and think about things like me. For example, the car, drive the car and what you mean his word with example and drawing." Amna followed the same procedure. She commented,

Put up with. I paint my neighbor house that, uh they are too noisy.

They put music very loud, they dancing. I want to sleep, but I

can't. But put up with it. I ... I didn't angry with them. I don't care about them. I leave them alone (Laughter).

Students seemed to try to bring the drawings closer to their reality, which might be helpful to enhance the possibility of retention and recall. Further research is necessary to fully explain this tendency on the part of the learners.

5.7 The Choice of Translation and Synonym

The fourth item was intended to allow the subjects the opportunity to start making their own choices when creating vocabulary cards. As mentioned earlier, Laufer and Shmueli (1997), based on Atkins and Knowles' study, affirmed that 75% of language learners use bilingual dictionaries. Laufer and Shmueli added that some learners seemed to need this psychological support (p. 93). This statement was confirmed here when most of the subjects relied heavily on their L1 and used translation as their optional item. All of the subjects utilized translation for at least a few of the phrasal verbs being studied, if not all of them. In some cases, this dependence on their L1 may be due to a lack of ability with the L2. In other cases, it was probably due to time restriction. Learners, like Tomiko for instance, tended to use translation because it was a faster way of 'learning' a word. Several learners seemed to believe that they would make better use of their time if they looked up the meaning of a new word in a bilingual dictionary. Other subjects said that when they did not understand the definition of a word, they resorted to translation. Some subjects were of the opinion that learning the translation of a word sufficed.

The use of translation for reading was considered rather counterproductive by Luppescu and Day (1993) because it was time-consuming and sometimes misleading.

Subjects, on the other hand, seemed to see translation as an important item on the vocabulary card. Tomiko said translation presented perfect meaning. Ya-Chen, Jim, and Blanca, to mention a few, pointed out that translation was necessary. This showed the learners' dependence on their L1. This dependence may have come from the way they learned the L2 in their countries. As the Kuwaiti subject mentioned, in his country the students were required to use translation. This could create in the students a habit that would be difficult to eliminate. Thus, they could carry it with them and keep using translation. This does not mean that translation should be eliminated. Yet learners need to be aware that if they do not go beyond translation, it may hinder their proper use of words. Finally, there are those students who are not as conscientious and tend to prefer the easier way.

According to Prince (1996), less proficient, i.e. novice-level, learners were more likely to rely on translations. Learners tended to fall back on what was familiar and comfortable. Even though the groups in the study were considered intermediate and lower-advanced, the subjects still resorted quite frequently to translation. Even the reasonably high-proficiency level subjects resorted quite often to their L1.

Several subjects mentioned alternating between a translation and a synonym. The use of synonymous words showed that those learners could actually be building on prior knowledge in the L2. As Carroll (1963) pointed out, this was critically important to the development of the language. He said that according to the psychology of language

the speaker who has acquired mastery of a second language does not normally 'translate' from his native language into the second

language; instead, his second–language verbal responses are direct response to situations, without the intervention of native-language responses (p. 1064).

It seemed that those students who were making use of synonyms were beginning to anchor their L2 words in L2. That was essential to L2 vocabulary acquisition. It appeared to be a sign that not all of them were totally dependent on their L1.

One argument against the use of vocabulary notebooks, which was mentioned by some participants, was that it was time-consuming. There was no denying that. However, it should be emphasized that vocabulary acquisition is a time-consuming and long-term task. Moreover, as Craik and Lockhart’s depth of processing suggested, “long-term recall should be facilitated by manipulations which induce deeper or more elaborative processing” (p. 680). Thus all the processing involved in doing the vocabulary cards may induce a deeper processing, which might be beneficial to the learner. Besides, it would not be expected that learners create a vocabulary card for every new word they encounter. It can be argued that the idea is to use this strategy to study words that learners would use productively rather than receptively, i.e., words that the students would actively use in writing and conversation. Therefore, words that learners would need to know more thoroughly.

From what was observed in the subjects’ comments, it could be concluded that, despite their time constraint, vocabulary cards were appreciated by the students. In addition, learners may possibly use this strategy if it is well presented and explained to them. The first step seemed to have been taken. The subjects in this study appeared to be aware of the importance of using a more elaborate strategy to study vocabulary. The

subsequent step would be to clarify to the students that the vocabulary cards are worth their time and effort since knowing a word is much more than just knowing a translation. As Nation (1990) pointed out, there are a few questions to be answered in order to prove whether we know a word or not (p. 31). The answers to several of those questions can be included on a vocabulary card.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

As previously mentioned, Schmitt (2000), commenting on how learners study vocabulary, pointed out, “learners do use strategies and find them helpful” (p. 136). An analysis of the data from the current study confirmed that the subjects had their own individual strategies for studying vocabulary. It is likely that being aware of what learners feel about certain activities will help the teacher improve these activities. The responses of the students helped me not only to identify areas of improvement in the vocabulary cards but also to increase my awareness of what the students perceived as relevant concerning the cards. With reference to the use of vocabulary cards, the subjects presented quite positive responses to their use as well as to some specific items on the cards. Yet, they also showed some reservations about both, especially in relation to time. These are the two points to be talked about here.

It seems that the consensus among the learners was that creating vocabulary cards was a beneficial strategy for studying vocabulary. Out of the 13 subjects only one student found the task too time-consuming and irrelevant. All of the other participants would consider using this strategy in the future. From their responses in the interview, it is likely that they would not use the exact same type of vocabulary card as the one in the study. However, it appeared that they would follow a similar pattern in creating their vocabulary cards. The majority mentioned that they would include a definition and an example, and a few would include or consider including a drawing. Some learners were willing to take the time and the effort to do the vocabulary cards

because they appeared to consider the strategy to be an effective way to learn new words and enhance their vocabulary. Others, on the other hand, were not willing to do them. The answers in the questionnaire and the reactions in the interview suggested that a few of the subjects were not in the habit of studying vocabulary. These learners were quite unlikely to take the time and effort to do vocabulary cards. There were also those learners who were satisfied with and prefer a translation. That type of learner as well is not likely to use vocabulary cards. As Instructor A and B suggested, only the more conscientious learner would make use of this elaborate vocabulary learning strategy.

In order to encourage learners to use vocabulary cards, teachers have to provide a sound explanation as to why it is important to keep records of the words they study (Gairns and Redman, 1986; McCarthy, 1990; Schmitt and Schmitt, 1995; Hopkins and Bean, 1997). It is also important to explain to the students how this strategy (vocabulary cards) works. Teachers would have to emphasize to students that seeing a word once or twice is not the same as knowing the word. On the contrary, it takes several exposures to a word and in different contexts before a learner can actually acquire it (Nation 1990). It would also be necessary for the teachers to walk students through the different ways of doing the cards and actually do the cards together with the students at first, as Schmitt and Schmitt (1995) suggested. If teachers do not follow this procedure, they run the risk of having students turn an innovative way of studying vocabulary into the oldest approach to vocabulary learning, which is translating vocabulary lists. Using vocabulary cards, however, takes more than just telling students what to do it and how to do it. It is necessary to guide students during the

entire process and explain to them exactly why they are doing the vocabulary cards. Furthermore, teachers need to inform learners that it is not a task to be carried out all at once. Learners can add information to the cards as the semester progresses. Recycling is vital and learners can gradually insert new information about the words. Moreover, teachers should encourage learners to do so. Not only will recycling give learners a chance to review the words studied, but also they will be able to enhance their knowledge of the individual words.

The type of vocabulary cards proposed here fail to provide the learners with detailed information about the importance of using vocabulary cards. It was assumed that the subjects were familiar with the strategy and therefore it was not necessary to give as much detail and explanation. The task of doing the vocabulary cards would probably be relevant and suitable as an introductory activity for presenting the strategy to learners. It would provide a model of what is expected of them. Yet, in subsequent lessons teachers would still need to monitor and check the cards periodically so that they could assess whether the students understand how the card strategy works. As McCarthy (1990) said, the teacher could assess the students' progress by verifying the cards. He stated, "Teachers can learn a lot by occasionally looking at learners' written records: persistent problems with spelling/transcription, mistranslations, over-reliance on translation, and use of a range of recording strategies can all act as a important feedback on the lesson... (p.128). Furthermore, as Schmitt and Schmitt (1995) pointed out, "We should teach students to learn words from as many different perspectives as possible, encourage them to choose the learning activities which are best for them, and

foster independent vocabulary study” (p. 142). The type of vocabulary card proposed here definitely aspires to encourage the learners to become more independent.

The use of vocabulary cards can suit learners’ different needs, and the cards can be personalized to suit the needs and expectations of the different types of learners. This is a major advantage, especially considering the variety of learners that teachers usually have in ESL or EFL classrooms. The eclectic feature of vocabulary cards may encourage learners to use them. Some learners, however, will still be resistant and prefer a more traditional way to study vocabulary. Several of the subjects in this study seemed to approach this vocabulary learning strategy as an in-class activity that is fun when done once in a while. To do so consistently may be considered rather burdensome and time-consuming. Perhaps if it is clarified to the learners that they do not need to insert all the information about the word at once, the issue of time could be partially solved. The adding of information can and should be done over an extended period of time. From the perspective on both instructors, vocabulary cards as proposed here can definitely be seen as a fun class activity rather than a strategy for enhancing vocabulary.

Furthermore, it was noted that the instructors did not feel so confident that the students would actually use the cards. In the interview, they both seemed to stress that only the more conscientious learner would make use of such a strategy. Nevertheless, practically all of the subjects claimed they would continue using vocabulary cards in the future.

In order to make this strategy more practical and useful it would be advisable to use smaller cards. The design of the study is that the cards used are too big and would

not be very convenient for the subjects to handle. Larger cards make it difficult for the learners to carry the cards with them and study the words when traveling or riding the subway or the bus.

The overall response to the drawing part of the vocabulary cards seemed to be a rather positive one. However, it appeared that only the more visual learners and those with an artistic character would be likely to make use of this visual stimulus. Only five out of 13 students approve of the drawing without reservations. It seems that the other learners would enjoy this task in one class or another. The activity also brought a great deal of cooperative work to the class. Moreover, the instructors commented that the students were having fun while doing the task. I, too, observed the same reaction in both groups.

Although the subjects themselves have pointed out that drawing would help them remember the words, it appears unlikely that they will use of this strategy on a regular basis. First, the task was considered time-consuming by some of the students, and some of them were usually very concerned about the amount of time they spend on certain activities. They would probably resort to a task that would consume less of their time. Second, some of the subjects did not like the idea of having to include a dialogue in the drawing so that it makes sense. This point can be seen as a serious drawback for several of the learners. Yet one way around the time constraint would be to space out the inclusion of items in the cards, as suggested previously. Since the creation of the cards can be an enjoyable task, teachers can take advantage of that and prepare their learners to make the best use of vocabulary cards. They can also use the cards in class occasionally to break the monotonous routine that can develop in a class.

Both instructors mentioned that their learners frequently include translation, and sometimes only translation, in their vocabulary cards. Instructor B pointed out that her students at first used solely translation. Moreover, several of the learners suggested that they considered translation essential for them to understand a word, which may imply that they are using it on a regular basis. Laufer and Shmueli (1997) pointed out that learners may be able to memorize lists of words, but may not be able to use them appropriately (p. 479). Students need to know the meaning of the words, but they need to go beyond that to communicate. It is essential that they be able to use some of the words actively. This lack of knowledge is observed when students try to use these words in conversation and in composition. It can become a serious detriment for them. Teachers should make a distinction between the words learners need to know receptively and productively. For receptive knowledge, learners could translate these words without much harm, whereas for productive use, learners would make an effort to study these more thoroughly.

Finally, considering the different sources of data, especially the subjects' and the instructors' comments, several questions for further research emerge. Are teachers actually providing all the background necessary for learners to create their vocabulary cards? Would it be advisable to allow the students to choose all the items to include on their cards or should the teacher tell them what to include? That is, is one method more effective than the other? On the other hand, by allowing learners to choose the items, would we run the risk of leading the learners to turn the inventive idea of vocabulary cards into a vocabulary list composed of English words and their translations? Should

the teacher recommend vocabulary cards as a supplemental strategy or should it be a course requirement?

This study reveals students' perspectives on vocabulary learning strategies. These perspectives should be taken into account in further studies of the effectiveness of vocabulary learning strategies and vocabulary acquisition in general.

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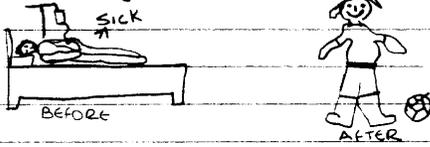
Appendix A

Vocabulary Card Samples

GET OVER

DEFINITIONS: To become healthy again after being sick, or to feel better after an upsetting experience

Sentence: I am get over after of my treatment against the flu

Drawing: 

TRANSLATION: RECUPERARSE

OPPOSITE: ~~get sick~~

SYNONYM: recover from - overcome

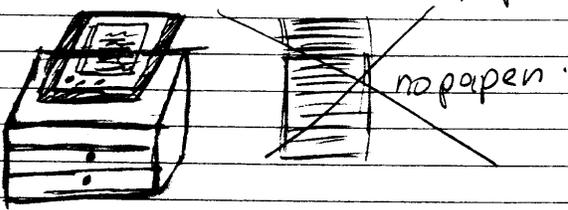
Pronunciation: get əvə

a word to help you remember: ?

Run out of.

Definition: to use all of something, so that there is none left.

Sentence: The Computer is run out of paper.

Drawing: 

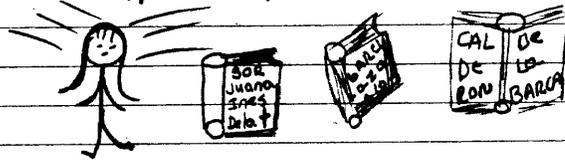
Translation: Quedan sin

Look up to

Definition: To admire and respect someone.

Sentence: I look up to Spanish classical writers

Drawing:



Translation: Sentin admiracion por alguien.

Look forward to

Definition: to be excited and happy about something that is going to happen.

ex: We're really looking forward to skiing in Tahoe.

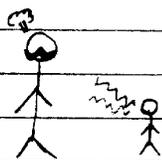


期待

Talk back

Definition: to rudely answer someone who is older or has more authority than you

ex: Don't talk back to your father!



目上の人に向かって失礼な口の
きかをする事

B)

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 1. pass away | _____ faint, or collapse |
| 2. get over | _____ die |
| 3. put off | _____ produce; send |
| 4. pass out | _____ recover from |
| 5. give up | _____ stop doing something or believing
in it. |
| | _____ postpone |
| | _____ delay |

C)

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 1. dress up | _____ care for someone |
| 2. watch out | _____ understand; learn something;
become popular. |
| 3. go off | _____ explode; make a loud noise; stop
operating. |
| 4. turn up | _____ be careful because something
might happen to you. |
| 5. catch on | _____ go, take part in. |
| | _____ appear unexpectedly. |
| | _____ put on different clothes from the
ones you usually wear. |

D)

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1. bring about | _____ disappoint usually by not doing something you have said you will do. |
| 2. show off | _____ become less intense or slower. |
| 3. show up | _____ meet or find someone or something unexpectedly. |
| 4. let down | _____ detach; unfasten; unstuck. |
| 5. come across | _____ make your skills, abilities or good qualities too obvious in order to impress people. |
| | _____ cause something to happen. |
| | _____ appear at a place where you are not expected. |

E)

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 1. look forward to | _____ eagerly anticipate. |
| 2. take out on | _____ leave a small, closed vehicle. |
| 3. put up with | _____ do something you were unable to do because you were busy. |
| 4. run out of | _____ endure; tolerate. |
| 5. get around to | _____ make arrangements for something. |
| | _____ have nothing of something left. |
| | _____ behave in an unpleasant way towards someone because you feel angry, or disappointed. |

F)

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 1. look back on | _____ accept an offer or invitation. |
| 2. look up to | _____ do something unpleasant or tedious
that must be done. |
| 3. get over with | _____ investigate. |
| 4. get rid of | _____ respect and admire someone. |
| 5. take up on | _____ remember; consider the past. |
| | _____ dispose of; give away or throw
way. |
| | _____ communicate |

G)

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 1. talk back | _____ check; review. |
| 2. drop off | _____ confuse |
| 3. mix up | _____ remove |
| 4. look over | _____ deliver something. |
| 5. goof off | _____ answer someone in a rude way. |
| | _____ think about something and discuss
it thoroughly. |
| | _____ be lazy; do nothing in particular. |

H)

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1. talk out of | _____ date regularly and steadily. |
| 2. take after | _____ accept or obey a rule, decision or policy. |
| 3. go along with | _____ persuade someone not to do something. |
| 4. cut back on | _____ use less of something. |
| 5. come up with | _____ resemble; favor (in appearance). |
| | _____ stop doing something. |
| | _____ think of something and suggest it, propose. |

Appendix C

Questionnaire – Activity #2

(Based on Levine, A. and Reves, T., 1990, appendix 1)

Name: _____ **Gender:** M () - F ()

Age: Under 18 _____ 18 – 24 _____ 25 – 30 _____
31 – 35 _____ 36 – 39 _____ over 40 _____

3. What is your native language?
4. Do you know other languages? If yes, which ones?
5. Do you think you have good memory?
6. When do you remember things better? When you:
see a picture: _____ listen? _____ write? _____
7. Do you learn better:
by hearing ? _____ by seeing? _____ by
doing? _____
8. When you don't understand a word, what do you usually do?
9. When you use an English-English dictionary, do you read the definition only or
do you read the example, too?
10. How often do you use an English-English dictionary?
always often sometimes rarely never

11. When you learn a new word in a foreign language, do you try to associate to words you already know?

12. What do you usually do when you learn a new word in English?

13. When you learn a new word in English, do you try to associate it with:

a) A word in English

always often sometimes rarely never

b) A picture or drawing

always often sometimes rarely never

c) A movement or motion

always often sometimes rarely never

14. What would you do to memorize something? Tell me step by step.

15. How important is learning English to you?

Appendix D

Interview Questions for the Subjects

1. How long have you studied English?
2. How do you usually study vocabulary?
3. What did you like/ dislike about doing the vocabulary notebook?
4. In what ways were the vocabulary notebook cards helpful or not helpful?
5. What items do you think were the most important ones to include in your notebook? Why?
6. Which item(s) did you choose as your fourth option? Why?
7. Which of the obligatory items do you think helped you most to remember the word? Why?
8. Which item did you like least? Why?
9. If you could choose the 4 items to include in your vocabulary cards, which ones would you choose? Why?
10. What did you choose to draw in (phrasal verb)? Why?
11. Do you intend to use vocabulary cards in the future? Why (not)?

Interview Questions to the Instructors

1. How do you think the students enjoyed the vocabulary card task?
2. Do you think they will use the vocabulary cards in the future? Why (not)?
3. How did students react to the activity in terms of involvement?
4. Which items do you think they seemed to like most? Why?
5. Which items do you think they seemed to like least? Why?
6. What do you think about the fact that some of the items were compulsory?
Why?
7. How different is the vocabulary notebook that they use in the regular class
from the vocabulary card I proposed?
8. ? Why did you choose to use notebooks?
9. How much do you emphasize the use of vocabulary notebooks in class?
10. Have you noticed the students using vocabulary card items after the
research?
11. What do they usually include in their notebooks?
12. What do you think about using vocabulary cards for your own foreign
language study? Why (not)?
13. Which items would you include on your vocabulary cards? Why?
14. Do you have any other comments about the in-class project?

Appendix E

Table 4 – Interview Results

Subjects: Categories:	Ahmed	Amna	Andrés	Blanca	Bruno	Gloria	Ibrahim	Ignés	Jim	Ohman	Pedro	Tomiko	Ya-Chen	Total
Definition	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+/-	+/-	9/ 13
Phrasal verbs			+	+	+	+	+	+						7/ 13
Context	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+/-	11/ 13
Drawing	+	+	+/-	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	+	-	5/ 13
Translation	+/-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+/-	+/-	+	10/ 13
Synonym		+	+			+	+	+	+	+			+	8/ 13

+ = Subject considered the item important to be included.

- = Subject considered the item irrelevant.

+/- = Subject pointed out positive and negative aspects of the item.

The total was calculated taking into account the positive responses of the subjects.