THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES AND VOCABULARY SIZE AMONG ARAB EFL LEARNERS

ALAA AL NAN

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Awang Had Salleh
Graduate School
of Arts And Sciences

Universiti Utara Malaysia

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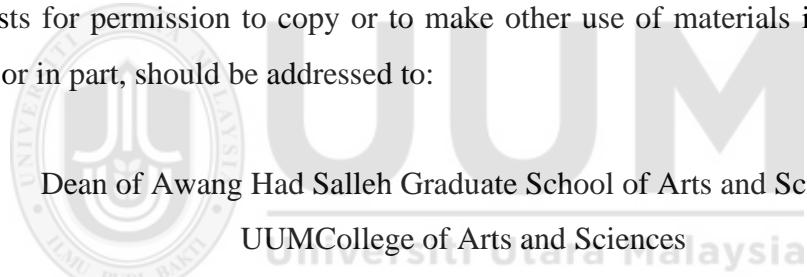
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Abstrak

Kajian ini menyelidik amalan pembelajaran perbendaharaan kata dalam kalangan pelajar sekolah menengah Syria yang mempelajari Bahasa Inggeris sebagai Bahasa Asing (BIBA). Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mencapai beberapa objektif utama: meneliti jenis strategi pembelajaran perbendaharaan kata yang paling kerap digunakan oleh pelajar BIBA sekolah menengah Syria, menganggarkan saiz perbendaharaan kata mereka, menilai hubungan antara strategi pembelajaran perbendaharaan kata dengan saiz perbendaharaan kata, serta meneroka cabaran yang dihadapi oleh pelajar dalam mempelajari perbendaharaan kata baharu dalam Bahasa Inggeris. Kajian ini menggunakan gabungan kaedah kuantitatif dan kualitatif, termasuk tinjauan mengenai strategi pembelajaran perbendaharaan kata, ujian saiz perbendaharaan kata, dan perbincangan kumpulan fokus. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa strategi sosial merupakan strategi pembelajaran yang paling kerap digunakan, manakala strategi kognitif merupakan yang paling kurang digunakan. Pelajar juga menunjukkan saiz perbendaharaan kata yang terhad. Terdapat juga korelasi yang signifikan antara penggunaan strategi pembelajaran perbendaharaan kata dengan saiz perbendaharaan kata peserta, yang menekankan keberkesanan pembelajaran strategik dalam penguasaan perbendaharaan kata. Data kualitatif turut mengenal pasti cabaran utama dalam pembelajaran perbendaharaan kata, termasuk pendedahan yang tidak mencukupi kepada Bahasa Inggeris, kesukaran dalam memahami dan menggunakan perbendaharaan kata, serta isu sebutan dan ejaan. Data kualitatif juga mendedahkan beberapa strategi yang diambil inisiatif oleh pelajar untuk menangani cabaran ini, termasuk sokongan digital secara kendiri, teknik pengulangan dan hafalan, serta pembelajaran secara sosial dan kontekstual. Secara keseluruhannya, kajian ini mencadangkan penggunaan teknologi, penggalakan aktiviti bahasa luar bilik darjah, dan penekanan kepada pengajaran perbendaharaan kata secara berkontekstual.

Kata Kunci: Strategi pembelajaran kosa kata, Saiz kosa kata, Perbendaharaan kata reseptif, Pelajar EFL sekolah menengah, Syri

Abstract

This study investigated the vocabulary learning practices among Syrian secondary school students studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The study aimed to achieve several key objectives: to examine the types of vocabulary learning strategies most frequently used by Syrian secondary school EFL learners, to estimate their vocabulary size, to assess the relationship between vocabulary learning strategies and vocabulary size, and to explore the challenges that the students face in learning new English vocabulary. The study employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, including a survey on vocabulary learning strategies, a vocabulary size test, and a focus group discussion. The results revealed that the social strategies were the most frequently used learning strategies, while the cognitive strategies were the least used strategies. The students also exhibited limited vocabulary size. A significant correlation was also found between the use of vocabulary learning strategies and participants' vocabulary size, highlighting the effectiveness of strategic learning in vocabulary learning. The qualitative data also identified major challenges in vocabulary learning, including insufficient exposure to English, difficulties in understanding and using vocabulary, and issues with pronunciation and spelling. The qualitative data also revealed several learner-initiated strategies to cope with these issues, which include self-directed digital support, repetition and memorization techniques, and social and contextual learning. Overall, the study recommends integrating technology, promoting extracurricular language activities, and focusing on contextualized vocabulary instruction.

Keywords: Vocabulary learning strategies, Vocabulary size, Receptive vocabulary, Secondary school EFL learners, Syria

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List of Abbreviations

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
LLS	Language Learning Strategies
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
VLS	Vocabulary Learning Strategies
VLSQ	Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire
VS	Vocabulary Size
VST	Vocabulary Size Test

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a general overview of the research area that the present study aims to investigate. It presents the background information and research problem in the existing literature, states the research objectives and questions, highlights the significance of the research, outlines its scope, and explains the definitions of the key terms needed to understand the topic.

1.2 Background

Vocabulary learning is one of the major difficulties that foreign language learners encounter during the acquisition of language (Alsahafi, 2023; Minalla, 2024). Vocabulary size (VS) has also been acknowledged as one of the most crucial parts of language use, where inadequacy in this knowledge may lead to difficulties in language comprehension (Alshehri, 2023; Alzahrani et al., 2021; Uchihara & Clenton, 2020).

Mastering vocabulary in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is one of the most arduous tasks that EFL learners have to face during learning, specifically when daily exposure to language use is very limited and vocabulary knowledge does not happen in a spontaneous and natural context (Fan, 2003; Gu & Johnson, 1996; Nation, 2013). It is well known that the role of vocabulary knowledge in language learning and language use has been widely discussed in the literature and a lack of it will be liable to bring a whole range of difficulties

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Appendix A
Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire
Source: Schmitt (1997, 2000)

Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire VLSQ	
Determination strategies: DET	
DET1	I use an English–Arabic dictionary to discover the meaning of new words. أستخدم قاموسًا إنجليزيًا-عربيًا لاكتشاف معنى الكلمات الجديدة.
DET2	I use an Arabic–English dictionary to discover the meaning of new words. أستخدم قاموسًا عربيًا-إنجليزيًا لاكتشاف معنى الكلمات الجديدة.
DET3	I use an English–English dictionary to find the meaning of new words. أستخدم قاموسًا إنجليزيًا-إنجليزيًا للعثور على معنى الكلمات الجديدة.
DET4	I guess the meaning from context to discover the meaning of new words. أخمّن المعنى من السياق لاكتشاف معنى الكلمات الجديدة.
DET5	I guess the meaning from word classes, such as noun, verb, adjective, adverb, to discover the meaning of new words. أخمّن المعنى من نوع الكلمة مثل الاسم، الفعل، الصفة، أو الظرف لاكتشاف معنى الكلمات الجديدة.
DET6	I guess the meaning by analyzing the structure of words (prefixes, roots, and suffixes) to discover the meaning of new words. أخمّن المعنى من خلال تحليل بنية الكلمات (البادئات، الجذور، واللواحق) لاكتشاف معنى الكلمات الجديدة.
DET7	I guess the meaning from grammatical structure of a sentence to discover the meaning of new words. أخمّن المعنى من التركيب النحوي للجملة لاكتشاف معنى الكلمات الجديدة.
DET8	I guess the meaning from aural features, such as stress, intonation, pronunciation, to discover the meaning of new words. أخمّن المعنى من السمات الصوتية مثل النبرة، التنغيم، والنطق لاكتشاف معنى الكلمات الجديدة.
Memory strategies: MEM	
MEM1	I categorize new words according to their synonyms and antonyms. أصنّف الكلمات الجديدة حسب المرادفات والأضداد.
MEM2	I group new words in relation to similar pronunciation and spelling. أجمّع الكلمات الجديدة التي لها نطق وتهجئة متشابهين.
MEM3	I group new words together to learn new vocabulary. أجمّع الكلمات الجديدة معًا لأتعلّم مفردات جديدة.
MEM4	I connect pictures to the meanings of new words. أربط الصور بمعاني الكلمات الجديدة.
MEM5	I observe the parts of speech of the new vocabulary items. ألاحظ أقسام الكلام للكلمات الجديدة.
MEM6	I examine the new words' affixes (prefixes and suffixes). أفحص بادئات ولواحق الكلمات الجديدة.
MEM7	I use new vocabulary items in sentences repeatedly. أستخدم الكلمات الجديدة في جمل بشكل متكرر.
MEM8	I use semantic maps to learn new words. أستخدم الخرائط الدلالية لتعلّم الكلمات الجديدة.
Cognitive strategies: COG	
COG1	I use a new lexical item by writing it repeatedly in sentences.

	أستخدم الكلمة الجديدة بكتابتها مرارًا في جمل.
COG2	I repeat orally a single word with its meanings to learn it.
	أكرّر الكلمة شفهيًا مع معانيها لأتعلّمها.
COG3	I revise previous English lessons and take notes in class to learn the new vocabulary items.
	أراجع دروس اللغة الإنجليزية السابقة وأدوّن الملاحظات في الصف لأتعلّم المفردات الجديدة.
COG4	I practice orally new words with their lexical sets.
	أتمرّن شفهيًا على الكلمات الجديدة مع مجموعاتها اللغوية.
COG5	I keep a notebook for a vocabulary list with meanings and examples to learn the new vocabulary items.
	أحتفظ بدفتر يحتوي على قائمة كلمات مع معانيها وأمثلة لأتعلّمها.
COG6	I associate new vocabulary items with physical objects to learn the lexical items.
	أربط الكلمات الجديدة بأشياء مادية لتسهيل تذكّرها.
COG7	I listen to vocabulary CDs to learn new vocabulary items.
	أستمع إلى أقراص تعليمية لأتعلّم الكلمات الجديدة.
COG8	I write new lexical items with meanings on flash cards to learn them.
	أكتب الكلمات الجديدة مع معانيها على بطاقات لأتعلّمها.
Metacognitive strategies: MET	
MET1	I expand my knowledge of lexical items by listening to English songs.
	أوسّع معرفتي بالمفردات من خلال الاستماع إلى الأغاني الإنجليزية.
MET2	I learn new words by watching English-speaking movies with subtitles.
	أتعلّم كلمات جديدة من خلال مشاهدة أفلام ناطقة بالإنجليزية مع الترجمة.
MET3	I study new vocabulary items from advertisements, written signs, written notices, etc.
	أدرس الكلمات الجديدة من الإعلانات، واللافتات، والملاحظات المكتوبة، وغيرها.
MET4	I learn new lexical items by reading articles from several sources such as magazines, newspapers, brochures, etc.
	أتعلّم كلمات جديدة من خلال قراءة مقالات من مصادر متعددة مثل المجلات، الصحف، الكتيبات، وغيرها.
MET5	I expand my vocabulary knowledge by testing myself with word lists.
	أوسّع معرفتي بالمفردات من خلال اختبار نفسي باستخدام قوائم الكلمات.
MET6	I learn new words by listening to English radio programs.
	أتعلّم كلمات جديدة من خلال الاستماع إلى البرامج الإذاعية الإنجليزية.
MET7	I expand my vocabulary knowledge by doing extra curriculum exercises from different sources.
	أوسّع معرفتي بالكلمات من خلال التمارين الإضافية من مصادر متعددة.
MET8	I learn new words by relating newly-learned words with previously learned ones.
	أتعلّم كلمات جديدة من خلال ربطها بكلمات تعلمتها من قبل.
Social strategies: SOC	
SOC1	I ask instructors of English for Arabic translations of new lexical items.
	أطلب من معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية ترجمة عربية للكلمات الجديدة.
SOC2	I communicate with instructors in English to use a new lexical item in a sentence to increase my vocabulary.
	أتواصل مع معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية باللغة الإنجليزية لأستخدم الكلمة الجديدة في جملة ولأطوّر مفرداتي.

SOC3	I ask for a synonym of a new word or ask the instructor to explain it. أطلب مرادفًا للكلمة الجديدة أو أطلب من المعلم شرحها.
SOC4	I look for extra English information online to learn new vocabulary items. أبحث عن معلومات إضافية باللغة الإنجليزية على الإنترنت لأتعلّم كلمات جديدة.
SOC5	I discuss in English with classmates to understand and expand the meaning of new vocabulary items. أناقش زملائي باللغة الإنجليزية لأفهم وأوسّع معنى الكلمات الجديدة.
SOC6	I communicate with foreigners in English through various types of media to develop my vocabulary. أتواصل مع الأجانب باللغة الإنجليزية من خلال وسائل إعلام مختلفة لتطوير مفرداتي.
SOC7	I play English games such as Scrabble or crossword puzzles to discover the meaning of new vocabulary through group activity. ألعب ألعابًا إنجليزية مثل سكرابل أو الكلمات المتقاطعة لأكتشف معنى الكلمات الجديدة من خلال العمل الجماعي.
SOC8	I study and practice the meaning of new vocabulary items in a group to expand my vocabulary knowledge. أدرس وأتمرّن على معاني الكلمات الجديدة ضمن مجموعة لتوسيع معرفتي اللغوية.

Appendix B
Vocabulary Size Test

- **First 1000**

1. SEE: They **saw** it.
   - A. Cut.
   - B. Waited for.
   - C. Looked at.
   - D. Started.

2. TIME: They have a lot of **time**.
   - A. Money.
   - B. Food.
   - C. Hours.
   - D. Friends

3. PERIOD: It was a difficult **period**.
   - A. Question
   - B. Time
   - C. Thing to do
   - D. Book

4. FIGURE: Is this the right **figure**?
   - A. Answer.
   - B. Place.
   - C. Time.
   - D. Number.

5. POOR: We are **poor**.
   - A. Have no money
   - B. Feel happy
   - C. Are very interested
   - D. Do not like to work hard

6. DRIVE: He **drives** fast.
   - A. Swims
   - B. Learns.
   - C. Throws balls
   - D. Uses car

7. JUMP: She tried to **jump**.
   - A. Lie on top of the water
   - B. Get off the ground suddenly
   - C. Stop the car at the edge of the road
   - D. Move very fast.

8. SHOE: Where is your **shoe**?
   A. The person who looks after you
   B. The thing you keep your money in
   C. The thing you use for writing
   D. The thing you wear on your foot

9. STANDARD: Her **standards** are very high.
   A. The bits at the back under her shoes
   B. The marks she gets in school
   C. The mony she asks for
   D. The levels she reaches in everything

10. BASIS: Thiswas used as the **basis**.
    A. Answer
    B. Place to take a rest
    C. Next step
    D. Main part.

- **Second 1000**

1. MAITAIN: Can they **maintain** it?
   A. Keep it as it is
   B. Make it larger
   C. Get a better one than it
   D. Get it

2. STONE: He sat on a **stone**.
   A. Hard thing
   B. Kind of chair
   C. Soft thing on the floor
   D. Part of a tree

3. UPSET: I am **upset**.
   A. Tired
   B. Famous
   C. Rich
   D. Unhappy

4. DRAWER: The **drawer** was empty.
   A. Sliding box
   B. Place where cars are kept
   C. Cupboard to keep things cold
   D. Animal house

5. PATIENCE: He has no **patience**.
    A. Will not wait happily
    B. Has no free time
    C. Has no faith
    D. Does not know what is fair

6. NIL: His mark for that question was **nil.**
    A. Very bad
    B. Nothing
    C. Very good
    D. In the middle

7. PUB: They went to the **pub**.
    A. Place where people drink and talk
    B. Place that looks after money
    C. Large building with many shops
    D. Building for swimming

8. CIRCLE: Make a **circle**.
    A. Rough picture
    B. Space with nothing in it
    C. Round shape
    D. Large hole

9. MICROPHONE: Please use the **microphone**.
    A. Machaine for making food hot
    B. Machaine thast makes sounds louder
    C. Machaine that makes things look bigger
    D. Small telephone that can be carried around

10. PRO: He's a **pro**.
    A. Someone who is employed to find out important secerets
    B. A stupid person
    C. Someone who writes for a newspaper
    D. Someone who is paid for playing spot etc.

- **Third 1000**

1. SOLDIER: He is a **soldier**.
    A. Person in business
    B. Student
    C. Person who uses metal
    D. Person in army

2. RESTORE: It has been **restored**.
   A. Said again
   B. Given to a different person
   C. Given a lower price
   D. Made like new again

3. JUG: He was holiding a jug.
   A. A container for pourung liquids
   B. An informal discussion
   C. A soft cap
   D. A weapon that explodes

4. SCRUB: He is scrubbing it.
   A. Cutting shallow lines into it
   B. Repairing it
   C. Rubbing it hard to clean it
   D. Drawing simple pictures of it

5. DINOSAUR: The children were pretending to be **dinosurs**.
   A. Robbers who work at sea
   B. Very small creatures with human form but with wings
   C. Large creatures with wings that breathe fire
   D. Animals that lived a long time ago

6. STARP: He broke the **starp**.
   A. Promise
   B. Top cover
   C. Shallow dish for food
   D. Strip of material for holding things togather

7. PAVE: It was **paved**.
   A. Prevented from going through
   B. Divided
   C. Given gold edges
   D. Covered with a hard surface

8. DASH: They **dashed** over it.
   A. Moved quickly
   B. Moved slowly
   C. Fought
   D. Looked quickly

9. ROVE: He could not stop **roving**.
   A. Getting drunk
   B. Travelling around
   C. Making a musical sound through
   D. Working hard

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10. LONESOME: He felt **lonesome**.
   A. Ungrateful
   B. Very tired
   C. Lonely
   D. Full of energy

- **Fourth 1000**

1. COMPOUND: They made a new **compound**.
   A. Agreement
   B. Thing made of two or more parts
   C. Group of people forming a business
   D. Guess based on past experience

2. LATTER: I agree with the **latter**.
   A. Man from the church
   B. Reason given
   C. Last one
   D. Answer

3. CANDID: Please be **candid**.
   A. Be careful
   B. Show sympathy
   C. Show fairness to both sides
   D. Say what you relly think

4. TUMMY: Look at my **tummy**.
   A. Cloth to cover head
   B. Stomach
   C. Small furry animal
   D. Thumb

5. QUIZ: We made a **quiz.**
   A. Thing to hold arrows
   B. Serious mistake
   C. Set of questions
   D. Box for birds to make nests in

6. INPUT: We need more **input**.
   A. Information, power,etc. put into something
   B. Workers
   C. Artifacial filling for a hole in wood
   D. Money

7. CRAB: Do you like **crabs**?
    A. Sea creatures that walk sideways
    B. Very thin small cakes
    C. Tight, hard collars
    D. Large black insects that sing at night

8. VOCABULARY: You will need more **vocabulary**.
    A. Words
    B. Skill
    C. Money
    D. Guns

9. REMEDY: We found a good **remedy**.
    A. Way to fix a problem
    B. Place to eat in public
    C. Way tp prepare food
    D. Rule about numbers

10. ALLEGE: They **alleged** it.
    A. Claimed it without proof
    B. Stole the ideas for it from someone else
    C. Provided facts to prove it
    D. Argued against the facts that supported it.
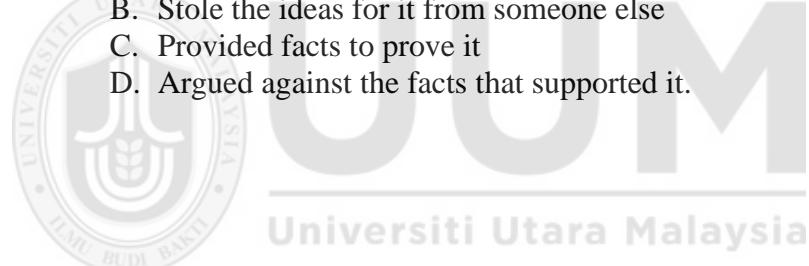
Appendix A
Focus Group Discussion

A. Interviewee Background Information

1) Name_____

2) Gender_____

3) Grade_____

4) School_____

B. Focus Group Discussion about the challenges that encounter students while learning new words.

1) Do you think that you have low vocabulary size? If yes/No, why?

2) What do you find most difficult during learning a new vocabulary?

3) What do you think you can do to overcome the challenges of acquiring new vocabulary? Can you give examples?

4) Do you know what VLSs are? Can you name any?

5) Have you been taught on how to use vocabulary strategies in learning new vocabularies? If yes, how? If No, in your opinion, why?

6) What strategy do you use to remember the meaning of new words? Probe: Can you tell me more about that?

Appendix B
FGD Transcript

1) Do you think that you have low vocabulary size? If yes/No, why?

Taleen: I think for simple words, I know most of them, but long words, I don't think so. Because of my memory, I always forget and can't use them in my daily life.

Anas: I think I have a low vocabulary because I have beginner vocabulary that is used in daily life, but professional vocabulary, I don't have a lot. Maybe because I didn't search a lot and practice.

Nada: I have a low vocabulary because sometimes when I'm talking to someone and listening to them, I don't understand everything. I try to understand the words from the sentence, but sometimes I can't. I just nod my head because I don't understand. Also, in English questions, there are some words that I don't understand. That's why I keep asking about the meaning to answer well.

Interviewer: This happens regularly or sometimes?

Nada: Sometimes.

Labiba: My vocabulary is low because sometimes I don't understand the meaning of words and don't know how to answer fully.

Interviewer: You mean it is difficult to produce and say the words?

Labiba: Yes, also I don't practice the vocabulary that I don't know because I find it difficult to find the meaning.

Habiba: For me, yes, I have a low vocabulary because I didn't use them in my life and didn't practice or search for word meanings and their pronunciation.

Noor: For me, I have a low vocabulary, yes, because sometimes when people talk, I don't understand. Even when I ask them about the meaning, I don't understand their explanation.

Amah: Yes, because I didn't learn many advanced words in my school.

2) What do you find most difficult during learning a new vocabulary? Can you give me examples?

Anas: First, I try to use my mind and guess the meaning before translating it by looking at the sentence and guessing.

Rimsha: The most difficult thing is the pronunciation and understanding the meaning and learning the new words.

Labiba: The pronunciation, and it is difficult to find the meaning of new words.

Habiba: If I don't know the meaning, I'll ask my sister, but if she doesn't know, I'll translate it.

Noor: Nothing is hard related to the meaning, but the spelling.

Amah: When I write homework, I forget the meaning of words, so I'll search on Google, translating the meaning into Arabic and asking my friends.

3) What do you think you can do to overcome the challenges of acquiring new vocabulary? Can you give examples?

Aseel: I try to translate the new words using Google Translate and learn the spelling by writing the words on a piece of paper.

Rimsha: For me, if I don't know the meaning, I'll search for it, then I memorize the meaning so it will be easy to learn the word. Also, I search on Google for the pronunciation, then practice a few times until I can do it.

Noor: Spelling is easy, but if I don't know a word, I'll write it five times on a paper and ask my family to check my writing.

Labiba: I just try to write the spelling many times, then I'll try to search on Google to find the meaning. Then, I'll practice their pronunciation.

Habiba: I do my best to search for the meaning, then write it.

Interviewer: Can you elaborate? How do you search?

Habiba: I'll search on Google.

Amah: I'll search on Google. Then, I write the word many times.

Anas: I'll search for similar words. First, I'll ask my parents if I don't understand. If I still don't, I'll search on Google.

Taleen: I'll make a list of difficult words, then I'll translate them. After that, I'll repeat it several times until I understand them, and I try to memorize them every day to remember them. When I find it difficult to put them in a sentence, I'll use Google to look for examples.

4) Do you know what VLSs are? Can you name any?

Anas: First, I'll see the opposite of this word or I'll use the Cambridge English Dictionary to see synonyms. I also use apps to learn English like Duolingo.

Aseel: I search on Google and check the sentences for each word.

Noor: Asking my parents or translating them using YouTube to find interesting things.

5) Have you been taught how to use vocabulary strategies in learning new vocabularies? If yes, how? If No, in your opinion, why?

Aseel: Yes, my mum told me to speak English with my friends, so I did so. As a result, I learned many words, nearly 200 words, because of my friends.

Anas: My mum told me to search for an app to learn new words, like Duolingo. Also, my dad printed papers with a lot of new words, and our teacher told us how to learn new vocabulary by searching in dictionaries.

Rimsha: My friends told me that I need to put new words in sentences so I won't forget the words' meaning and pronunciation.

Maida: My sister, when she was in university, told me to write the words on a piece of paper, and when you memorize them, use them in a sentence; it will be easier.

Taleen: During watching movies or series with my family, they use a lot of different words, and I ask my mum the meaning of these words, so she answers me, and I use these words in my daily life so I don't forget them.

Interviewer: Does your mum tell you to learn from movies?

Taleen: Yes.

Nada: For hard words that I don't understand, sometimes I'll ask my sister.

Interviewer: Who told you to use this strategy?

Nada: My sister. I search for words in Google Translate. After understanding the meaning, I try to use it in sentences so I can improve my English.

Noor: In grade 3, I had very few words, so my mum taught me and told me to write the words to remember them.

6) What strategy do you use to remember the meaning of new words? Probe: Can you tell me more about that?

Noor: I'm good at spelling, but I usually write on a piece of paper 5 times. After that, I ask my parents to test me.

Anas: I try to look around me to link the word to the meaning, like objects, etc.

Interviewer: If the word relates to an abstract meaning, what do you do?

Anas: I'll try to connect the words to anything I watched, like movies.

Maida: I write the meaning down and the words, then match them to check if it is correct or wrong.

Rimsha: I'll search for the words on the internet using some dictionaries like Cambridge.

Interviewer: What do you search for exactly in this dictionary?

Rimsha: Meaning, synonyms, and the sentences those words are used in.

Taleen: I'm lazy, so I translate the words to Arabic and sometimes to English. When I forget this word and want to use it in a sentence, I search for the word again to memorize it.

Labiba: When I'm writing for dictation purposes, I try to remember the sentence for the word, and if I forget the sentence, I search for synonyms.

Nada: I'd search for similar words.

Habiba: I try to read more English books to find difficult words, so I write notes to remember them.