

Investigating the Most Frequently Utilized Vocabulary Learning Strategies: A Case of Sudanese EFL University Students

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Abstract

Vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) play a crucial role in vocabulary learning. For ESL or EFL learners, the lack of vocabulary knowledge in the target language may have an effect on the four language skills of EFL. The use of VLSs facilitates learners' vocabulary learning process and helps them to become more self-directed. However, few studies have been conducted on the use of VLSs amongst by Sudanese EFL learners. VLSs used in this study are based on Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy. The main purpose of this study is to explore the vocabulary learning strategies used by Sudanese EFL learners. In addition, it attempts to investigate which vocabulary learning strategy is the most frequently used by Sudanese EFL learners. Data collected via a questionnaire of (VLSs) were adapted from Al-Fuhaid (2004). Findings indicate that Sudanese EFL learners used a medium range of strategies. Whereas the least used strategies are asking the teacher for paraphrase or the synonym of a new word as well as asking the classmates and word list. In contrast, there is a small number of the students mostly apply strategies such as skipping or passing new words, studying words overtime and verbal repetition.

Key words: vocabulary, learning strategies, vocabulary learning strategies, vocabulary knowledge, autonomous learning

1. Introduction

Vocabulary is an essential building block in language learning (Schmitt,1997).However the biggest challenge that facing language learners is knowing what techniques,behaviors and actions are most helpful and impactful. The importance of vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) and the related areas of language have led to an increasing number of studies focusing on FL vocabulary learning strategies (Chostelidou, Griva, Ioannidis, & Panitsidou, 2012; Nation, 1990; Schmitt, 2000).

In such study, being aware of Sudanese university student's preferences of VLSs will help a lot in their language performance since they shed the lights on their learning attitudes and aptitudes.

Sudanese university students are thought to face some difficulties when they are learning English Among these difficulties is the lack of vocabulary knowledge (Ahmad,1988) .Moreover,(Ahmad ,1988) added that the problems of using correct vocabulary or language words they need to express the intended meaning, spoken or written is due to their less awareness of the use of VLSs . In addition, vocabulary learning is not precisely defined in the curriculum in Sudanese universities despite of the distinct shortage of vocabulary knowledge among Sudanese EFL learners. Moreover the curriculum of English language at university level in Sudan is affected with the arabicization. Before 1956; Sudan was a British colony and teachers were native speakers and English language was the medium of instruction. After arabicization (courses translated and taught in Arabic) the level of English language declined Alfaki (2015) (. Undoubtedly, discovering VLSs of the learners is a worth in the development of students language learning.

1.1 Literature review

Research on the use of VLSs among ESL and EFL learners has started very far in the past. For example, Kalajahi et al. (2014) conducted a study to investigate the vocabulary learning strategies use among Malaysian ESL students majoring in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) at University Putra Malaysia (UPM).The findings concluded that metacognitive strategies were utilized very frequently by participants, while social strategies were least preferred by the students.

In Asian context, Rahimy and Shams (2012) conducted a study to examine the influence of vocabulary learning strategies on intermediate Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary test score. Respondents were 64 EFL learners majoring in different fields at English language institute. Data were gathered from oxford placement test (OPT), vocabulary test and vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire (VLSQ). The findings showed that there was a significant effect of vocabulary learning strategies on intermediate EFL learners' performance in a vocabulary test in which most of the high-score students have often or always applied the strategies given in the questionnaire in order to improve their vocabulary knowledge

However, a limited number of studies have been conducted on the use of VLS used by Sudanese EFL learners. For instance research of vocabulary learning strategies used by good and poor students has been conducted by Ahmed (1988). The study investigated the VLS used among 300 Sudanese learners of English. Results indicated that good and poor learners had different ways of using strategies. Therefore, the findings which relate to previous research

works indicated that students employed different types of strategies to deal with their vocabulary learning and most EFL learners neglect many aspects of using VLSs.

Firstly, this study aims at investigating the VLSs utilized by Sudanese university EFL students in general. Secondly, the study seeks to identify the most used strategies and the least used ones for learning vocabulary among EFL university students at Sudan University of Science and Technology in Sudan. There is an attempt to find answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the various VLSs used by Sudanese university students?
2. What are the most common VLSs used by Sudanese university EFL learners?
3. What are the least frequently utilized VLSs by Sudanese university EFL learners?

1.2 Statement of the Problem

One of the most important challenges that learners will face during the process of second language learning is learning vocabulary.. Unfortunately most of EFL students don't employ the most suitable vocabulary strategies. Individual differences exist between the learners, which makes deciding what vocabulary students should learn difficult and not easily predictable (Schmitt, 2000). Accordingly, some students might face problems in understanding the meaning of the text if sentences contain some new words. On the other hand, teachers cannot teach all vocabulary to the students, but they need to engage, enhance and direct them in the process of learning vocabulary autonomously. Solving such problems requires awareness of students' perceptions and preferences towards strategies of learning new vocabulary. Such problems are thought to be among the barriers that Sudanese EFL learners face in learning new words.

1.3 Purpose of the study

This study primarily aims at investigating the perceptions of Sudanese university students towards the VLSs they frequently use; i.e. what strategies are more or less common for learning vocabulary among EFL university students at Sudan University in Sudan.

Secondly, the study aims to highlight the importance of knowing the various vocabulary strategies employed by the students. Moreover to emphasize the importance of vocabulary as one of the most powerful predictors of language proficiency.

2. Methodology

The present study examines the type of vocabulary learning strategies used by Sudanese EFL students at SUST using Schmitt's taxonomy as a basis of the study. It was developed based on Oxford (2003)'s classification of language learning strategies. Based on the aim of this study, it was decided that the best method for this investigation to better understand the use of VLSs by these particular students is to adopt the quantitative research design. Hence, the method of conducting is a structured questionnaire distributed to the sample of the study at Faculty of Education and Faculty of Languages at SUST choosing random strategies from each of the five categories in Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy e.g. 'ask a teacher for paraphrase or synonym

of the new word ' (Social), ' analyze any available pictures or gestures to guess the meaning of the new word ' (Determination), ' say the word aloud when studying ' (Memory), ' make a word list of new vocabulary ' (Cognitive), ' continue to study new words over time ' (Metacognitive) .

2.1 Participants

The subjects in this study were (100) students who study English language specialization at Sudan University of Science and Technology (SUST) in their first year of academic year 2017. The students were considered have different proficiency from low to high as they come from different secondary schools during their admission to the university. The sample was chosen randomly .The respondents' age ranged between 18 and 21 years of age. They were more female than male subjects. The process of data collection took place during their academic year.

2.2 Instruments

The instrument which was utilized in this research is the one employed by some researchers; (Fan, 2003; Gu& Johnson, 1996; Nation, 2001; O'Malley&Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Schmitt, 2000). The questionnaire consisted of 15 items related to the students' approach to vocabulary learning. The items are classified under five groups as determination strategies, cognitive strategies, metacognitive, memory strategies, and social strategies. The participants were asked to answer each item with a 5-point Likert-style frequency scale based on Oxford (1990) as follows:1) never use the strategy, 2) I seldom use the strategy, 3) I sometime use the strategy, 4) I oftenuse the strategy and 5) I always use the strategy.

2.3 Data Collection and procedures

The questionnaire used for the study was a 15-item questionnaire based on Schmitt's Taxonomy. It was designed specifically for the purpose of this study.

The 15 strategies were chosen among the long list of about 56 strategies from 6 categories in Schmitt's Taxonomy. Yet only 15 strategies are adopted in the questionnaire due to some limitation and appropriateness. For instance, in the Determination and Social categories, there are 4 questions. Whereas a lot of some other strategies were dropped due to the aim of the study. The descriptive and statistic method is adopted in this study.

The result was very acceptable, and all the statistical procedures were done by a specialist university scholar using a computer and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). All that helped a lot to obtain very accurate results and findings and to make sure of the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. After that, the results and the findings of the questionnaire were analyzed descriptively and statistically.

2.4 Data Analysis

The statistical package, SPSS program, was used to analyze the data obtained from the questionnaires. The questionnaires of the strategy categories: the Determination, the Social (Discovery), the Social (Consolidation), the Memory, the Cognitive and the Metacognitive . The mean (\bar{X}), and percentage were used to compute the data.

The results of the data collection are presented in the following:

3. Results

3.1 Respondents Answers of the Social Strategies (SOC)

Statement no (1): I ask the teacher to translate the words into Arabic

Table No (1): The Frequency and percentage Distribution for the Respondents' Answers in Question No.(1)

Valid	Frequency	percent	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
always	11	11.0	11.0	11.0
often	9	9.0	9.0	20.0
sometimes	3	3.0	3.0	23.0
rarely	23	23.0	23.0	46.0
never	54	54.0	54.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

From the above table No.(1) and figure No (1) It is clear that there are (11) persons in the study's sample with percentage (11.00%) they answered always with that " I ask the teacher to translate the words into Arabic.". There were (9) persons with percentage (9.00%) answered often, and (3) persons with percentage (3.00%) their answer was sometimes, and (23) persons with percentage (23.00%) answered rarely. and (54) persons with (54.00%) their answers was never

Statement No.(2): I ask the teacher for paraphrase or synonym of a new word..

Table No (2): The Frequency and percentage Distribution for the Respondents' Answers in Question No.(2)

Valid	Frequency	percent	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
always	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
often	3	3.0	3.0	6.0
sometimes	6	6.0	6.0	12.0
rarely	35	35.0	35.0	47.0
never	53	53.0	53.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

From the above table No.(2) and figure No (2) It is clear that there are (3) persons in the study's sample with percentage (3.00%) they answered always with that " I ask the teacher for paraphrase or synonym of a new word..". There were (3) persons with percentage (3.00%) answered often, and (6) persons with percentage (6.00%) their answer was sometimes, and (35) persons with percentage (35.00%) answered rarely. and (53) persons with (53.00%) their answers was never

Statement No.(3): I ask the teacher for a sentence including the new word.

Table No (3): The Frequency and percentage Distribution for the Respondents’ Answers in Question No.(3)

Valid	Frequency	percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
always	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
often	11	11.0	11.0	12.0
sometimes	17	17.0	17.0	29.0
rarely	48	48.0	48.0	77.0
never	23	23.0	23.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

From the above table No.(3) and figure No (3) It is clear that there are (1) persons in the study's sample with percentage (1.00%) they answered always with that " I ask the teacher for a sentence including the new word.". There were (11) persons with percentage (11.00%) answered often, and (17) persons with percentage (17.00%) their answer was sometimes, and (48) persons with percentage (48.00%) answered rarely. and (23) persons with (23.00%) their answers was never

Statement No.(4) : I ask classmates for meaning of the word.

Table No (4): The Frequency and percentage Distribution for the Respondents’ Answers in Question No.(4)

Valid	Frequency	percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
always	6	6.0	6.0	6.0
often	3	3.0	3.0	9.0
sometimes	3	3.0	3.0	12.0
rarely	59	59.0	59.0	71.0
never	29	29.0	29.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

From the above table No.(4) and figure No (4) It is clear that there are (6) persons in the study's sample with percentage (6.00%) they answered always with that " I ask classmates for meaning of the word..". There were (3) persons with percentage (3.00%) answered often, and (3) persons with percentage (3.00%) their answer was sometimes, and (59) persons with percentage (59.00%) answered rarely. and (29) persons with (29.00%) their answers was never

3.2 Respondents Answers of the Determination Strategies (DET)

Statement No.(5) : I analyse any available pictures or gestures to guess the meaning of new words.

Table No (5): The Frequency and percentage Distribution for the Respondents' Answers in Question No.(5)

Valid	Frequency	percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
always	7	7.0	7.0	7.0
often	3	3.0	3.0	10.0
sometimes	6	6.0	6.0	16.0
rarely	21	21.0	21.0	37.0
never	63	63.0	63.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

From the above table No.(5) and figure No (5) It is clear that there are (7) persons in the study's sample with percentage (7.00%) they answered always with that " I analyse any available pictures or gestures to guess the meaning.". There were (3) persons with percentage (3.00%) answered often, and (6) persons with percentage (6.00%) their answer was sometimes, and (21) persons with percentage (21.00%) answered rarely. and (63) persons with (63.00%) their answers was never

Statement no (6): I use bilingual dictionary to find the meaning of new words.

Table No (6): The Frequency and percentage Distribution for the Respondents' Answers in Question No.(6)

Valid	Frequency	percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
always	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
often	7	7.0	7.0	10.0
sometimes	3	3.0	3.0	13.0
rarely	47	47.0	47.0	60.0
never	40	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

From the above table No.(6) and figure No (6) It is clear that there are (3) persons in the study's sample with percentage (3.00%) they answered always with that " I use bilingual dictionary to find the meaning of new words.. ". There were (7) persons with percentage (7.00%) answered often, and (3) persons with percentage (3.00%) their answer was sometimes, and (47) persons with percentage (47.00%) answered rarely. and (40) persons with (40.00%) their answers was never

Statement No.(7):I use monolingual dictionary to find the meaning of new words.**Table No (7): The Frequency and percentage Distribution for the Respondents' Answers in Question No.(7)**

Valid	Frequency	percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
always	10	10.0	10.0	10.0
often	9	9.0	9.0	19.0
sometimes	3	3.0	3.0	22.0

rarely	18	18.0	18.0	40.0
never	60	60.0	60.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

From the above table No.(7) and figure No (7) It is clear that there are (10) persons in the study's sample with percentage (10.00%) they answered always with that " I use monolingual dictionary to find the meaning of new words..". There were (9) persons with percentage (9.00%) answered often , and (3) persons with percentage (3.00%) their answer was sometimes, and (18) persons with percentage (18.00%) answered rarely . and (60) persons with (60.00%) their answers was never

Statement No.(8):I guess the meaning of new words from the textual context

Table No (8) : The Frequency and percentage Distribution for the Respondents' Answers in Question No.(8)

Valid	Frequency	percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
always	9	9.0	9.0	9.0
often	7	7.0	7.0	16.0
sometimes	6	6.0	6.0	22.0
rarely	37	37.0	37.0	59.0
never	41	41.0	41.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

From the above table No.(8) and figure No (8) It is clear that there are (9) persons in the study's sample with percentage (9.00%) they answered always with that " I guess the meaning of new words from the textual context ". There were (7) persons with percentage (7.00%) answered often, and (6) persons with percentage (6.00%) their answer was sometimes, and (37) persons with percentage (37.00%) answered rarely. and (41) persons with (41.00%) their answers was never

3.3 Respondents Answers of the Memory Strategies (MEM)

Statement no (9):I say a new word aloud when studying...

Table No (9): The Frequency and percentage Distribution for the Respondents' Answers in Question No. (9)

Valid	Frequency	percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Always	3	3.0	3.0	13.0
often	3	3.0	3.0	16.0
sometimes	13	13.0	13.0	19.0
rarely	25	25.0	25.0	44.0
never	56	56.0	56.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

From the above table No.(9) and figure No (9) It is clear that there are (3) persons in the study's sample with percentage (3.00%) they answered always with that " I say a new word aloud when studying... ". There were (3) persons with percentage (3.00%) answered often, and (13) persons with percentage (13.00%) their answer was sometimes, and (25) persons with percentage (25.00%) answered rarely. and (56) persons with (56.00%) their answers was never

Statement no (10): I connect the word to its synonyms and antonyms..

Table No (10): The Frequency and percentage Distribution for the Respondents' Answers in Question No. (10)

Valid	Frequency	percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
always	13	13.0	13.0	13.0
often	3	3.0	3.0	16.0
sometimes	19	19.0	19.0	35.0
rarely	25	25.0	25.0	60.0
never	40	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

From the above table no. (10) and figure No (10) It is clear that there are (13) persons in the study's sample with percentage (13.00%) they answered always with that "I connect the word to its synonyms and antonyms.. ". There were (3) persons with percentage (3.00%) answered often, and (19) persons with percentage (19.00%) their answer was sometimes, and (25) persons with percentage (25.00%) answered rarely. and (40) persons with (40.00%) their answers was never

3.4 Respondents Answers of the Cognitive Strategies (COG)

Statement no (11):I study new words through verbal repetition.

Table No (11): The Frequency and percentage Distribution for the Respondents' Answers in Question No. (11)

Valid	Frequency	percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Always	12	12.0	12.0	12.0
often	23	23.0	23.0	35.0
sometimes	3	3.0	3.0	38.0
rarely	21	21.0	21.0	59.0
never	44	44.0	44.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

From the above table No.(11) and figure No (11) It is clear that there are (12) persons in the study's sample with percentage (12.00%) they answered always with that " I study new words through verbal repetition..". There were (23) persons with percentage (23.00%) answered often, and (3) persons with percentage (3.00%) their answer was sometimes, and

(21) persons with percentage (21.00%) answered rarely . and (44) persons with (44.00%) their answers was never

Statement no (12): I study new .words through written repetition.

Table No (12): The Frequency and percentage Distribution for the Respondents' Answers in Question No.(12)

Valid	Frequency	percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
always	4	14.0	14.0	14.0
often	4	4.0	4.0	17.0
sometimes	13	13.0	13.0	20.0
rarely	56	56.0	56.0	76.0
never	23	23.0	23.0	99.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

From the above table No.(12) and figure No (12) It is clear that there are (4) persons in the study's sample with percentage (11.00%) they answered always with that " I study new .words through written repetition..". There were (4) persons with percentage (9.00%) answered often, and (13) persons with percentage (13.00%) their answer was sometimes, and (56) persons with percentage (56.00%) answered rarely. and (23) persons with (23.00%) their answers was never

Statement no (13):I make a word list of new vocabulary.

Table No (13): The Frequency and percentage Distribution for the Respondents' Answers in Question No. (13)

Valid	Frequency	percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
always	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
often	3	3.0	3.0	16.0
sometimes	3	3.0	3.0	19.0
rarely	28	28.0	28.0	37.0
never	63	63.0	63.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

From the above table no. (13) and figure No (13) It is clear that there are (3) persons in the study's sample with percentage (3.00%) they answered always with that ". I make a word list of new vocabulary..". There were (3) persons with percentage (3.00%) answered often, and (3) persons with percentage (3.00%) their answer was sometimes, and (28) persons with percentage (28.00%) answered rarely. and (63) persons with (63.00%) their answers was never

3.5 Respondents Answers of the Metacognitive Strategies (MET)

Statement No. (14):.I continue to study new words over time

Table No (14): The Frequency and percentage Distribution for the Respondents' Answers in Question No. (14)

Valid	Frequency	percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
always	10	13.0	10.0	10.0
often	6	6.0	6.0	19.0
sometimes	19	19.0	19.0	35.0
rarely	56	56.0	56.0	91.0
never	9	9.0	9.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

From the above table No.(14) and figure No (14) It is clear that there are (10) persons in the study's sample with percentage (10.00%) they answered always with that". I continue to study new words over time". There were (6) persons with percentage (6.00%) answered often, and (19) persons with percentage (19.00%) their answer was sometimes, and (56) persons with percentage (56.00%) answered rarely. and (9) persons with (9.00%) their answers was never

Statement No. (15): I skip or pass the new words.

Table No (15): The Frequency and percentage Distribution for the Respondents' Answers in Question No. (15)

Valid	Frequency	percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
always	9	9.0	9.0	9.0
often	7	7.0	7.0	7.0
sometimes	22	22.0	22.0	38.0
rarely	22	22.0	22.0	60.0
never	40	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

From the above table No.(15) and figure No (15) It is clear that there are (9) persons in the study's sample with percentage (9.00%) they answered always with that " I skip or pass the new words.". There were (7) persons with percentage (7.00%) answered often, and (22) persons with percentage (22.00%) their answer was sometimes, and (22) persons with percentage (22.00%) answered rarely. and (40) persons with (40.00%) their answers was never

4. Discussion

The following is a discussion of the results of the respondents' responses and perceptions about 15 strategies chosen for this study from the five categories of vocabulary learning strategies, according to Schmitt's taxonomy (1997).

4.1 Social (discovery) strategies (SOC)

With reference to table no (1), it is clear that the smallest number of the students record high frequency use ,always(11),often(9), for the strategy ‘ **I ask the teacher to translate the words into Arabic** ’ .Whereas the largest number of the students record low frequency use of the strategy, sometimes(3),rarely(23),never(54).For the strategy ‘ **I ask the teacher for paraphrase or synonym of a new word** ’ table no.(2) indicate different tendencies among the respondents responses .Also high frequency use is recoded by a few students, always(3), often(3).On the other hand the most students are low-frequently users of the strategy sometimes(6), rarely(35) , never(53) Table no.(3) displays the respondents view points of the strategy ‘ **I ask the teacher for a sentence including the new word** . It’s clearly seen that only minor studentsrecorded with high frequency use of the strategy, always(1),often(11),but the majority of the students low –frequently use the sometimes(17), rarely(48) never(23).

Finally, the student’s preferences towards the strategy ‘ **I ask classmates for meaning of the new word**,is displayed in table no.(4).We can see that only few students prefer to use this strategy when learning new words ,always(6),often(3).However ,the largest number of the students don’t prefer this strategy in learning new words, sometimes(3),rarely(59),never(29) . From this result, it seems that Sudanese EFL learners not widelyuse these social (discovery) strategies for learning the meaning of new words although they are the easiest and fastest ones..

4.2 Determination strategies (DET)

The first strategy of the determination category is ‘ **I analyze any available pictures or gestures to guess the meaning of the new word** . The results of the questionnaire in table no.(5) display that ,there is no preference among most of the students to this strategy , always(7), often(3) .The largest number of the respondents sometimes(6) rarely(21) , never (63) not mostly apply this strategy .This can be referred to their learning styles differences ,because it’s well-known that pictures are very useful in guessing the meaning of new words specially in a written text . The second item in the determination strategy is ‘ **I use bilingual dictionary to find the meaning of the new word** ’ . As it can be seen from the results in table no.(6) only 3 students always use bilingual dictionary to find the meaning of new words and 7 respondents often apply this strategy .In contrast, 3 students sometimes use the strategy .As we can see only 10 students recorded in the two highest frequency degrees in the table out of 100 students , while the rest of 90 students low frequently consult bilingual dictionary to find the meaning of new words .This result explains that the most of the students are unaware of one of the most important strategy like using bilingual dictionary in learning new words. This will directly and negatively affect their vocabulary learning .Despite of the study of Japanese students conducted by Schmitt and McCarthy (1997) shows that the most frequently used determination strategy is bilingual dictionary, (85%) of their 600 sample students use the strategy and it is the most useful.It’s definitely that a learner of English can’t ignore the use of a bilingual dictionary as one of the most essential elements of determination strategy in learning the meaning of new encountered words.

The next strategy is ‘ **I use monolingual dictionary to find the meaning of the new word** . Table no.(7) displays the results of the respondents responses .As it’s seen from the table only 10 students always utilize this strategy ,and 9 students often use the strategy . However, 3 students sometimes apply this strategy , and18 students rarely find the meaning of new words through using a monolingual dictionary ,and the highest number of the students (60)never use monolingual dictionary in learning new words .This is based on the students

experience and vocabulary size ,since a monolingual dictionary can be difficult to help them identify the meaning of new words or the general meaning of a sentence ,because they don't already know the meaning of some words in the context ,so students tend not to use monolingual dictionary ,although some high level students can use it . The last element in the category of Determination strategy is ‘ **I guess the meaning of new words from the textual context** ’ .The results on table no.(8) show that 8 respondents out of 100 total number of the students always guess the meaning from textual context, and 7 respondents often use guessing the meaning from context .On the other hand ,6 other students sometimes use this strategy ,37 students rarely guess the meaning from context and 41 students never use guessing the meaning from context. In conclusion, guessing from context is not the most frequently utilized strategy by the students. This is due to level of students ,because applying such strategy requires a kind of students with high level of language awareness and vocabulary knowledge ,in addition to other reading skills and strategies .Poor achievers students face some difficulty in adopting guessing from context ,while good achievers can use this strategy.

4.3 Memory Strategies (MEM)

Trends of the students about the first memory strategy ‘ **I say the word aloud when studying** ’ . Table no.(9) shows that only 3 students always say a new word aloud when studying ,and 3 students often apply the same strategy .Whereas 13 students sometimes use this strategy when studying , 25 respondents rarely utilize saying a new word aloud when studying ,and 56 respondents never use this strategy. The second element of the memory strategy in the present study is ‘ **I connect the word to its synonyms and antonyms** ’ . As it can be seen on table no.(10),13 students always connect the word to its synonyms and antonyms ,and only 3 students often use this strategy .In contrast, 19 respondents sometimes connect the word to its synonyms and antonyms , 25 students relate the new word to its synonyms and antonyms ,and the largest number of the students (40) never connect the new word to its synonyms and antonyms.To sum up ,students with high level and good previous knowledge of language can autonomously make a progress in language learning ,since they can study the meaning of new words through their lexical relationships .based on their prior background . However, low level students can not adopt this strategy, which is why most of them tend not to use it.

4.4 Cognitive strategies (COG)

In this study, three elements were chosen from the category of cognitive strategy group .The first element is ‘ **I study new words through verbal repetition.** ’ Based on the information on table no(11) there are only 11 respondents always study new words through verbal repetition and 23 of the respondents often use this strategy also when studying new words ,in addition to 3 students sometimes apply the same strategy .On the other hand there are 21 respondents rarely utilize the verbal repetition when learning new words ,while 44 subjects never study new words through verbal repetition . The second element in cognitive strategy group is ‘ **I study new words through written repetition.**

As can be seen from table no.(12), only 4 students in the sample of the study ,always study new words through written repetition and 4 subjects often use the same strategy ,while 13 respondents sometimes apply this strategy .However ,56 students in the sample rarely study new words through written repetition ,in addition to 23 respondents never practice this

strategy to learn new vocabulary . The third element is ‘ **I make a word list of new vocabulary**. Based on table no(13),it is clear that only three respondents always make a word list of new vocabulary ,and 3 other students often apply this strategy besides 3 more respondents sometimes use the same strategy .On the other hand ,there are 28 students rarely use word list in studying new vocabulary ,whereas 63 respondents never make a word list of new words while they are learning new words .The possible explanation of the above perceptions of the students about this cognitive strategy is that repetition is not the most suitable strategy for a adult learners as it is for beginners or young learners . Students in higher level tend to practice language learning through real language practice environment such as interaction with native speakers, or through other spoken or written language sources like conversations, visual, audio materials e.g. TV, radio newspapers, internet downloads ...etc. These kinds of materials are so attractive, enjoyable and effective. This considerable low preference of making word list among the most EFL students at Sudan University is due to the reason mentioned previously.

4.5 Metacognitive Strategies (MET)

Two elements of metacognitive strategy were chosen based on the requirements and objectives of the present study. The first strategy is ‘ **I continue to study new words over times**. According to table no.(14),it’s clear that only 10 students always continue to study new words over times or again and again ,6 respondents often utilize this strategy ,while 19 subjects in the study sample sometimes apply the same strategy . On the other hand, 56 respondents rarely continue to study new words overtimes and 9 students never use this strategy when studying new words. This is significantly reluctance towards this strategy .The second element of metacognitive strategy group is ‘ **I skip or pass the new words**. As can be seen from table no.(15),there are only 9 respondents who always skip or pass the new words and 7 respondents often practice the same strategy. Whereas slightly increased number (22)of respondents sometimes skip or pass the new words .However, 22 subjects rarely utilize the strategy ,in addition to 40 respondents never pass or skip the new words .Students worldwide, frequently skip or pass new or unknown words ,when they are studying English language .The same thing happens in Sudanese students case ,but it depends on some points to skip or pass the unfamiliar words met in a written text. First, students must have higher knowledge and language experience that enable them to decide that such type of words are less frequent and less important ,so to skip or pass them. Second, the students must be able to comprehend the general meaning or idea of the context depending on the words they already know .Finally, it can be concluded that Sudanese EFL students skip or pass the new words due to their previous knowledge and background .However those who don’t apply this strategy, is linked to their less awareness of language. So they need to look for the meaning of each word instead of skipping or passing it in order to comprehend the general idea of any written text.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, there is no significant preference to a particular strategy which is frequently used by Sudanese EFL learners at Sudan University of Science and Technology .Consequently, students tend to use a variety of strategies ,while a slight number of the learners frequently use social strategies such as asking the teacher to translate the new words into Arabic, besides the determination strategy like monolingual dictionary to find the meaning of a new word ,in addition to cognitive strategy of verbal repetition. However a considerably larger number of the students rarely or never prefer to utilize the Social and

Determination strategies. Though strategies as bilingual dictionary is basic and very important, to students, in second language learning McCarthy and Schmitt (1997). Whereas the least used strategies are asking the teacher for paraphrase or the synonym of a new word (12%) as well as asking the classmates (12%) and word list (9%). In contrast, there is a small number of the students mostly apply strategies such as skipping or passing new words (38%), studying words overtime (35%), besides verbal repetition (38%).

This reluctance of vocabulary learning strategies use amongst Sudanese EFL learners is due to their less awareness of the fundamental role of VLSs in any language learning. Thus students should be trained, encouraged and enhanced in the use of some basic strategies. For example monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, guessing from context, word list ...etc.

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Appendices

Put () in the box (always, often, sometimes, seldom or never) that tells the degree of opinion on the strategies you use to learn English vocabulary. Please mark the statement that most describes you.

Example:

The statement of vocabulary learning strategies	Degree of frequency				
	always	often	sometimes	seldom	never
1. I ask the teacher to translate the words into Arabic.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

The statement of vocabulary learning strategies	Degree of frequency				
	always	often	sometimes	seldom	never
1. I ask the teacher to translate the words into Arabic.					
2. I ask the teacher for paraphrase or synonym of a new word.					
3. I ask the teacher for a sentence including the new word.					
4. I ask classmates for meaning of the word.					
5. I analyze any available pictures or gestures to guess the meaning.					
6. I use bilingual dictionary to find the meaning of new words.					
7. I use monolingual dictionary to find the meaning of new words.					
8. I guess the meaning of new words from the textual context.					
9. I say a new word aloud when studying..					
10. I connect the word to its synonyms and antonyms.					
11. I study new words through verbal repetition.					
12. I study new words through written repetition.					
13. I make a word list of new vocabulary.					
14. I continue to study new words over time.					
15. I skip or pass the new words					