



Strategies Used by Kuwait University English Language Student-teachers in Learning New English Vocabulary

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Abstract:

The present study investigated English language student-teachers' strategies in learning new English vocabulary with reference to some variables (gender and year of study). The sample consisted of 70 students: 29 males and 41 females from the College of Education at Kuwait University. The analytical descriptive approach was applied and a questionnaire was used as a data collection tool. The coefficient alpha Cronbach was (0.920) of the 41 questionnaire items divided into three domains: vocabulary determination strategies, metacognitive strategies, and memory strategies.

The statistical packages for social sciences (SPSS) were used to obtain percentages, means and standard deviations. Both t-test and One Way ANOVA were also applied for data analysis. The results indicated that the degree of students' use of these strategies came to a medium degree. On the one hand, the most used strategy was the cognitive strategies with a special focus on in-class note-taking strategy. On the other hand, the least used strategy was the memory strategies with a special focus on grouping words spatially on a page. The study concluded with a number of recommendations to enhance vocabulary learning.

Introduction

There is no doubt that vocabulary learning is a complex process that requires an adequate mastery of form, meaning, and usage. However, vocabulary is an essential part in the learning process of the English language since a limited or inadequate knowledge of it will result in poor language comprehension and production. Wilkins (1972,

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p.111) summarizes the importance of vocabulary to language learning and use as “without grammar very little can be conveyed; without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed”. Several research studies on vocabulary learning strategies affirm that many English language learners encounter difficulties in communicating and interacting in English because of being limited in their vocabulary (Nation,2001; Schmitt, 2000; Nassaji, 2006; Nemati, 2009; Alhaysony, 2012; Al-Khasawneh, 2012).

According to Mart (2012) without vocabulary it becomes difficult for learners to develop their language skills, and it is the task of teachers to help them to do so. Therefore, vocabulary is very significant not only to native speakers, but also to English language learners. Al-Khasawneh (2012) confirms that a sufficient amount of vocabulary is very essential to help English language learners communicate with others, otherwise; it will be hard to convey messages.

Cook (2001) confirms that the lack of sufficient amount of vocabulary will lead to a gradual loss of motivation and confidence among English language learners. A good knowledge of vocabulary learning strategies will enable language learners to become autonomous and responsible for their learning (Oxford, 1990). Benson (2001) explains that to help English language learners become independent, explicit teaching of vocabulary learning strategies is inevitable. However, English language learners should master not less than 3000 common and high frequency words to be able to communicate effectively (Nation, 1993).

Nevertheless, Baniabdelrahman & Al-Shumaimeri (2014) state that many English language teachers in the Arab world still depend on traditional teaching methods which focus mostly on translating the English vocabulary into Arabic. Sardroud (2013) affirms that this is a problem, as English language teachers need to help their learners memorize and learn as many vocabulary of the target language as possible to improve their language fluency. This could only be achieved through teaching English language learners vocabulary learning

strategies and how best to apply them in the learning process (Sadighi & Zarafshan, 2006).

Grenfell & Harris (1999) point out that there are two significant reasons behind supporting research in the field of vocabulary learning strategies. First, this will lead to a good understanding of the cognitive, metacognitive, social, and affective operations that are associated with the process of vocabulary learning. Second, this will help language learners who have low chances to succeed to become successful. However, Nielsen (2003) states that research indicates that poor English language learners prefer memory strategies over cognitive and metacognitive strategies when learning vocabulary. By contrast, good language learners go beyond memory strategies in the process of vocabulary learning. In this respect, it is important to inform poor language learners of the different strategies used by good language learners to be aware of them and use them in their process of vocabulary learning (Oxford, 1996).

Significance of Study:

Internationally, vocabulary learning strategies have been researched to understand their significance for English language learners. Similarly, they have received the necessary attention from researchers in the Arab world, including the Gulf Region (Al-Khasawneh, 2012; Javid, 2014; Alhaysony, 2012). However, in the context of Kuwait, this study is pioneering, particularly as it investigates male and female perspectives. The study will be useful to encourage English language student-teachers to apply the most effective vocabulary learning strategies based on our research findings. In addition, the study will help to draw the attention of English Language curriculum designers to introduce activities in order to develop and improve English language students' vocabulary learning strategies.

Objectives of the Study:

The objectives of the present study are as the following:

- to highlight the main vocabulary learning strategies.

- to identify the frequently used vocabulary learning strategies according to Kuwaiti English language student-teachers at the College of Education.

Statement of Problem:

Being globally influenced by the increasing interest to learn English as a second/ foreign language, the Ministry of Education in Kuwait has modified its educational system to start teaching English as early as the primary stage instead of the intermediate stage since 1993/ 1994. In addition, the College of Education at Kuwait University has also paid great attention to offer English language teaching programs tailored especially to prepare teachers of English as a foreign language according to international standards. Therefore, graduation major sheets have been modified and new courses added to improve student-teachers' language level.

However, during classroom interactions and discussions with English language student-teachers, the researcher has noticed that they have difficulty using the correct and appropriate vocabulary. Furthermore, those students have difficulty grasping what they read or listen to. This has affected their oral presentations as well as their written assignments, and consequently their final results. The mastery of vocabulary learning strategies is necessary for English language learners in general, and essential for English language student-teachers in particular. This will enable them to master the English language and easily employ its vocabulary in different contexts appropriately.

Based on reviewing relevant literature in the field of vocabulary learning, the researcher has noticed that there is a significant weakness in learning the vocabulary among English language learners. Internationally, researchers have investigated such difficulties and focused on learners' vocabulary learning strategies to identify their common learning patterns (Sardroud, 2013; Walters, 2009; Schmitt, 2000; Schmitt, 1997).

In the Arab world, many researchers have conducted similar studies on English language learners in order to improve vocabulary learning and activate the effective vocabulary learning strategies

(Al-Khasawneh & Huwari, 2014; Al-Khasawneh, 2012; Aljdee, 2011). Similarly, some researchers from Arab Gulf countries have investigated English language learners' vocabulary learning strategies (Javid, 2014; Alhaysony, 2012).

The present study aims to investigate English language student-teachers' vocabulary learning strategies in the College of Education at Kuwait University. It seeks to identify the most and least frequently-used ones.

Research Questions:

The present study attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1 - What are the most and least frequently used vocabulary learning strategies among Kuwaiti English language student-teachers?
- 2 - Are there any statistically significant differences in the use of vocabulary learning strategies among Kuwaiti English language student-teachers according to (gender and years of study) at a ≤ 0.05 level?

Theoretical Background

Vocabulary Learning Strategies: Seeking A Definition

Receiving such an international attention, it becomes necessary to define the meaning of vocabulary learning strategies. Yet, looking at relevant literature, it shows that there are various definitions. Vocabulary strategies are defined by Wenden and Rubin (1987, p. 29) as "the process by which information is obtained, stored, retrieved, and used". Schmitt (1997, p. 203), states, "vocabulary learning strategies could be any action which affects this rather broadly-defined process". According to Cameron (2001, p. 92) vocabulary learning strategies are "actions that learners take to help themselves understand and remember vocabulary". Nation (2001, p. 217) refers to them as "language learning strategies which in turn are part of general learning strategies".

Catalan (2003, p. 85) defines them as "knowledge about the mechanisms (process, strategies) used to learn vocabulary as well as steps or actions taken by students". Takaè (2008, p. 52) states "specific

strategies utilized in the isolated task of learning vocabulary in the target language”. Asgari & Mustapha (2011, p. 85) define them as “steps taken by the language learners to acquire new English words”.

The different definitions of vocabulary learning strategies highlight two important elements. First, language learners shoulder the responsibility of learning the target language vocabulary, and they should make the necessary effort to achieve such a goal. Second, the mastery of vocabulary through the application of vocabulary learning strategies will have its effective impact on language learning.

Vocabulary Learning Strategies: Taxonomies' Classifications

The growing interest in vocabulary learning strategies has resulted in various strategies proposed by different researchers to describe the learning of vocabulary by language learners. Intaraprasert (2000) clarifies that the classifications of vocabulary strategies depend on how the scholars researched and categorized them. Being influenced by Oxford's (1990) language learning taxonomy, Schmitt and Schmitt (1993) grouped vocabulary strategies into two main divisions: remembering a word and learning a new word. Then came Rubin and Thompson (1994) who categorized vocabulary learning strategies based on learners' opinions into three main groups: Direct Approach, Mnemonics, and Indirect Approach. Stöffer (1995) developed a vocabulary learning strategy inventory by grouping 53 items under nine categories by factor analysis as follows: strategies involving authentic language use, strategies used for self-motivation, strategies used to organize words, strategies used to create mental linkages, memory strategies, strategies involving creative activities, strategies involving physical action, strategies used to overcome anxiety, and visual/auditory strategies.

Gu & Johnson (1996) developed one of the most prominent classifications of vocabulary learning strategies by clustering 91 items into eight groups: beliefs about vocabulary learning, metacognitive regulation, guessing strategies, dictionary strategies, note-taking strategies, memory strategies (rehearsal), memory strategies (encoding), and activation strategies. Moreover, Lawson & Hogben (1996)

introduced another classification for vocabulary strategies including fifteen strategies classified under four categories: repetition, word feature analysis, simple elaboration, and complex elaboration. Schmitt (1997) developed his vocabulary learning strategies a step further by dividing the two main categories of strategies into five sub-groups. First, Determination strategies which involve individual learning strategies. Second, social strategies where learners learn new words through interaction with others. Third, memory strategies where learners link their learning of new words to mental processing by associating their existing or background knowledge with the new words. Fourth, cognitive strategies where learners engage in mechanical processing. Finally, metacognitive strategies where learners are involved in monitoring, decision-making, and evaluation processes of one's progress.

Kudo (1999) developed a vocabulary learning taxonomy which was fundamentally based on Schmitt's taxonomy. Kudo (1999) combined memory and cognitive strategies into psycholinguistic strategies, and metacognitive and social strategies into metacognitive strategy, because of exploratory factor analyses.

Nation (2001) developed another prominent classification of vocabulary learning strategies by identifying three main categories. First, planning where learners choose what and when to focus attention on the vocabulary items through (choosing words, choosing the aspects of word knowledge, choosing strategies, and planning repetition). Second, sources where learners find information about words from analyzing the words; context, dictionary, etc. Third, process where learners establish lexical knowledge through such powerful processes like noticing, retrieving and generating. GU (2003) refined Gu & Johnson (1996) classifications of vocabulary learning strategies to introduce four main categories: Metacognitive regulation, Cognitive strategies, Memory strategies, and Activation strategies. Fan (2003), as well, refined Gu's (2003) classification to produce two main categories: the primary category where learners focus on dictionary strategies and guessing strategies and the remembering category where learners learn by integrating the sub-

strategies repetition, association, grouping, analysis, and known words strategies.

The next section looks at studies on vocabulary learning strategies. Furthermore, it explores English language students' responses and points of view regarding the role which vocabulary learning strategies play in learning new vocabulary and highlighting the most used ones.

Previous Studies

Many studies have investigated vocabulary learning strategies in different learning contexts. Light will be shed on studies that investigated vocabulary learning strategies in three contexts: the international context, the Arab context, and the Arab Gulf context.

AbdulMutalib, AbdulKadir, Robani, & Majid (2014) researched the vocabulary learning strategies of 31 Malaysia students studying at the German-Malaysian Institute. The results of the study revealed that although students realized the importance of vocabulary learning, the majority relied on discovery strategies such as referring to monolingual dictionaries, guessing words, asking friends and teachers. Very few students were familiar with more concrete cognitive strategies which would lend more success in vocabulary learning.

Amirian & Heshmatifar (2013) investigated the common vocabulary learning strategies among 74 EFL Iranian students. The results revealed the following order of strategy use by the students from the most frequent to the least frequent ones: determination, cognitive, memory, metacognitive, and social strategies. Findings indicated that guessing from context, and dictionary use strategies were the most popular strategies, while asking the teacher or peers for meaning was rarely used.

Saunders (2013) explored the most popular vocabulary study methods among 139 English language Japanese students and looked for patterns with reference to language proficiency level, class groups, and gender. The results showed that memorizing the translation of vocabulary items and rote copying, writing the item again and again, were the most commonly reported forms of study. With respect to

study patterns in various groups, there were no significant differences found according to the specified demographic variables.

Asgari & Mustapha (2011) examined the type of vocabulary learning strategies used by Malaysian English language students majoring in Teaching English as a Second Language. To achieve the aim of the study, the qualitative research design was adopted by conducting an open-ended interview. They concluded that strategies such as learning a word through reading, the use of monolingual dictionary, the use of various English language media, and using new English words in their daily conversation, determination, metacognitive strategies respectively are popular strategies and the learners are keen to use them.

Lip (2009) examined the frequency and usefulness of vocabulary learning strategies by administering a questionnaire to 36 postsecondary students in a postsecondary institution in Hong Kong. The results showed that the frequency of vocabulary learning strategy use did have an influence on post-secondary students' choices in employing the most useful vocabulary strategies in their responses. The most frequently used and most useful vocabulary learning strategies were as follows: 1) spelling the word in the mind repeatedly; 2) analyzing the word by breaking down the sound segments; and 3) remembering words by doing a project; and 4) asking classmates for the meaning of the word.

In an experimental study, Nemati (2009) attempted to compare the impacts of teaching through memory strategies on 310 Indian pre-university females by reflecting on the students' short-term and long-term retention. The results indicated that the students of the experimental group outperformed in short-term and long-term scores, and portrayed the superiority of memory strategies in short-term and long-term retention. The study recommended providing learners with explicit instruction on memory strategies and emphasizing strategy awareness to help facilitate storing and retrieving new vocabulary items.

Seffar (2014) investigated the use of vocabulary learning strategies on 124 (60 males and 64 females) Moroccan university students of

English as a foreign language with reference to gender and proficiency. The findings revealed that the most frequently used strategies are compensation strategies and the least used are affective strategies. Female students showed more frequent use of the six categories than male students. Fourth year university students employed compensation and memory strategies more often, whereas first year students employed metacognitive, cognitive, affective and social strategies more often. Cognitive strategies showed the highest correlation with metacognitive and memory strategies. It was concluded that gender and proficiency had a significant relationship with students use of learning strategies.

Al-Khasawneh & Huwari (2014) identified the effect of metacognitive strategy instruction on vocabulary learning of Jordanian university students through a ten-week instruction program. The findings revealed that explicit instruction on using metacognitive strategies proved to be effective. The experimental group surpassed the control group in the post-instruction vocabulary test.

Ababneh (2013) tried to identify the strategies used by Jordanian college students in dealing with new vocabulary in English with reference to the effect of gender and academic major while reading English texts. The results showed that the most used strategies were looking up the meaning of every new vocabulary or asking for its meaning. Guessing strategies came next. Skipping strategies came last. Both gender and academic major did not have a significant effect on the participants' choice of strategy.

Al-Khasawneh (2012) also investigated the frequency of employing various vocabulary learning strategies used by EFL Jordanian students at Jordan University of Science and Technology. The results indicated that determination strategies were the most used, while metacognitive strategies were found to be the least used.

Aljdee (2011) identified the range and frequency of vocabulary learning strategies of 56 final year English majors in Libya. The findings showed that Libyan learners reported using a wide range of vocabulary learning strategies, even though the frequency of use was relatively low. Discovery strategies, such as using dictionaries and

guessing meaning from context, were used more frequently than consolidation strategies, such as practising in groups, making word lists, or assessing vocabulary knowledge. The results of the vocabulary tests indicated that the learners' receptive and controlled-productive vocabulary knowledge were very low. Moreover, there were highly positive correlations between the learners' vocabulary knowledge and some vocabulary learning strategies, such as using a monolingual dictionary, guessing meaning from context, making lists of words, and using media.

In the Gulf Region, several studies investigated the vocabulary learning strategies followed by English language learners. However, all of the cited studies were conducted in Saudi Arabia, which reflect the high interest in vocabulary learning strategies and the role they play in developing learners' vocabulary learning.

Javid (2014) conducted an empirical study to investigate Saudi English language learners' strategies in learning their discipline-related vocabulary. It also attempted to investigate their preferences towards using various strategies to learn new English vocabulary in terms of gender. A total of 153 (82 male and 71 female) learners participated in the data collection process. The results suggested that the participants liked the determination strategies most followed by memory strategies. Among the remaining strategies, cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies were assigned 3rd, 4th, and 5th positions respectively. The results also suggested that Saudi learners exploited various strategies to infer the meaning of new words. It is also reported that learners did not like note-taking strategies and encoding strategies.

Baniabdelrahman & Al-Shumaimeri (2014) investigated first-year Saudi university English language students' strategies to obtain the meaning of unfamiliar words while reading English texts. The sample consisted of (120 male and 120 female) students. The results revealed poor application of the right strategies to guess the meaning of unknown words. However, the application of two or more strategies helped students to achieve better guessing rates; yet, it was only applied by a small number of the participants.

Alhaysony (2012) examined the preferred vocabulary learning

strategies of Saudi English language students enrolled in an intensive English Language Program at the University of Ha'il in Saudi Arabia. A sample of 746 male and female students participated in the study. The results revealed that the students reported using different vocabulary learning strategies. The data analysis showed that social and skipping strategies are the most used strategy categories, while guessing and dictionary strategies were used less frequently. The results also showed that females used all the strategies more frequently than males, and there was a statistically significant difference in guessing and skipping strategy use by females. Females also used social and dictionary strategies more than males according to mean differences, although there was no statistically significant difference.

In summary, based on literature review, there are several attempts to define vocabulary learning strategies which in general stress the process of vocabulary learning and retrieval processes. In addition, there are various vocabulary learning taxonomies that have been introduced by researchers and educationists (Schmitt & Schmitt, 1993; Rubin & Thompson, 1994; Stoffer, 1995; Gu & Johnson, 1996; Lawson & Hogben, 1996; Schmitt, 1997; Kudo, 1999; Nation, 2001; Gu, 2003; Fan, 2003), who focused on major strategies like memorization, cognitive, and social strategies as being effective based on English language learners' opinions. The international interest in vocabulary learning strategies has also influenced both Arab researchers (i.e., Al-Khasawneh & Huwari, 2014; Al-Khasawneh, 2012; Aljdee, 2011) and Gulf region researchers (i.e., Javid, 2014; Alhaysony, 2012), who investigated the role of vocabulary learning strategies. The main objective is to help Arab English language learners at different universities in learning their vocabulary and retaining them.

Researchers were interested in both quantitative and qualitative research methodology for in-depth opinions. In addition, researchers investigated the impact of different demographic variables on the responses of their participants. Generally speaking, almost all the findings stressed the importance of training English language learners on how to use various sub-strategies of vocabulary learning strategies.

Along similar lines, the present study investigates the strategies

used by student-teachers of English in the College of Education at Kuwait University in learning English vocabulary. The study adapts Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies as a tool of data collection.

Methodology

The Participants

This study is run on a small scale by comparing the opinions of male and female English language student-teachers from the College of Education at Kuwait University. For this purpose, student-teachers were selected randomly based on availability and convenience. The sample consisted of (58.6%) female and (41.4%) male student-teachers. The sample represents different year groups: sophomores (17.1%), college juniors (38.6%), and college seniors (44.3%). Freshman student-teachers were excluded as they are still studying prerequisite courses and some of them may decide to transfer to other majors. See Table (1) for a representation of demographic variables.

Table (1)
The demographic variables

Labels	Value Labels	Freq.	%	Mean	Std. Dev.	Total / %
Gender	Male	29	41.4	1.59	0.496	70
	Female	41	58.6			100%
Year of Study	College Sophomores	12	17.1	3.27	0.741	70
	College Juniors	27	38.6			100%
	College Seniors	31	44.3			

Instrument:

Following a descriptive, analytical method to describe the current state of vocabulary learning strategies which student-teachers employed, a questionnaire was devised as the primary data collection tool. The items included in the questionnaire were adapted from the "Taxonomy of Vocabulary Learning Strategies" developed by

Schmitt's (1997). A total of 41 questionnaire items were written in English and classified under five domains. Eight items were included in the first domain "Determination Strategies". Nine items were included in the second domain "Social Strategies". Seven items were covered in the third domain "Cognitive Strategies". The fourth domain "Meta-Cognitive Strategies" covered five items. The last domain "Memory Strategies" included twelve items. The findings will be interpreted according to the means of all items based on the following scale:

- 1 - Means less than 2.50 indicate (L) low frequency of use.
- 2 - Means equal to 2.50 and less than 3.50 indicate (M) medium frequency of use.
- 3 - Means more than 3.50 indicate (H) high frequency of use.

Data Collection:

Data was collected at the College of Education, Kuwait University. English language student-teachers majoring in intermediate and secondary stage teaching were invited to participate. Interested student-teachers then received explanations of the purpose of the study and the method of response. In addition, the participants were informed of how the results of the study would be used. A total of 70 questionnaires were distributed and they were all returned (the return rate was 100%).

Data Analysis:

To obtain different types of descriptive statistics, statistical analysis was carried out using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 21.0). In addition, both t-test and One Way ANOVA were applied.

Validity of the Instrument:

The validity of the study instrument was tested following two steps. First, five faculty members from the Departments of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Psychology received a copy of the questionnaire for reviewing. Second, a pilot study was administered where ten English language student-teachers majoring in primary stage education responded to the 41 items in the questionnaire. Consequently, necessary changes were made to insure a proper wording of some items.

Reliability of the Instrument:

The instrument obtained Cronbach's alpha equals "0. 920", which is high and acceptable. This shows a consistency and reliability of the instrument for all its items and domains as presented in Table (2).

Table (2)
Classifications of Reliability Analysis

Variables Labels	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items	Means	Std. Dev.	Ranking of Means
Vocabulary Determination Strategies	0.680	8	2.647	0.650	4
Social Strategies	0.636	9	2.970	0.560	2
Cognitive Strategies	0.767	7	2.987	0.755	1
Meta-Cognitive Strategies	0.610	5	2.756	0.709	3
Memory Strategies	0.881	12	2.641	0.771	5
All Domains	0.920	41	2.831	0.556	----

Analysis & Discussion

In this section, the results of the study are discussed in relation to the research questions presented earlier. SPSS Program version (21.0) was used to analyze the data. Total means and standard deviations were calculated, as well as the means of female and male English language student-teachers based on their responses to individual items under each strategy. In addition, both t-test and One Way ANOVA were applied. Tables (3-7) represent the results.

The First Research Question:

This section discusses the findings of the first research question: "what are the most and least frequently used vocabulary learning strategies among Kuwaiti English language student teachers with respect to individual items?".

To provide an in-depth analysis, the participants' responses will be analyzed in two parts. The first part will be concerned with ranking the items of each strategy according to their means. In the second part of the analysis, the means of female and male English language student

teachers will be compared to find out which of the participants has a higher level of frequency of use. All items will be arranged in a descending order, starting with the highest mean in each strategy.

Table (3) below discusses the findings of domain (1) 'The Vocabulary Determination Strategies'. This domain covers 8 items.

Table (3)
Means and Standard Deviations of Determination Strategies

Domain 1: Vocabulary Determination Strategies	Means	Stand. Dev.	Rank	Scale	Frequency of Use		Male/ Female Use
					Female Means	Male Means	
1) Analyze part of speech	2.11	1.043	6	Low	1.93	2.38	Male
2) Analyze affixes and roots	2.77	1.310	4	Med.	2.66	2.93	Male
3) Analyze through available pictures or gestures	1.97	0.834	7	Low	1.83	2.17	Male
4) Guess meaning from textual context	1.86	0.839	8	Low	1.66	2.14	Male
5) Use bilingual dictionary	2.70	1.397	5	Med.	2.41	3.10	Male
6) Use monolingual dictionary 30	2.97	1.307	3	Med.	3.00	2.93	Female
7) Use word lists	3.16	1.211	2	Med.	3.27	3.00	Female
8) Use flash cards	3.56	1.150	1	High	3.46	3.69	Male

Table (3) represents the items of the first domain (Vocabulary Determination Strategies). It shows that the most frequently used item is number 8 with a mean of (3.56) and standard deviation of (1.150). By contrast, the least frequently used item is number 4 with a mean of (1.86) and a standard deviation of (0.839). In between these two items, the other items are ranked as follows. In the second position comes item (7) with a mean of (3.16) and a standard deviation of (1.211). In the third place comes item (6) with a mean of (2.97) and a standard deviation of (1.307). In the fourth place comes item (2) with a mean of (2.77) and a standard deviation of (1.310). In the fifth place

comes item (5) with a mean of (2.70) and a standard deviation of (1.397). In the sixth place comes item (1) with a mean of (2.11) and a standard deviation of (1.043). In the seventh place comes item (3) with a mean of (1.97) and a standard deviation of (0.834).

Comparing the means of female and male English language student-teachers, it showed that frequency of use of male student-teachers were more than female student-teachers in almost all the items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8) of the first domain. Out of the six items mentioned above three items (1, 3 & 4) were of low frequency of use. Items (2, & 5) were of medium frequency of use. Only item (8) was of high frequency of use. As for female student-teachers, only items (6 & 7) were female dominant. Both were of medium frequency of use. However, by comparing the means of females with those of males in these two items, female student-teachers' frequency of use was slightly higher than that of male student-teachers.

Based on the total means (2.647) of the 'Vocabulary Determination Strategies' Domain', which was presented in table (1), this strategy scored the fourth place among the other vocabulary learning strategies. This indicated that this strategy was not favored by Kuwaiti English language student-teachers, which does not match the findings of Javid (2014) and Amirian & Heshmatifar (2013), as the sample of their studies preferred the determination strategies over other strategies. In addition, it was inconsistent with the findings of (Ababneh, 2013; & Al-Khasawneh, 2012) regarding the importance of guessing in learning new vocabulary. In addition, the vocabulary determination strategies were the most used strategies according to the results of Al-Khasawneh (2012). The results of this domain showed that students-teachers did not favor this vocabulary learning strategy.

However, the findings match those of Baniabdelrahman & Al-Shumaimeri (2014) and Alhaysony (2012) as their participants did not favor the guessing strategy, either. As for the dictionary strategy, most of the participants agreed that they use the monolingual dictionary.

This result matches the findings of AbdulMusalib, AbdulKadir, Robani, & Majid (2014), and Asgari & Mustafa (2011).

Table (4) below discusses the findings of the second domain "The Social Strategies". This domain covers nine items.

Table (4)
Means and Standard Deviations of the Social Strategies

Domain 2: Vocabulary Strategies	Determination	Means	Stand. Dev.	Rank	Scale	Frequency of Use		Male/ Female Use
						Female Means	Male Means	
1) Ask teacher for L1 translation		2.64	1.091	Med.	7	2.76	2.48	Female
2) Ask teacher for paraphrase or synonym of new word		2.97	1.109	Med.	3	2.95	2.97	Male
3) Ask teacher for a sentence including the new word		3.34	0.961	Med.	2	3.29	3.41	Male
4) Ask classmates for meaning		2.41	1.028	Low	9	2.34	2.52	Male
5) Discover new meaning through group work activity		2.57	0.957	Med.	8	2.41	2.79	Male
6) Study and practice meaning in group		2.86	1.026	Med.	5	2.80	2.93	Male
7) Teacher checks students flash cards for accuracy		3.37	1.230	Med.	1	3.27	3.52	Male
8) Teacher checks students word lists for accuracy		2.96	1.221	Med.	4	2.98	2.93	Female
9) Interact with native speakers		2.71	1.264	Med.	6	2.56	2.93	Male

Table (4) represents the items of the second domain (Social Strategies). It shows that the most frequently used item is number 7 with a mean of (3.37) and standard deviation of (1.230). The least frequently used item is number 4 with a mean of (2.41) and standard deviation of (1.028). The rest of the items come in between the

abovementioned items. Second is item (3) with a mean of (3.34) and a standard deviation of (0.961). Third is item (2) with a mean of (2.97) and a standard deviation of (1.109). Fourth comes item (8) with a mean of (2.96) and a standard deviation of (1.221). Fifth is item (6) with a mean of (2.86) and a standard deviation of (1.026). Sixth is item (9) with a mean of (2.71) and a standard deviation of (1.264). Seventh is item (1) with a mean of (2.64) and a standard deviation of (1.091). Eighth is item (5) with a mean of (2.41) and a standard deviation of (1.028).

Comparing the means of female and male participants, it shows that the frequency of use of male student teachers was higher than female student teachers. On the one hand, male student-teachers employed seven out of nine items of the social strategies (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, & 9). Among these items, only item (7) was of a high frequency of use, while item (4) was of a low frequency of use. The rest of the items are of medium frequency of use. On the other hand, female student-teachers used two items only (1 & 8) and both were of a medium frequency of use.

Based on the total means (2.970) of the 'Social Strategies Domain', this strategy scored the second place among vocabulary learning strategies. This indicates that this strategy is one of the favored strategies. This suggests that social strategies encourage interaction between the participants and their English language professors as they are considered a model to follow. Student-student interaction was not favored by the participants which may indicate their equality in their level of language proficiency, and this matches the findings of Lip (2009). The findings also matched those of Ababneh (2013) and Alhaysony (2012).

Table (5) below discusses the findings of the third domain "Cognitive Strategies", which covers seven items.

Table (5)
Means and Standard Deviations of the Cognitive Strategies

Domain 3: Vocabulary Strategies	Determination	Means	Stand. Dev.	Rank	Scale	Frequency of Use		Male/ Female Use
						Female Means	Male Means	
1) Verbal repetition		1.73	0.760	Low	7	1.61	1.90	Male
2) Written repetition		2.11	0.925	Low	6	2.05	2.21	Male
3) Word lists		3.31	1.123	Med.	4	3.20	3.48	Male
4) Take notes in class		3.99	1.161	High	1	3.73	4.34	Male
5) Keep a notebook for new vocabulary		3.70	1.448	High	2	3.49	4.00	Male
6) Identify new/difficult vocabulary		2.39	1.289	Low	5	2.22	2.62	Male
7) Listen to tape of word lists		3.61	1.322	High	3	3.22	4.17	Male

Table (5) represents the items of the third domain (Cognitive Strategies). It shows that the most frequently used item is number 4 with a mean of (3.99) and standard deviation of (1.161). The least frequently used item is number 1 with a mean of (1.161) and standard deviation of (0.760). Second is item (3) with a mean of (3.34) and a standard deviation of (0.961). Third is item (2) with a mean of (2.97) of and a standard deviation of (1.109). Fourth comes item (8) with a mean of (2.96) of and a standard deviation of (1.221). Fifth is item (6) with a mean of (2.86) of and a standard deviation of (1.026) Sixth is item (9) with a mean of (2.71) of and a standard deviation of (1.264). Seventh is item (1) with a mean of (2.64) of and a standard deviation of (1.091). In the eighth position is item (5) with a mean of (2.57) of and a standard deviation of (0.957).

Comparing the means of female and male English language student- teachers, it shows clearly that male English language student-teachers used all the items of the cognitive strategy more than their female counterparts as indicated by the means of the two groups. As for male student-teachers, it shows that their frequency of use of

cognitive strategy items was a mixture of different levels of use. Three of the items (4, 5, & 7) were of high frequency of use. Item number (3) was of medium frequency of use. Finally, the items with a low frequency of use were (1, 2, & 6).

Based on the total means (2.987) of the 'Cognitive Strategies' Domain, this strategy scored the first place among the other vocabulary learning strategies. This shows that the participants favored this strategy and used it always because it allowed them to use the language in speaking as well as in writing. These findings match those of Amirian & Heshmatifar (2013). In addition, it is consistent with the findings of Lip (2009) with reference to verbal and written repetition. However, the findings do not match those of Javid (2014) and Al-Khasawneh (2012).

Table (6) below discusses the findings of the fourth domain "The Meta-Cognitive Strategies", which covers five items.

Table (6)
Means and Standard Deviations of Meta-Cognitive Strategy

Domain 4: Vocabulary Strategies	Determination	Means	Stand. Dev.	Rank	Scale	Frequency of Use		Male/ Female Use
						Female Means	Male Means	
1) Testing oneself with word lists		3.10	1.144	Med.	3	3.05	3.17	Male
2) Testing oneself with flash cards		3.76	1.148	High	2	3.61	3.97	Male
3) Testing oneself with word lists		1.56	0.862	Low	4	1.54	1.59	Male
4) Skip or pass new word		3.87	1.089	High	1	3.83	3.93	Male
5) Continue to study word overtime		1.44	0.651	Low	5	1.44	1.45	Male

Table (6) represents the items of the fourth domain (Meta-Cognitive Strategies). It shows that the most frequently used item is number 4 with a mean of (3.87) and a standard deviation of (1.89). The least frequently

used item is number 5 with a mean of (1.44) and a standard deviation of (0.651). Second is item (2) with a mean of (3.76) and a standard deviation of (1.148). Third is item (1) with a mean of (3.10) of and a standard deviation of (3). Fourth comes item (3) with a mean of (1.56) and a standard deviation of (0.862).

Comparing the means and standard deviations of female and male participants, it shows that this is another male dominated strategy. Males used the items of this domain more than females. However, the level of frequency of use varied. The items with a high frequency of use were (2 & 4). Only item (1) was of a medium frequency of use. Finally, two items (3 & 5) were of a low frequency of use.

Based on the total means (2.756) of the 'Meta-Cognitive Strategies' Domain', this strategy scored the third place among the other vocabulary learning strategies. The findings match those of (Al-Khasawneh & Huwari, 2014; Aljedi, 2011; Asgari & Mustaph, 2011). However, they do not match those of (Javid, 2014; Amirian & Heshmatifar, 2013; Al-Khasawneh, 2012).

Table (7) below discusses the findings of the fifth domain "The Memory Strategies", covering 12 items.

Table (7)
Means and Standard Deviations of the Memory Strategies

Domain 5: Vocabulary Strategies	Determination	Means	Stand. Dev.	Rank	Scale	Frequency of Use		Male/ Female Use
						Female Means	Male Means	
1) Connect word to previous personal experience		1.81	0.786	Low	12	1.71	1.97	Male
2) Use semantic maps		3.44	1.347	Med.	3	3.10	3.91	Male
3) Connect the word in its synonyms and antonyms		2.10	1.009	Low	10	2.07	2.14	Male
4) Part of speech (remembering)		2.56	1.247	Med.	6	2.46	2.69	Male

Cont/ Table (7)
Means and Standard Deviations of the Memory Strategies

Domain 5: Vocabulary Strategies	Determination	Means	Stand. Dev.	Rank	Scale	Frequency of Use		Male/ Female Use
						Female Means	Male Means	
5) Image word's meaning		2.11	1.071	Low	9	1.98	2.31	Male
6) Image word form		2.34	1.350	Low	5	2.05	2.76	Male
7) Say new word aloud when studying		2.23	1.332	Low	7	2.00	2.55	Male
8) Study the spelling of a word		1.97	1.103	Low	11	1.93	2.03	Male
9) Use physical action when learning a word		2.97	1.296	Med.	4	2.88	3.10	Male
10) Group words spatially on a page		3.90	1.052	High	1	3.80	4.03	Male
11) Study word with a pictorial representation of its meaning		3.73	1.239	High	2	3.59	3.93	Male
12) Use new words in sentences		2.51	1.046	Med.	8	2.59	2.41	Female

Table (7) represents the items of the fifth domain (Memory Strategies). It shows that the most frequently used item is number 10 with a mean of (3.90) and standard deviation of (1.52). The least frequently used item is number 1 with a mean of (1.81) and standard deviation of (0.786). In the second position comes item (11) with a mean of (3.73) and a standard deviation of (1.239). Third is item (2) with a mean of (3.44) of and a standard deviation of (1.347). Fourth comes item (9) with a mean of (2.97) of and a standard deviation of (1.296). Fifth is item (6) with a mean of (2.34) of and a standard deviation of (1.350). Sixth is item (4) with a mean of (2.56) of and a standard deviation of (1.247). Seventh is item (7) with a mean of (2.23) of and a standard deviation of (1.332). In the eighth position is item (12) with a mean of (2.51) of and a standard deviation of (1.046). In the ninth position comes item (5) with a mean of (2.11) of and a standard

deviation of (1.071). Tenth is item (3) with a mean of (2.10) and a standard deviation of (1.009). Eleventh is item (8) with a mean of (1.97) and a standard deviation of (1.103).

Comparing the means of females and males, it is noticed that this is another male dominated vocabulary learning strategy as males have higher means in 11 items of the memory strategies. Only item (12) was favored by females with a higher mean than those males. This item was of medium of frequency use. As for the frequency of use of the other items used by males, it was found that frequency of use varied as well. Four items were of low frequency of use (1, 3, 5, 6, 7 & 8). Three items were of medium frequency of use (2, 4 & 9). The items with high frequency of use were (10 & 11).

Based on the total means (2.641) of the 'Memory Strategies' Domain', this strategy scored the fifth place among learning strategies. Although memory strategies and the sub-skills of memorization and retrieval are considered primary in the process of thinking, they were not favored by the participants. The findings do not match those of Javid (2014), Seffar (2014), and Saunders (2013). According to Nemati (2009) learners must be advised to consider memory strategies as they enhance memorization and retrieval of vocabulary.

The Second Research Question:

In relation to the second research question "Are there any statistically significant differences in the use of vocabulary learning strategies among Kuwaiti English language student-teachers according to (gender and years of study) at $\leq$ a 0.05 level?", both t-test and One Way ANOVA test were applied. The results are represented in Tables: 8 and 9.

Table (8) below discusses the findings in accordance with "Gender" as a demographic variable.

Table (8)
t-test according to the demographic variable of Gender

Variable Names	Female			Male			t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Mean	Std. Dev.			
Determination	41	2.527	0.528	29	2.793	0.755	1.733	68	0.088
Social	41	2.818	0.495	29	2.943	0.639	0.915	68	0.363
Cognitive	41	2.693	0.544	29	2.821	0.605	0.925	68	0.358
Metacognitive	41	2.788	0.612	29	3.246	0.856	2.609	68	*0.011
Memory	41	2.512	0.6478	29	2.822	0.896	1.680	68	0.098

Table (8) represents the t-test results. It shows that there is a significant difference only in domain 4 (Metacognitive Strategy) with reference to gender. The mean value (2.788) for female participants is less than the mean value (3.246) of the male participants. This means that female participants agree less than their male counterparts in this domain. Accordingly, the males apply the metacognitive strategies more than females. This result does not match the findings of Alhaysony (2012), who found out that female participants used all the strategies more than the male participants. However, the t-test results of the other domains show that there are no significant differences according to gender, which matches the findings of (Seffar, 2014; Ababneh, 2013; Saunders, 2013; Asgari & Mustapha, 2011).

Table (9) discusses the findings in accordance with "Years of study" as a demographic variable.

Table (9)
F-Test (ANOVA) by Years of Study

Variable Labels	Source	D.F	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Ratio	Sig.
Determination	Between Groups	2	0.582	0.291	0.702	0.499
	Within Groups	67	27.767	0.414		

cont/ Table (9)
F-Test (ANOVA) by Years of Study

Variable Labels	Source	D.F	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Ratio	Sig.
Social	Between Groups	2	0.465	0.233	0.741	0.481
	Within Groups	67	21.040	0.314		
Cognitive	Between Groups	2	0.545	0.273	0.836	0.438
	Within Groups	67	21.849	0.326		
Metacognitive	Between Groups	2	0.298	0.149	0.256	0.775
	Within Groups	67	38.993	0.582		
Memory	Between Groups	2	0.056	0.028	0.046	0.955
	Within Groups	67	40.827	0.609		

Table (9) shows that there were no significant differences between the total of responses according to the 'Years of Study' with reference to the study domains as the level of significance was $p \geq 0.05$. This finding matches those of Saunders' (2013).

Conclusion

The present study aimed to investigate vocabulary learning strategies used by English language student teachers in the College of Education at Kuwait University. Accordingly, the study examined the most frequently used strategies by the participants with reference to some demographic variables (gender and year of study). Based on relevant literature review, the study adopted and adapted Schmitt (1997) Vocabulary Learning Taxonomy by administering a questionnaire including 41 items divided into five domains. The findings revealed that the participants used different sub-strategies under each domain and ranked them in the following order from the most to the least used (cognitive strategies, social strategies, meta-cognitive strategies, determination strategies, and memory strategies). Gender influenced the responses of the participants as it indicated significant differences only in the cognitive strategies domain in favor of male

participants. However, years of study did not show any significant differences in the responses of the participants. Although the study matched the findings of some studies, yet there were major differences with others as well. This leads to the following recommendations:

- 1 - Introducing English language student teachers to the importance of vocabulary learning strategies in developing their vocabulary and language.
- 2 - Training English language student teachers on how to apply the different sub-strategies of the main vocabulary learning strategies.
- 3 - Training English language teachers on how to teach vocabulary learning strategies.
- 4 - Encouraging English language teachers in public schools to train students on how to use those strategies and provide ample opportunities for practice.
- 5 - Drawing the attention of curriculum designers and developers to include activities based on the different vocabulary learning strategies.

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