

THE USE OF OXFORD'S MEMORY STRATEGIES
TO IMPROVE VOCABULARY LEARNING
AMONG ELEVENTH GRADE EFL
STUDENTS IN OMAN

AL ABRI AHMED HAMED RASHID

SULTAN IDRIS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY

2025



05-4506832



pustaka.upsi.edu.my



Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun
Kampus Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah



PustakaTBainun



ptbupsi

THE USE OF OXFORD'S MEMORY STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE
VOCABULARY LEARNING AMONG ELEVENTH GRADE
EFL STUDENTS IN OMAN

AHMED HAMED RASHID AL ABRI



05-4506832



pustaka.upsi.edu.my



Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun
Kampus Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah



PustakaTBainun



ptbupsi

DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO QUALIFY FOR A MASTER'S DEGREE IN
EDUCATION
(TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE)
(RESEARCH MODE)

FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION
SULTAN IDRIS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY

2025



05-4506832



pustaka.upsi.edu.my



Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun
Kampus Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah



PustakaTBainun



ptbupsi



Please tick (✓)
Project Paper
Master by Research
Master by Mixed Mode
PhD

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK

This declaration is made on the 11st day of MARCH 2025

i. Student's Declaration:

I, AL ABRI AHMED HAMED RASHID, M20212003206, FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION hereby declare that the work entitled THE USE OF OXFORD'S MEMORY STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE VOCABULARY LEARNING AMONG ELEVENTH GRADE EFL STUDENTS IN OMAN is my original work. I have not copied from any other students' work or from any other sources except where due reference or acknowledgement is made explicitly in the text, nor has any part been written for me by another person.

Signature of the student

ii. Supervisor's Declaration:

I, DR MOHD HANIFF BIN MOHD TAHIR hereby certifies that the work entitled THE USE OF OXFORD'S MEMORY STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE VOCABULARY LEARNING AMONG ELEVENTH GRADE EFL STUDENTS IN OMAN was prepared by the above named student, and was submitted to the Institute of Graduate Studies as a full fulfillment for the conferment of MASTER OF EDUCATION (TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE), and the aforementioned work, to the best of my knowledge, is the said student's work.

11 MARCH 2025

Date

MOHD HANIFF BIN MOHD TAHIR *Phd*
Pensyarah Kanan
Jabatan Bahasa dan Kesusasteraan Inggeris
Fakulti Bahasa dan Komunikasi
Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris

Signature of the Supervisor



UPSI/IPS-3/BO 31
Pind : 00 m/s: 1/1

**INSTITUT PENGAJIAN SISWAZAH /
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**BORANG PENGESAHAN PENYERAHAN TESIS
DECLARATION OF THESIS**

Tajuk / Title: THE USE OF OXFORD'S MEMORY STRATEGIES TO
IMPROVE VOCABULARY LEARNING AMONG
ELEVENTH GRADE EFL STUDENTS IN OMAN
No. Matrik /Matric's No.: M20212003206
Saya / I : AL ABRI AHMED HAMED RASHID

mengaku membenarkan Tesis (Sarjana) ini disimpan di Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun) dengan syarat-syarat kegunaan seperti berikut:-
acknowledged that Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (Tuanku Bainun Library) reserves the right as follows:-

1. Tesis/Disertasi/Laporan Kertas Projek ini adalah hak milik UPSI.
The thesis is the property of Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris
2. Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun dibenarkan membuat salinan untuk tujuan rujukan dan penyelidikan.
Tuanku Bainun Library has the right to make copies for the purpose of reference and research.
3. Perpustakaan dibenarkan membuat salinan Tesis/Disertasi ini sebagai bahan pertukaran antara Institusi Pengajian Tinggi.
The Library has the right to make copies of the thesis for academic exchange.
4. Sila tandakan (✓) bagi pilihan kategori di bawah / *Please tick (✓) for category below:-*

SULIT/ CONFIDENTIAL

Mengandungi maklumat yang berdarjah keselamatan atau kepentingan Malaysia seperti yang termaktub dalam Akta Rahsia Rasmi 1972. / *Contains confidential information under the Official Secret Act 1972*

TERHAD/RESTRICTED

Mengandungi maklumat terhad yang telah ditentukan oleh organisasi/badan di mana penyelidikan ini dijalankan. / *Contains restricted information as specified by the organization where research was done.*

TIDAK TERHAD / OPEN ACCESS

AL ABRI AHMED HAMED RASHID

(Tandatangan Pelajar/ Signature)

MOHD HANIFF BIN MOHD TAHIR PhD
Pensyarah Kanan
Jabatan Bahasa dan Kesusasteraan Inggeris
Fakulti Bahasa dan Komunikasi
Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris

DR MOHD HANIFF BIN MOHD TAHIR

(Tandatangan Penyelia / Signature of Supervisor)
& (Nama & Cop Rasmi / Name & Official Stamp)

Tarikh: 11 MARCH 2025

Catatan: Jika Tesis/Disertasi ini **SULIT** @ **TERHAD**, sila lampirkan surat daripada pihak berkuasa/organisasi berkenaan dengan menyatakan sekali sebab dan tempoh laporan ini perlu dikelaskan sebagai **SULIT** dan **TERHAD**.

Notes: If the thesis is CONFIDENTIAL or RESTRICTED, please attach with the letter from the organization with period and reasons for confidentiality or restriction.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful

First and foremost, I humbly express my deepest gratitude to Allah SWT, whose infinite blessings have endowed me with the resilience, patience, and well-being necessary to complete my Master's journey. This accomplishment would not have been possible without His divine guidance and mercy. I wish to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the many individuals whose invaluable support and encouragement have contributed significantly to the successful completion of this thesis.

Foremost among them is my esteemed supervisor, Dr. Mohd Haniff bin Mohd Tahir. I am profoundly grateful for his insightful feedback, thoughtful guidance, and steadfast encouragement throughout every stage of this academic endeavour. His mentorship has been instrumental in helping me navigate the various challenges encountered along the way.

I also extend sincere thanks to my examiners, Dr. Revathi A/P Gopal and Prof. Madya Dr. Noriah Ismail, for their constructive critiques and expert advice. Their critical insights have substantially enriched the quality and rigor of this research.

This journey has demanded both perseverance and endurance, and I am deeply indebted to my beloved parents and siblings for their unwavering support. Their unconditional love, prayers, patience, and constant encouragement have been a source of strength and comfort throughout this process.

To my dear friends and colleagues, I offer my sincerest thanks for your continued moral support, kind words, and encouragement during times of difficulty. Your solidarity and belief in my potential have been deeply motivating and greatly appreciated.

Lastly, I extend my warmest gratitude to all the educators and students who generously participated in this study. Their cooperation and willingness to contribute have played a pivotal role in the success of this research, and their involvement is sincerely acknowledged.





ABSTRACT

Since vocabulary knowledge has a significant role in mastering a foreign language and attaining good academic achievement, Omani students need to learn English vocabulary to obtain an educational qualification and to use English to communicate with English-speaking people. Omani eleventh-grade students need help utilising appropriate strategies for learning and memorising English vocabulary. They also have difficulty recalling words when they speak and write. This study explores the type of memory strategies used, the type of strategies preferred and the factors that influence the strategy used among eleventh-grade EFL students in Oman. A survey research design is used in this study. A group of 126 students participated in this study using convenience sampling. The researcher collected data using a questionnaire, a semi-structured interview and an observation checklist. The questionnaire data is processed using the descriptive statistical analysis method, involving mean and standard deviation calculations. Thematic analysis is used to analyse the semi-structured interview data, and observation analysis is conducted to examine the classroom observation checklist. The results revealed that reviewing well ($\bar{x} = 3.99$) is the most used category of strategies, followed by employing actions ($\bar{x} = 3.07$) category of strategies. Through interviews, it is found that students prefer to use videos, other visual aids, gaming, or other competitive activities with their peers and friends. Moreover, Creating Mental Linkages (CML) strategies are being mainly used by teachers in their classrooms. The study findings would help the teaching community plan their vocabulary teaching strategies more effectively. Also, the curriculum developers could design tasks that improve vocabulary learning so that the students get ample opportunities to learn and use vocabulary through appropriate memory enhancing activities.





MENGGUNAKAN MODEL MEMORI OXFORD UNTUK MENINGKATKAN PEMBELAJARAN KATA PERBENDAHARAAN BAHASA INGGERIS DI KALANGAN PELAJAR KELAS 11 DI AMMAN

ABSTRAK

Memandangkan pengetahuan perbendaharaan kata mempunyai peranan penting dalam menguasai bahasa asing dan mencapai pencapaian akademik yang baik, pelajar Oman perlu mempelajari perbendaharaan kata bahasa Inggeris untuk mendapatkan kelayakan pendidikan dan menggunakan bahasa Inggeris untuk berkomunikasi dengan orang yang berbahasa Inggeris. Pelajar gred kesebelas Oman memerlukan bantuan menggunakan strategi yang sesuai untuk belajar dan menghafal perbendaharaan kata bahasa Inggeris. Mereka juga mengalami kesukaran mengingat perkataan apabila mereka bercakap dan menulis. Kajian ini meneroka jenis strategi ingatan yang digunakan, jenis strategi yang diutamakan dan faktor yang mempengaruhi strategi yang digunakan dalam kalangan pelajar EFL gred kesebelas di Oman. Reka bentuk kaedah campuran berjujukan penjelasan digunakan dalam kajian ini. Sekumpulan 126 pelajar telah mengambil bahagian dalam kajian ini menggunakan pensampelan kemudahan. Pengkaji mengumpul data menggunakan borang soal selidik, temu bual separa berstruktur dan senarai semak pemerhatian. Data soal selidik diproses menggunakan kaedah analisis statistik deskriptif, melibatkan pengiraan min dan sisihan piawai. Analisis tematik digunakan untuk menganalisis data temu bual separa berstruktur, dan analisis pemerhatian dijalankan untuk meneliti senarai semak pemerhatian bilik darjah. Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa mengkaji semula dengan baik ($\bar{x}=3.99$) adalah kategori strategi yang paling banyak digunakan, diikuti dengan menggunakan kategori strategi tindakan ($\bar{x}=3.07$). Melalui temu bual, didapati pelajar lebih suka menggunakan video, alat visual lain, permainan, atau aktiviti kompetitif lain dengan rakan sebaya dan rakan mereka. Selain itu, strategi CML digunakan terutamanya oleh guru di dalam bilik darjah mereka. Dapatan kajian akan membantu komuniti pengajar merancang strategi pengajaran perbendaharaan kata mereka dengan lebih berkesan, membawa kepada faedah yang dipertingkatkan untuk komuniti pelajar. Selain itu, pembangun kurikulum boleh mereka bentuk tugas yang meningkatkan pembelajaran perbendaharaan kata.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK	ii
DECLARATION OF THESIS	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	v
ABSTRAK	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF TABLES	xiii
LIST OF FIGURES	xiv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xvi
LIST OF APPENDICES	xviii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background of the Study	4
1.3 Problem Statement	8
1.4 Research Objectives	12
1.5 Research Questions	13
1.6 Significance of the Study	13
1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study	15
1.8 Operational Definitions	15
1.8.1 English as a Foreign Language (EFL)	15

1.8.2	Oxford's Memory Strategies	16
1.8.3	Memory Strategies	16
1.8.4	Vocabulary Learning	17
1.8.5	Eleventh-Grade Omani Students	18
1.9	Summary	18
CHAPTER 2	LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.1	Introduction	19
2.2	Shift of Interest to Vocabulary	20
2.3	Vocabulary Learning in the Sultanate of Oman	22
2.3.1	The Research Gap Addressed by this Study	23
2.4	Vocabulary Types, Importance and Challenges	25
2.4.1	Definition of Vocabulary	25
2.4.2	Expansion of Vocabulary in English	26
2.4.3	Types of Vocabulary	27
2.4.3.1	Listening Vocabulary	28
2.4.3.2	Speaking Vocabulary	29
2.4.3.3	Reading Vocabulary	31
2.4.3.4	Writing Vocabulary	33
2.4.4	Other Types of vocabulary	35
2.4.4.1	Active and Passive Vocabulary	36
2.4.4.2	Receptive Vocabulary	36
2.4.4.3	Productive Vocabulary	38
2.4.4.4	Receptive and Productive Vocabulary	38
2.4.4.5	Formal and Informal Vocabulary	41
2.4.4.6	Collocations	42

2.4.5	Vocabulary Learning and Affixes	44
2.4.6	Importance of Learning Vocabulary	46
2.4.6.1	Vocabulary and Communication	48
2.4.6.2	Comprehension Development	51
2.4.6.3	Enhancement of All Language Skills	53
2.4.6.4	Essential for Researchers in All Fields	55
2.4.7	Mastering Vocabulary	57
2.4.8	Challenges in Learning Vocabulary	60
2.4.9	Cognitive Constraints on Vocabulary Retention	63
2.4.10	Factors Influencing Vocabulary Learning	67
2.5	Memory and Vocabulary Learning Strategies	76
2.5.1	Functioning of Memory	76
2.5.2	Memory Strategies	81
2.5.3	Memory Strategies Processing of Vocabulary	85
2.5.4	Concept of Vocabulary Memorisation	88
2.5.5	Memory Strategies Enhance Speaking	93
2.5.6	Non-language Students also Need Memory Strategies	96
2.5.7	Memory Strategies in the Classroom	98
2.5.8	The Most Used Vocabulary Learning Strategies	102
2.5.9	Memory Strategies – Research Review	104
2.5.10	Vocabulary Learning and Long-Term Memory	108
2.5.11	Need for Strategies to Improve Long-term Memory	110
2.5.12	Training and Strategy Increases Effectiveness	112

2.6	Language Learning and Vocabulary Learning – Strategies	114
2.6.1	Language Learning Strategies	115
2.6.2	Role of Memory in Language Learning	119
2.6.3	Contribution of Strategies to Memory	121
2.6.4	Vocabulary Learning Strategies	122
2.6.5	Inter-relationships Between VSLs and LLSs	125
2.7	Classification of Memory Strategies	128
2.7.1	Oxford Classification	128
2.7.2	Purpura’s Classification	131
2.7.3	Schmitt’s Classification Based on Oxford’s	131
2.8	Need for Research on Memory Strategies	142
2.9	Theoretical Framework	143
2.10	Conceptual Framework	156
2.11	Conclusion	157
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY		
3.1	Introduction	159
3.2	Summary of Methodology	160
3.3	Research Design	160
3.4	Population	163
3.5	Sample	163
3.6	Setting	165
3.7	Instruments Used in This Study	166
3.7.1	Questionnaires	166
3.7.2	Semi-Structured Interview	167
3.7.3	Observation Checklist	168

3.8	Data Collection	169
3.9	Techniques of Data Analysis	170
3.10	Ethical Procedure	171
	3.10.1 Steps to Avoid Bias	172
3.11	Pilot Study	173
3.12	Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire Validation	176
3.13	Summary	177
CHAPTER 4	RESULTS	
4.1	Introduction	179
4.2	Investigation of the First Research Question	180
4.3	Investigation of the Second Research Question	184
4.4	Investigation of the Third Research Question	193
	4.4.1 Findings from Semi-Structured Interview	193
	4.4.2 Semi-Structured Interview Data Analysis	194
	4.4.3 Findings from the Observation Checklist	211
4.5	Summary	219
CHAPTER 5	FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	
5.1	Introduction	222
5.2	Discussion of Key Findings	223
	5.2.1 Section 1: Reviewing Well (RW)	224
	5.2.2 Section 2: Applying Images and Sounds (AIS)	226
	5.2.3 Section 3: Creating Mental Linkages (CML)	228
	5.2.4 Section 4: Employing Action (EA)	233
	5.2.5 Section 5: Other Aspects	235



5.3	Theoretical Aspects of Results	237
5.4	Implications for Teaching	239
5.5	Recommendation for Further Research	241
5.6	Conclusion	242
	REFERENCES	244
	APPENDICES	



LIST OF TABLES

Table No.		Page
1.2	Categories of Memory Strategies (Oxford, 2003)	6
2.1	Key Components of Word Knowledge	40
2.2	Oxford's Memory Strategies (Oxford, 1990)	129
2.3	Taxonomy of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (Schmitt, 1997)	140
2.4	The IPM and the Oxford's Memory Strategies	145
2.5	High-Quality Images	152
4.1	KMO and Barlett's Test	181
4.2	Total Variance Explained	181
4.3	Rotated Component Matrix	183
4.4	Number of Items in Each Factor	184
4.5	Weighted Average for Five-Point Likert Scale	185
4.6	Means and Standard Deviations of the Four Types of Strategies	186
4.7	Means and Standard Deviations of Reviewing Well	187
4.8	Means and Standard Deviations of Creating Mental Linkages	188
4.9	Means and Standard Deviations of Applying Images and Sounds	190
4.10	Means and Standard Deviations of Employing Actions	191
4.11	Interview Questions Classified into Oxford's Strategies 1	195
4.12	Interview Questions Classified into Oxford's Strategies 2	195
4.13	Interview Questions Classified into Oxford's Strategies 3	196
4.14	Analysis of Classroom Observation 1	217
4.15	Analysis of Classroom Observation 2	217

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
2.1	Stages of Memory Process	66
2.2	Short-Term Memory and Long-Term Memory	87
2.3	Learning Strategies by Omally & Chamot (Brown, 2000)	116
2.4	The Model of Human Memory by Atkinson & Shiffrin (1968)	118
2.5	Illustration of Categorisation of the Strategies	140
2.6	Information Processing Model Stages	144
2.7	Language Learning Strategies (Oxford, 2003)	147
2.8	Conceptual Framework	156
3.1	Organizational Framework of the Study	161
3.2	Research Design Diagram	162
3.3	Sampling Procedure	165
3.4	Data Collection and Analysis Procedure	171
4.1	The Screen Plot of the Components in the Questionnaire	186
4.2	The Mean Values of the Four Types of Memory Strategies	189
4.3	Means of the Items in Reviewing Well (RW) Category	187
4.4	Means of the Items in Creating Mental Linkages (CML) Category	189
4.5	Means of the Items in Applying Images and Sounds (AIS) Category	190
4.6	Means of the Items in Employing Actions (EA) Category	192
4.7	How Often Do You Review a New Word?	197
4.8	Aids Helpful To Learn Vocabulary?	198



4.9	How Do You Want to Learn New Vocabulary?	200
4.10	Is There Anyone Helps You in Learning Vocabulary?	201
4.11	How Do You Usually Learn New Vocabulary?	202
4.12	Tell About Any Memorable Vocabulary Learning Session?	204
4.13	Do You Learn Contexts, Collocations, And Phrases?	205
4.14	Do You Keep A List of New Words?	206
4.15	Learning Vocabulary Makes You Successful?	208
4.16	Is It Easy Or Difficult to Learn New Words? Why?	209
4.17	Overall Summary of Semi-Structured Interview Data in a Bar Chart	211
4.18	Integrated Summary of Data from the Questionnaire, Interview and Classroom Observation	218
4.19	Data Collected Using Semi-Structured Interview	219





LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIS	Applying Images and Sounds Strategies
CALPS	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
CML	Creating Mental Linkage Strategies
DIP	Direct Intervention Period
DTA	Deductive Thematic Analysis
EA	Employing Action Strategies
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
FLL	Foreign Language Learners
FSs	Formulaic Sequences
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
ITA	Inductive Thematic Analysis
LL	Language Learning
LLS	Language Learning Strategies
LTA	Latent Thematic Analysis
LTM	Long Term Memory
NGSL	New General Service List
RW	Reviewing Well Strategies
SILL	Strategy Inventory for Language Learning
SPSS	Statistical Package for The Social Science
STA	Semantic Thematic Analysis
TA	Thematic Analysis





05-4506832



pustaka.upsi.edu.my



Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun
Kampus Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah



PustakaTBainun



ptbupsi

xvii

TV

Television

VLS

Vocabulary Learning Strategies



05-4506832



pustaka.upsi.edu.my



Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun
Kampus Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah



PustakaTBainun



ptbupsi



05-4506832



pustaka.upsi.edu.my



Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun
Kampus Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah



PustakaTBainun



ptbupsi

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A	QUESTIONNAIRE: MEMORY STRATEGIES IN VOCABULARY LEARNING
APPENDIX B	SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
APPENDIX C	CLASSROOM OBSERVATION
APPENDIX D	FEEDBACK ON VOCABULARY ACQUISITION SURVEY
APPENDIX E	INSTITUTIONAL APPROVAL LETTER – HEADMASTER’S CONSENT



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION



1.1 Introduction

Vocabulary is commonly considered the primary communication device and is often classified by language teachers as the most challenging field (Al-Khresheh & Al-Ruwaili, 2020). It is the key to mastering all primary language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. A person with limited vocabulary will find it difficult to speak, write, read, or understand other people's language effectively. Therefore, foreign language learners need help with vocabulary during their language-learning process.





Receptive skill is a form of communication focusing on vocabulary inputs through listening and reading. In other words, learners need sufficient vocabulary to understand their input. On the other hand, a productive skill is when learners use words to convey meaning. Different learners employ different strategies for learning vocabulary, but every strategy depends on learners' needs, age, and cognitive strength (Yucedal, 2022). It has been found that a supportive environment and the availability of resources play an essential role in the enrichment of students' vocabulary. Therefore, many methods have been developed to assist in learning vocabulary in school. These methods include using memory strategies, contextual inference, or semantic mapping in vocabulary learning. Depending on learners' needs and ability levels, these vocabulary learning methods can be taught extrinsically or intrinsically.



Students in Oman must attend the classroom and maintain their day-to-day

activities to successfully respond to their academic demands (Akoi et al., 2021). English language should be considered an important international language as this may bring possibilities for students to give more attention and interest to the English language (Ali & Anwar, 2021). This means students in Oman need a practically usable English language rather than only fulfilling the academic demand to obtain a certain degree.

At the same time, to successfully practise English as a second language, students need considerable knowledge of the vocabulary in the language. Therefore, knowledge about diverse vocabulary learning strategies will assist eleventh-grade EFL learners to get educated effectively, by acquiring the necessary vocabulary knowledge. Vocabulary learning strategies are instinctively attractive to





undergraduates and teachers. It has been a joint research theme among researchers for decades (Al-Yaseen, 2019; Setyawan, 2019).

Vocabulary acquisition is significant in learning a foreign language (Schmitt, 2019). Vocabulary acquisition has been the centre of attention for various second-language acquisition linguists, such as Bao (2019) and Wang (2023). Omani eleventh-grade students were reported to have used independent learning strategies to improve their learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Al Towity, 2024). Students usually show successful engagement in independent learning tasks in the classroom. They are typically engaged in employing various skills that help them promote their learning by using their ideas to form opinions, solve problems and use various strategies in their learning.



Grade eleven students employ a variety of independent language learning strategies. For instance, they use a group work strategy; they also learn through play and learn through Maker's *tinkering* and *play*. The nature of learning through Maker Education requires self-reliance, creative problem-solving, and resourcefulness. Although a human mind can store around 100 trillion pieces of information, we cannot have access to this huge storage without employing memory strategies (Oxford, 1990, p. 38). Hence, this research will examine Oxford's memory strategies employed by Omani eleventh-grade students in learning English vocabulary.





1.2 Background of the Study

Vocabulary learning is essential to mastering any language since it enables learners to learn about the language they seek to learn and develop. Nation (2022) reports that learning vocabulary is part of learning a language. It is a fundamental step in the communication and acquisition process. Vocabulary is the core of language and is essential to language learners (Wansek, Wood, & Schatschneider, 2022).

Students need various independent words in their academic learning (Lateh, 2018). This is only possible by employing some learning strategies. Vocabulary learning strategies engage students in thinking about the relationships between words, the meaning of words, and the application of words and to various situations (Goundar, 2019). Therefore, understanding foreign language learners' strategies to learn vocabulary is essential. In this context, memory strategies can play a significant role in enhancing vocabulary learning. A vocabulary strategy is an approach that seeks to facilitate better vocabulary learning, which students can successfully use to enhance their mastery of the language they need to learn (Schmitt, 2000). Al Towity (2024) describes a vocabulary strategy as a unique learning tool for a learner to learn words and terms independently. Moreover, it is affirmed through Language Learning Strategies (LLSs) defined by Oxford (2003) as "specific actions, behaviours, steps, or techniques such as seeking out conversation with partners or giving oneself encouragement to tackle a difficult language task - used by students to enhance their learning". (p. 2).





Over the last three decades, rapid advances in the field of EFL learning strategies have been made and used by learners to memorise vocabulary, as stated by Suwanarak (2019) and Pawlak (2021). Moreover, vocabulary learning refers to the strategies second language learners use to help them learn more words and express the ideas they want to communicate to others. As per Oxford's (1990) language learning strategies, attention is given to memory strategies because of individual abilities to learn language; vocabulary strengthens the individual understanding of language use. Memory strategies, traditionally known as mnemonics, have found ways to link new knowledge with familiar words and images (Badr & Abu-Ayyash, 2019).

In this regard, learners link a new word they learn with familiar words they already know (Oxford, 2003). According to Oxford (2003), memory strategies are employed by learners when they learn and memorise vocabulary, especially in the initial stages of language learning. The researcher points out that using memory strategies in a test-taking situation had a significant negative relationship to learners' test performance in grammar and vocabulary. The probable reason is that memory strategies are often used for memorising vocabulary and structures in the initial stages of language learning. However, "learners need such strategies much less when their arsenal of vocabulary and structures has become larger". (p. 41). Because memory is a critical component of learning at all levels of education, students use memory strategies to maximise their learning and connect their learning of new words to mental processes by associating their existing or prior information with the new words (Cohen & Henry, 2019; Aravind & Rajasekaran, 2020; Barkley & Major, 2020).



According to Oxford (2003), two significant memory division categories are Direct and Indirect Strategies. Metacognitive, affective and social strategies are under the indirect ones, whereas direct strategies include memory, cognitive and compensation strategies. The current study examines the effects of memory strategies that Omani grade eleven students frequently utilise for vocabulary learning.

Many researchers, such as Oxford (1990), Gathercole, Dunning, Holmes, and Norris (2019), and Schwartz (2020), indicate that the four memory strategies for vocabulary learning play a crucial role in improving students' English vocabulary repertoire. The four memory strategies for vocabulary learning include creating mental linkages, applying images and sounds, reviewing well, and employing actions. All the memory strategies for vocabulary learning, according to Oxford (2003) will be

the basis of the current study.

Table 1.2

Categories of Memory Strategies (Oxford, 2003)

Category	Strategies
Creating Mental Linkage Strategies (CML)	<p>(1) Group some new words according to their meaning. Such as, organise vocabulary in word maps or label the picture.</p> <p>(2) Creating associations. For example, teachers can encourage students to make their own class story with ten new words (house, roof, bedroom.)</p> <p>(3) Putting new words in a context. It means that students can use new expressions in written work. One typical example is an exercise where they must write a short letter to some friend and describe their house or flat. The teacher can provide them with some patterns or write the beginning on the board. For example, beginning: Dear Sue, Thanks for your letter. In my house, there is/are...</p>

Applying Images and Sounds Strategies (AIS)	<p>(1) Association of eyesight. This is obviously illustrated by the task in which students make some associations with pictures and sounds. For example, the teacher presents a few flashcards showing different animals and asks students to imitate animal sounds.</p> <p>(2) Putting words in some situational context. Students may place new vocabulary in some dialogue, and then, in pairs, they can learn the dialogue by heart.</p>
Category	Strategies
Reviewing well strategies (RW)	<p>(3) Keyword – create some short rhyme with terms they must become competent in. For example: He was dark and intelligent. She was thin and slim. They were bold and cold. You were...</p> <p>(4) Replaying sounds in memory. Pupils can build linkages between two similar words. They can think about minimal pairs of words. For example: Fan – van, Cat – wat</p>
Employing action strategies (EA)	<p>Give opportunities to students to revise what they have learned regularly and systematically. Moreover, students can monitor their progress and achievements.</p> <p>(1) Creating a new word through mechanical means, such as taking notes on a tiny sheet of paper with its definition.</p> <p>(2) The learner uses experience or physical response to practise a new phrase or term, such as opening the window.</p>

Based upon Deep Processing Theory (DPT), the more effort a learner exerts when manipulating information, the better it is stored and remembered. Forsberg, Adams, and Cowan (2021) initially propose the theory, where the concept is that memory is just anything that takes place due to information processing. Memory is the end-product of deep information processing and the way information is processed. This occurs in the following ways: (1) Shallow processing involves rehearsal, i.e., repetition to aid the learners in holding information in the temporary memory and cause relatively temporary retention. (2) Deep processing comprises an elaboration rehearsal based on a more meaningful analysis of information that can be achieved



through images, thinking, and associating or linking words' meaning to previous knowledge. The second one leads to long-term retention. The deep and elaborate processing of word knowledge can lead to better retention and minimise attrition.

1.3 Problem Statement

This mixed-method (qualitative and quantitative) study examines memory strategies to improve vocabulary learning among eleventh-grade EFL students in Oman. It also aims to investigate Omani students' learning styles when employing their vocabulary learning strategies. EFL learners face many challenges in gathering the required vocabulary knowledge that will enable them to adequately comprehend the foreign language effectively in their various fields of endeavours (Ali, 2020). As English has become an important language and a job requirement, it is one of the core subjects at all levels of Omani education. According to Thompson (1994), "one cannot speak, understand, read or write a foreign language without knowing many words, so vocabulary learning is at the heart of mastering a foreign language". (p. 79).

One proposed way to help Omani students acquire English more efficiently is by encouraging them to read, as reading books, especially in English, allows learners to learn the language. According to Nation and Waring (2019), extensive reading is helpful for vocabulary growth and is called incidental learning. Moreover, when students are unable to comprehend the books they read, the development of their English language skills will be limited. To further complicate the matter, many teachers in Al Dhahirah governorate, where the research study was conducted,





highlighted this as an alarming trend among Omani teenagers. These teenage students only study to acquire knowledge for academic reasons rather than to develop long-term skills. According to Al Rabeei, Al-Humaidi, and Al-Busaidi (2019), students only read occasionally and mostly read to achieve the class quizzes and final examinations. The researcher add that Omani learners seldom read books to search for information or enjoy reading, and their focus is only on preparing for assessments.

In addition, the researcher think that the students need more exposure to English in real-life situations. Therefore, the learners are not motivated to learn a foreign language for its own sake and the enjoyment it provides. Furthermore, to worsen the situation, reading as a habit is no longer practised, as most Omanis' students' latest favourite interest is watching TV and films, primarily online. Aprilia and Aminatun (2022) mention that mental strength and memory influence students' ability to remember lessons and express themselves in class by channelling ideas and creations in their minds.

In his experience, the researcher, who was a teacher and then became a regional supervisor, observed that students typically struggle with speaking English fluently. They typically consider speaking and writing activities exhausting because they are constantly using the same expressions and words and very soon their conversation is abruptly interrupted by missing words. The primary reason for such communication difficulties is the lack of vocabulary. Students face this problem because they forget the words immediately after the teacher has told them their meanings or after they have looked them up in the dictionary, and this is also a cause





of lack of vocabulary. The more vocabulary students learn, the easier it is for them to use it in communication.

With the above issues in mind, Omani eleventh-grade students seem to face problems remembering English words, especially when they need them, during situations like when writing academic documents such as final examinations, essays, writing tasks and speaking in public. These problems are associated with the student's failure to employ the appropriate strategies for learning and remembering vocabulary when needed. In addition, Omani students might need help memorising English vocabulary due to their inability to choose the appropriate memory strategies.

This inability might be due to a need for appropriate strategies that fit the memory process of vocabulary recall and retention. Therefore, Omani students with this complexity or memory issue may need to improve in encrypting or processing information in memory loading or protecting information in retention memory (Gathercole & Hitch, 2019). The main concern of this study is to examine appropriate learning strategies that involve a deeper engagement with words, consequently leading to better memory retention. When vocabulary must be retained for a longer-time, a rehearsal strategy is commonly employed; once these strategies fail to work, this leads to short-term memory issues affecting the recalling process (Axmedovna & Ibragimovich, 2019).

However, when inappropriate strategies are employed, the vocabulary information can be retained for a few moments (i.e. minutes or sometimes seconds). In contrast, a rehearsal strategy must be employed if new vocabulary items must be





retained longer. Short-term memory issues affect the recalling process if this strategy fails to work. As found in the guidelines for teachers of the Basic Education curriculum, although the course aims to provide wide and rich vocabulary, in the context of Sultanate of Oman, it is not known that to what extent it is effective; probably the tasks and activities could not reach the students due to unknown reasons.

However, the course tends to provide functional knowledge of the language rather than vocabulary enrichment. In the Basic Education curriculum, the lexical sets of words, context-based tasks, recycling tasks, word-building tasks etc. are given to students for the purpose of vocabulary learning and development. In the EFL setting of Oman, the students may need more support to remember and retain the vocabulary through more visual, game-like and fun activities.



Another unclear issue is that if the tasks and strategies in this curriculum allow enough mental processing, time, and practice are required to let the newly learnt words sink deeper and get assimilated. Probably, more comprehensive steps should be added to provide more visual, phonetic, and usage-oriented strategies of Oxford Model that could enhance the effective assimilation of vocabulary. In addition, the Omani students of the present study might have different problems in remembering vocabulary introduced in English classes. The researcher might also find it difficult to understand the fundamentals of vocabulary memorisation.

In terms of vocabulary learning, very few studies have investigated the suggestions made by Oxford (2003) on memory strategies for vocabulary learning. Concerning the problems mentioned above and memory strategies, further research





studies are necessary to resolve the issues. Thus, there is a need to fill these research gaps to offer appropriate memory strategies for vocabulary learning in Oman. This will assist learners in enhancing their vocabulary abilities and becoming more aware of effective vocabulary learning and memorisation strategies (Li, 2022).

Employing appropriate memory strategies in learning vocabulary will make the learning process more effective and efficient, and the learners will be able to become more proficient in learning the foreign language. In this situation, as explained in the previous paragraphs, more is needed about the memory strategies' use in the Omani government schools. Moreover, even if some strategies are used, it is not known what type of memory strategies are currently being used in the classrooms, which ones among these strategies are preferred by the students, and what factors influence these strategies. Therefore, this study becomes necessary to address this critical research gap in education.

1.4 Research Objectives

The current study aims to investigate using Oxford's memory strategies to improve vocabulary learning among eleventh-grade EFL students in Oman. Therefore, the objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the Omani eleventh-grade students' use of Oxford's memory strategies for learning English vocabulary.
2. To identify the students' preference of Oxford's memory strategies used for





learning English vocabulary by the Omani eleventh-grade students.

3. To investigate the factors affecting the students' Oxford's vocabulary learning strategies used for learning English vocabulary by the Omani eleventh-grade students.

1.5 Research Questions

Based on the mentioned objectives, the study will attempt to find answers to the following questions:

1. To what extent the Oxford's memory strategies are used for learning English vocabulary by the Omani eleventh-grade students?
2. What is the student's preference for Oxford's memory strategies used for learning English vocabulary by Omani eleventh-grade students?
3. What are the factors affecting the students' Oxford's vocabulary learning strategies used for learning English vocabulary by the Omani eleventh-grade students?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Scholars agree that vocabulary is one of the most critical components of language learning and communication (Noprianto & Purnawarman, 2019). A limited number of studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of memory strategies in acquiring





second-language vocabulary words (Courage & Cowan, 2022; Gaybulloyevna, 2022; & Radvansky, 2021). Vocabulary is crucial to learning a second or foreign language because, with adequate vocabulary, students can communicate their ideas in public, school, and classroom, affecting their overall academic performance.

This study examines Omani students' use of memory strategies for learning English vocabulary to improve their academic performance and learning experience. It is fundamental for Omani eleventh-grade students to develop their individual memory strategies for learning English vocabulary and develop their ability to express themselves in English and communicate with others effectively. An appropriate choice of memory strategies for learning English vocabulary will help them increase their repertoire and lead to better retention and memorisation of the vocabulary learned. In theory, the outcomes of the study provide information about the appropriate use of memory strategies by eleventh-grade Omani students for learning English vocabulary.

The findings are also useful for Omani English teachers, policymakers and the Omani Ministry of Education, as memory strategies enhance the quality of English vocabulary teaching and learning. In addition, the findings can help teachers prepare appropriate materials for their students to retain vocabulary items for extended periods. The researcher believes that teaching new vocabulary should aim to increase retention without increasing learning time. Therefore, applying memory strategies is an excellent way to benefit from learning that provides long-lasting knowledge.





1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study might be affected by some limitations that the researcher expects to have. This study's respondents are grade 11 Omani male students. Thus, grade 11 students in different courses are neglected. Moreover, because involvement is voluntary, the number of participants may be smaller or as expected. In addition, since the information used in this study is based on self-reporting by the participants through a questionnaire, some students might not be more accurate in their responses. According to Zhang and Zhang (2019), students may not respond truthfully, either because they cannot remember or because they like to present themselves in a socially acceptable way, as in this study. Finally, the students' use of memory strategies in their vocabulary learning process are measured based on the mean value of the most and least used strategies. This study only considers some of the potential factors affecting vocabulary memorisation and usage.

1.8 Operational Definition

It is essential to understand the operational definition of the research topic to understand the focus of this study. The definitions are the following:

1.8.1 English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

EFL refers to the context of English learning in which a student learns English in a non-English speaking country. Iwai (2011) defines EFL learners as individuals who





learn English in non-English-speaking countries; for example, Japanese individuals who study English in Japan are EFL considered EFL learners.

1.8.2 Oxford's Memory Strategies

Memory strategies are a plan of action designed to improve long-term retention and retrieval of information as proposed by Oxford's (2003, p. 271-278). Memory strategies are referred to the activities that promote the recall and retrieval of new knowledge, such as key words, acronyms, pictures, etc. They help learners to combine elements of the second language (L2) with the new information. To better investigate the English learning strategies of the students in vocational studies, the researcher applies Oxford's taxonomy, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL).

Therefore, the current study investigates memory strategies as one type of the direct learning strategies proposed by Oxford (2003). The memory is a biological process that occurs in individuals where individuals can recall information that has been coded. Vocabulary in language learning is very important to master, because this type of strategies can help the students overcome the problems, they encounter in vocabulary learning.

1.8.3 Memory Strategies

Memory strategies are proposed as simple rules to arrange information in human memory. They are "those techniques which help learners' store specific information and then retrieve it when needed" (Oxford, 1990, p. 38). When new information is rehearsed through memory strategies, it will be transferred to Long-Term Memory





(LTM). Courage and Cowan (2022) present a similar definition. For them, MS memory strategies organise or encodes information to make remembering easier. Schmitt and McCarthy (1997, p. 216) suggest a different definition that associates the word to previously stored and learned knowledge by activating some form of imagery or grouping. Courage and Cowan (2022) report that new information is transformed from short-term to long-term memory by associating it with an existing schema.

1.8.4 Vocabulary Learning

Krashen (1981) reports that learning vocabulary is part of learning a language. It is a fundamental step in the communication and acquisition process. The importance of vocabulary does not only lie in establishing cognitive systems of language skills and linguistic knowledge but also in assisting communicative and comprehensive interaction (Brooks, Clinton, & Fraser, 2021). This study provides relevant information and findings on the effectiveness of using memory strategies for vocabulary learning to help students increase vocabulary knowledge and retention. In this study, the students are assumed to determine their opinions about the memory strategies for vocabulary learning through a questionnaire and other research instruments. Vocabulary is viewed as the glue that holds stories, ideas and content together and enables children to comprehend (Ali & Anwar, 2021).

Ismailova (2021) also argues that vocabulary makes it easier for us to communicate and express thoughts about people, places or things as well as activities, relationships and states. Vocabulary can also be defined as a collection of words that someone understands. According to Qian and Lin (2019), someone who understands



terminology effectively has an impact on the process of good communication. This means that studying English vocabulary can develop a better mindset and improve communication skills.

1.8.5 Eleventh-Grade Omani students

Eleventh-grade Omani students are the sample of the target population selected to form the study participants. The mean age of the participants is 16 years. They come from similar educational backgrounds and have received at least 10 years of English instruction beginning in the 1st grade of primary school. They are studying in a school in the town centre of Al Dhahirah Governorate in Oman.

1.9 Summary

In summary, this study aims to examine the use of Oxford's memory strategies to improve vocabulary learning among eleventh-grade EFL students in Oman. Vocabulary learning strategies are fundamental to improving learners' vocabulary knowledge. Vocabulary is one of the core elements of a language that helps in reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. The researcher hopes that the findings of this research would assist English language learners in enhancing their vocabulary skills and becoming more aware of effective vocabulary learning and memorisation strategies.